

# *Pwyllgor Ymgynghorol Harbwr Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee*

*15 Mawrth / 15 March 2011*

## *Adroddiad yr Uned Forwrol a Pharciau Gwledig – Maritime and Country Parks Unit Report*

### **1.0 - Dwr Ymdrochi Aberdyfi Bathing Water**

**1.1** It has been confirmed that the bathing water quality at Aberdyfi reached the required Mandatory Standard in 2010 and therefore, despite not having achieved the standard required for the International Blue Flag Award the beach will be submitted for the Resort Beach Award in 2011.

The timetable for the revised Bathing Water Directive is noted below.

- **2011:** The Environment Agency will publish a profile for each bathing water in England and Wales
- **2012:** Appropriate signs must be in place at all Bathing Waters by the beginning of the bathing season. The Environment Agency will commence monitoring using the parameters of the revised Directive
- **2014:** Final Bathing Water report using the standards of the current Directive
- **2015:** First set of classifications using the new parameters will be published, based on the data set commenced in 2012
- **2016:** New classifications will appear on the signs using symbols that are being prepared by the EC

**1.2** As reported to Members during the Autumn, the new European Bathing Waters Directive will come into force in 2015 and meeting the stringent Bathing Water criteria set by the new Directive will be challenging. Following further discussion with officers from the Environment Agency and given that the standard of Bathing Water at Aberdyfi over the last five years has fluctuated, it is a possibility that the Bathing Water for Aberdyfi beach could be classified as being of a 'Poor' standard under the new directive in 2015.

There will be four classifications of Bathing water under the revised directive, these are;

- Excellent
- Good
- Sufficient
- Poor

**1.3** Whilst two alternative 'candidate' bathing beaches have been considered with the most favourable and realistic option having been identified as the beach known locally as 'Cemetery Beach', it remains unclear as to the benefit that could be forthcoming if the Bathing Beach at Aberdyfi was designated.

- 1.4 Should the 'Cemetery Beach' be considered as a Bathing Beach in the near future, given the rural location of the beach it would be most likely that the beach would only be considered for a Green Coast Award. The Green Coast Award only recognises rural beaches that achieve the highest quality of bathing water standard during the bathing season and there is very little infrastructure associated with rural beaches.
- 1.5 In general, the existing area of Bathing Water at Aberdyfi is used extensively by watersports enthusiasts. As Members will be aware, identified Bathing Beach only take account of the number of individuals actually swimming in the water and the criteria for identifying a Bathing Beach does not require consideration to be given to the number of people participating in any form of watersports in the designated area even though the sport could be defined as immersion sports, i.e. windsurfing, surfing, body boarding etc.
- 1.6 In order to ensure that members are fully aware of the implications of the new directive in 2015, the Environment Agency has been invited to the meeting of the Harbour Consultative Committee.
- 1.7 Looking positively towards the future, should the overall quality of the Bathing Water at Aberdyfi reach the required standard, then the Maritime Unit will continue to submit a beach award application for the beach. We are of the opinion that such a prestigious award does have a positive impact on increasing tourism and can have a positive effect on the local economy. The monitoring of Bathing Water also enables the Council to measure the quality and standard of local bathing areas.

The results of the final Bathing Water samples for Aberdyfi, Fairbourne and Abermaw for 2010 is appended for information.

## **2 – Ffioedd a Thaliadau / Fees and Charges**

- 2.1 The fees and charges relating to the next financial year, 2011/12, has been forwarded to the Statutory Officers and the Portfolio Leader for approval. It is anticipated that the Portfolio Leader will have confirmed the fees before the end of March 2011. In order to ensure that our clients are aware of the forthcoming charges, the Maritime and Country Parks Unit has forwarded a copy of the provisional fees and charges to all clients emphasising that the fees are subject to confirmation and final approval.
- 2.2 A copy of the fees and charges relating to the harbours of Aberdyfi and Abermaw is appended, and Members will note that it is recommended that the harbour fees and charges for all vessels mooring within the jurisdiction of Aberdyfi will be increased by **2%**. The increase of V.A.T to **20.0%** as of the 4th January 2011 will unfortunately incur a further increase in costs to all users but will not contribute towards the overall income generated at the harbour.
- 2.3 Members will also note that a proposal has been submitted recommending that fees and charges relating to Harbour Dues and Mooring Dues be standardised and that a single fee is applied. As from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, it is recommended that all clients are charged a similar fee regardless of the main area of residence.

- 2.4 The increase in inflation for the harbour of Aberdyfi for 2011/12 is forecast to be **1.53%** which is based on a number of factors that fluctuate beyond the level of inflation (Electricity etc) and are also based on an increase in staffing costs of **1%** even though there will be no increase payable to staff. The overall increase in the income target for Aberdyfi for 2011/12 is £600 bringing the total income target to **£39,870**. It is anticipated that the increase in mooring fees at a level slightly above inflation will bridge the continuously increasing sum when comparing income target with actual end of year income generated.
- 2.5 With regard to Abermaw harbour the inflation rate is forecasted to be **0.25%** and the overall income target for Abermaw for 2011/12 will be **£51,730**. This inflationary increase will incur a minor increase to the overall income target in 2011/12.
- 2.6 Members will be aware that the income target at Aberdyfi and also at Abermaw harbour have continuously not been reaching the required target for a number of years, and, as expected in such serious financial circumstances, further measures on efficiency savings have been identified and discussed. Further measures will need to be taken in order to ensure that the overall expenditure, and income targets achieve their targets without compromising standards and safety.
- 2.7 The fees and charges relating to the launching and registration of Powerboats and Personal Watercraft have also been increased for the next financial year. A copy of the fees and charges for Launching and Powerboat Registration is appended.
- 2.8 The increase in the overall income target for the Maritime Unit for 2011/12 is **£57,330** which compares with an increased target of **£9,070** in 2010/11 and **£51,020** in 2009/10. This increases the overall income target of the Maritime Unit to **£2,219,360** in 2011/12.

## 2. - Cyllidebau / Budgets

- 2.1 The financial position of Aberdyfi and Abermaw harbours as of the third quarter of the financial year up to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 is appended for information. Members will note that the income target relating to the harbour of Aberdyfi for 2010/11 is **£39,270**, and that the total income generated at Aberdyfi to the end of December 2010 is **£31,003**. This is in comparison with having achieved a total of **£31,694** income for the same period last year.
- 2.2 As of the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010, the shortfall in income for Aberdyfi harbour is **-£8,267**. The shortfall for the same period last year was **-£7,966**, and therefore the figure to date clearly demonstrates that there is a general trend and a consistency in the income shortfall on an annual basis. It is not anticipated that a significant amount of income will be generated during the final quarter of the current financial year and it is therefore expected that the income target for Aberdyfi harbour will not reach its target. We forecast the overall expenditure to be in the region of **-£7,000** below the required target. This surplus includes having reduced the staffing number for the winter period in an effort to meet with the budget target. And is also inclusive of funding that was introduced into the budget from other Maritime headings in order to complete projects at Aberdyfi.
- 2.2 The total overall expenditure has taken the income target into consideration and given the predicted overspend in other areas of the service, additional savings will need to be identified from all Maritime and Country Parks Unit budget headings. For expenditure to be higher than the allocated budget is unacceptable and all budget headings will require further scrutiny during the next few weeks.

- 2.3 Given the current economic climate and the requirement to identify further savings, 2011/12 will be a very challenging year for the Maritime and Country Parks Unit, especially for the harbour of Aberdyfi and Abermaw both of which demonstrate a requirement for additional financial support. It is emphasised that the general over expenditure coupled with the continuous deficit in income will need to be overcome, especially given the significant overall reduction in the budget available to Gwynedd Council and the savings that require to be identified in the future.
- 2.4 In comparison, the income target for Abermaw during the same period is **£46,100**, and a total of **£32,569** has been reached leaving a deficit at Abermaw of **£13,531**. However, it is expected that there will be a saving of approximately **-£14,000** in the expenditure budget at Aberdyfi which will in turn demonstrate an overall under expenditure of approximately **-£7,000 in Aberdyfi** at the end of the financial year. Taking into account the reduction in expenditure at Aberdyfi, the total shortfall/over expenditure for both harbours is anticipated to reach the target.

### 3 Mordwyo / Navigation

- 3.1 All Aids to Navigation leading to the harbour of Aberdyfi have remained on station during the initial part of the winter months. It is essential that work to maintain all Aids to Navigation will have been completed before the Easter festival which falls much later in April this year. It is essential that all Aids to Navigation will be on their chartered positions before Easter. The Maritime Officer Harbours and the Harbourmaster will be providing further details at the meeting as to the programme of work for all Aids to Navigation at Aberdyfi. Information detailing the anchoring and securing system for each buoy together with details of the required maintenance will also be distributed at the meeting.
- 3.2 The Fairway Buoy was due to be brought ashore in 2010 but unfortunately the project has been delayed. The work will now be completed in 2011. The refurbished Fairway Buoy has already been maintained and is ready for deployment.
- 3.3 It is a requirement that the Craft Exclusion Zone marker buoys will be in position before the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend. Unfortunately, in previous years the ground anchoring system securing the buoys has been failing during times of adverse weather conditions and during exceptional tides. The Maritime Officer Harbours and the Harbourmaster will have devised a plan to improve on the present system in order to reduce the number of days whereby the buoys are not in the correct position.
- 3.2 As in previous years, funding from within the existing revenue budget will need to be identified in order to meet the cost of maintaining Aids to Navigation which is a statutory duty. All Aids to Navigation are inspected annually by Trinity House.

To date, there are no Notices to Mariners in force for the harbour of Aberdyfi.

### 4 - Staff – Staffing

- 4.1 The post of Harbour Assistant for Aberdyfi for the forthcoming season has been advertised, and the post will commence on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, and extend to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011. Similarly, the post of Harbour Assistant for Abermaw has also been advertised and the successful applicant will also be employed from the 7<sup>th</sup> of April to the 30<sup>th</sup> September.

- 4.2 For the main part of the summer season, one beach officer for Aberdyfi will be appointed and will hopefully be able to commence duties in mid June. Consideration is being given to the possibility of employing two seasonal Beach Officers for Tywyn and the wardens will also commence mid June.

The appointing of one additional seasonal Harbour Assistant for Aberdyfi whose primary responsibilities are to monitor, and manage Powercraft navigating in the harbour during the peak period is subject to further review. Given the current financial position, funding for the post has to be identified from within the available budget.

#### **5 - Cloch Llanw ac Amser / Time and Tide Bell**

- 5.1 Details regarding the interesting proposal to position the 'Time and Tide Bell' under the wooden jetty at Aberdyfi is appended for information. Members will be aware that the project has been funded by a third party and all additional costs such as the structural/condition report of the jetty together with the load bearing design has been generously funded by Aberdyfi Community Council.
- 5.2 The Maritime and Country Parks Unit in co operation with the Coast Protection Unit has agreed to the positioning of the 'Time and Tide Bell' under the jetty. We are confident that the bell will be an additional attraction for visitors to Aberdyfi and the bell does have a historic connection with the village. The 'Time and Tide Bell' project has been nominated for the award of 'Best Artist Response to Climate Change' as part of Climate Week taking place from 21-27 March 2011.
- 5.3 Future maintenance of the 'Time and Tide Bell' and the regular inspection of the structure supporting the bell is to be confirmed.

#### **6.0 Quay Wall**

- 6.1 As previously reported, Members will be aware that in March 2010 a specialist Structural Engineer was commissioned and conducted a detailed survey of the sheet piling that supports the quay wall at Aberdyfi. The report investigated the current condition of the sheet piling and was following on from previous further studies that were undertaken in 2006 by Bureau Vitas Consulting Ltd and a study that was conducted by Possford Duvivier in 1998.
- 6.2 The report confirmed that the remaining lifespan of the sheet piling is approximately six years and such calculations used by the consultant are based on the assumed corrosion rate on the effective life for the 'Frodingham' sheet piling that is used at Aberdyfi. A draft plan of the proposal to replace the quay wall will be available for inspection at the meeting.
- 6.3 Cyngor Gwynedd are considering all available options given that the quay wall is of significant importance to the operation of the harbour and also supports the foundation for Canolfan Dyfi, the visitor Centre and the Aberdyfi Yacht Club. Enquiries are continuing in order to determine as to whether the quay wall would be classed as a coast protection structure or as an amenity quay wall. The definition of the purpose of the wall will determine the level of funding that could be forthcoming when the sheet piling is replaced.

7. **Llithrfa / Slipway**

- 7.1 The public slipway at Church Bay has been resurfaced and a new concrete bay has been cast into the structure. The previous surface which consisted of stone sets was not suitable for the purpose and funding from outside of the harbour's budget was allocated towards this essential work. The supporting wall has also been maintained. We are confident that those using the slipway will benefit from the improvements.

The slipway used by the Lifeboat, the Outward Bound Trust and by members of Dyfi Yacht Club and the Rowing Club has also deteriorated of recent and it is proposed that a number of the concrete bays will be removed and replaced with new concrete during the spring. The Maritime and Country parks Unit will liaise with the Lifeboat Station and with other users in order to ensure that the construction work does not impair on activities.

Funding for this work is being sought from outside of the harbour's budget and in order to reduce the overall cost to the Maritime Unit, all groups using the slipway will be contacted requesting that consideration be given to contributing financially towards the repair of the slipway.