

**Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee  
held on 12 March, 2014 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi**

**PRESENT**

Councillors Anne Lloyd Jones, Dewi Owen, (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr. Brian Bates, (Aberdyfi Community Council), Mr W Bracewell (Aberdyfi Partnership), Mr Dave Williams (Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertising Committee), Mr Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club), Mr Huw Evans (Cardigan Bay Fisheries Association), Mr Paul Fowles (Aberdyfi Chamber of Trade), Mr Al Crisp (Outward Bound Wales), Dr Alun Stedman (Aberdyfi Rowing Club), Mr Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club).

**Officers**

Mr Llŷr B. Jones	-	Senior Manager Economy and Community
Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr William Stockford	-	Aberdyfi Harbour Assistant (Temporary)
Mr Huw Davies	-	Principal Engineer
Mrs Glynda O'Brien	-	Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer
Mrs Mererid Watt	-	Translator

**Apologies:** Councillors John Wynn Jones, Mike Stevens, (Cyngor Gwynedd), David Richardson (Aberdyfi Community Council).

1. **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially Mr Williams Stockford, Harbour Assistant, to his first meeting of the Consultative Committee.

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

No declarations of personal interest were received from any member present.

3. **MINUTES**

**Submitted:** Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee held on 5 March 2013.

**Resolved:** To accept and approve the minutes as a true record.

4. **THE MARITIME OFFICER'S REPORT**

**Submitted:** The report of the Maritime Officer, Mr Barry Davies, on activities in Aberdyfi Harbour with specific reference to the following:

**(A) Harbour Consultative Committees – Terms of Reference**

(i) Reference was made to the Harbour Consultative Committees' terms of reference which dealt with the Membership, Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair, Quorum and Voting, Frequency of Meetings and the function of the Committee, that would be adopted as soon as

possible in order to reconcile the arrangements of the four Harbour Consultative Committees. It was stressed that the Harbour Committees of Aberdyfi, Barmouth and Pwllheli were not statutory and that the terms of reference created a framework to consult with Harbour users. When the Membership was discussed at the previous meeting of the Consultative Committee, concern was highlighted that representation from the Community Council was to be restricted to one member. It was explained that only one representative from the relevant Town Councils served on the Porthmadog and Pwllheli Harbour Committees. It was further stressed that the matters for discussion on the Agenda would be restricted to issues that were vitally important to the Harbour such as budgets, operation of the harbour, staffing, work programmes etc. and it would be possible to discuss matters outside the Harbour terms of reference directly with the Maritime Service.

(ii) In order to formalise arrangements, it was suggested that the best way forward would be to correspond with each one of the organisations who already served on the Consultative Committee (together with the RNLI) as follows:

- (a) Confirm the role and purpose of the Committee
- (b) Invite nominations to serve on the Committee
- (c) Request that organisations note the reasons and the opportunities where they can contribute as an organisation to the Consultative Committee's work.

(iii) It was trusted that the arrangements could be implemented in accordance with the terms of reference in October 2014. It was suggested that up to seven members should be elected to represent the interests of different Harbour User organisations, and if more organisations than required show an interest to be part of the membership, it would be a matter for the Cabinet Member to consider and choose the final Membership.

(iv) During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted:

- (a) They continued to express discontent regarding the suggestion to reduce the number of representatives from Community/Town Councils on the membership of the Harbour Committee i.e. one member rather than three as currently existed. It was felt that there should be joint working in partnership and considering the existing financial climate, it was necessary to be more creative and imaginative and more representation from the Community Council would be beneficial for this.
- (b) In the past, successful working groups had been established working in collaboration with the Harbour Master.
- (c) The new arrangements would ensure that issues would be submitted to the Council's Cabinet and would therefore strengthen any action taken by the Consultative Committee.
- (d) That the RNLI had never officially nominated a representative to serve on the Consultative Committee as three or four of the Members who already served on the Committee were also members of the RNLI.

(v) In response to the above, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would welcome the re-establishment of working groups in order to make use of experience and expertise. It was added that it would be a new period for Aberdyfi as a result of new appointments to the Harbour. It was emphasised that Consultative Committee meetings were public meetings and any person was welcome to attend and listen to the discussion. Although the proposed terms of reference reduced the number of representatives from the Community/Town Council, it would be possible for other Members of the Community/Town Council to attend the meetings and it would be possible to send a substitute in the absence of the representative.

**Resolved: (a) To accept and note the above.**

**(b) Send a letter to all the organisations who already serve on the Consultative Committee together with the RNLI as outlined in (ii) (a), (b) and (c) above.**

**(B) Port Marine Safety Code**

(i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that he had not received any observations from Members of the Consultative Committee on the contents of the Port Marine Safety Code, and therefore it was taken for granted that the Code would be approved. During the next few weeks it would be printed and circulated to the relevant organisations.

(ii) Concern was highlighted by several members regarding the responsibility for public safety that fell on the shoulders of the Harbour Master because of the use of the estuary by users who launch from Ynys Las, Ceredigion. It was trusted that the Port Marine Safety Code would be a means to give additional power and responsibility in terms of safety to Ceredigion authority.

(ii) Due to the nature of the boundary between the Ceredigion estuary and the Harbour, complications often arose and it should be borne in mind that the Coastguard Agency had powers and a role in the context of safety and use should be made of them.

(iii) In response, the above concern was noted by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer and it was confirmed that in terms of liability for marine safety that the guidelines stated that the Cabinet as a Duty Holder would shoulder the responsibility on behalf of the Harbour Authority for controlling activities within the Harbour. It was further noted that the Port Marine Safety Code was comparatively new and every authority had not adopted it. As a result of the concerns, it was suggested that it would be beneficial to write on behalf of the Consultative Committee to the appropriate officer in Ceredigion to draw attention to the concerns highlighted as well as to investigate what the Coastguard could offer.

**Resolved: (a) To accept and approve the Port Marine Safety Code.**

**(b) Request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer writes a letter, on behalf of this Consultative Committee, to highlight the concerns regarding a procedure for launching vessels/personal watercraft from Ynys Las, Ceredigion and specifically in terms of public safety.**

**(C) Navigation and Moorings**

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Fairway Buoy had been off station for some months, however, it was assured that the navigational aids would be on station prior to the Easter holidays and this would include Buoy No. 1 together with replacing a light on Buoy No. 2.

(ii) A Member stated that the standard of navigational aids last summer had been particularly good.

(iii) In response to a query regarding the procedure when there was no aid to navigation on station, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that a notice was sent to mariners and they also had a responsibility to contact the Harbour Master beforehand to get advice regarding procedure.

(iv) Regarding the impact of the adverse weather experienced this year, the investment in Aberdyfi had withstood the strongest winds. It was further explained that work was proceeding to restore a wall near the Church and the work to the boardwalk would be completed by May.

Whilst accepting that the sand had been problematic, it was explained that staff had assisted to clear seaweed etc. It was noted that the Council had received £400,000 for restoration work following the storms and the Principal Engineer trusted that the sand would be cleared by the Easter holiday, however, no specific date had been specified.

(v) A Member reported that sand near the Yacht Club had been placed in a heap and an explanation was requested regarding its ownership and where to dispose it. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that it was necessary to place the sand back on the beach, if it had not been contaminated with oil.

(vi) The Chairman added that there was a heap of sand on the car park in Aberdyfi and the Principal Engineer promised to keep in contact with the Chair to confirm the date the sand would be cleared in order to contact Mr Colin Jones, Parking and Road Safety Manager, to coordinate the work of clearing the car park at the same time.

(vii) From past experience of moving sand, the RNLI had experienced difficulties with a considerable dip in the beach and it was impossible to drive down the slipway. It was thought that further consideration had to be given to profiling the beach in order to overcome these difficulties.

(viii) In response to a query regarding repairing the wall near the Church, the Principal Engineer explained that up to 60m would be repaired and the work would commence in September, however, in the meantime it was assured that they would keep an eye on the condition of the wall so that it did not get any worse or dangerous.

(ix) A positive report was received from Trinity House regarding the condition of the buoys. It was further noted that the moorings had been maintained. They had corresponded with the customers and thus far 60 forms had been returned.

(x) It was noted that they would continue with the service of disposing of pyrotechnics (flares) at a cost of £2,500 and it was proposed to establish a central centre in order that companies could collect them from one location.

(xi) In response to a comment made by the Chair regarding moving debris washed up on the beach as a result of recent storms, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he was hopeful that this task could be undertaken within the budget. It was noted that in parts of Gwynedd voluntary groups had been established to collect debris for lorries to collect. An appeal was made that if organisations in Aberdyfi were interested to help then they would be very grateful. The Chair added that he would discuss this with the Community Council and it was trusted that a group could be established to clean the beach prior to the Easter holiday.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

#### **(D) Harbour Budgets**

A budget spreadsheet was submitted to Members during the meeting and they were guided through the information, it was noted that the total expenditure for running the harbour was £51,890 with actual expenditure of £35,124. In terms of income, it was noted that a target of £34,700 had been specified for the harbour and £24,430 had been collected up until the end of February 2014, which meant a reduction of £10,000. Reference was made to the inflation sheet for each of the services.

(ii) A Member noted that a publicity budget would be useful and at the same time he expressed discontent and criticism of the photograph in the advertisement that appeared in 'Practical Boat

Owner' which was a small photograph of the beach in Aberdyfi compared with the photographs of boats in the Harbours of Barmouth, Porthmadog, Pwllheli and Doc Victoria.

(iii) Whilst accepting the comment, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Service did not have any expertise in marketing and he had no budget for this. It was added that the beach in Aberdyfi was an asset for the village and attracted thousands of people every summer.

(iv) A representative from the Chamber of Trade gave an undertaking to send photographs to the Maritime and Country Parks Officer and the need to advertise the Harbour in Aberdyfi was stressed, however, at the same time it was accepted that more advertising was required to draw attention to Aberdyfi.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

### **(DD) Improvements**

(i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that discussions had taken place with the Chair regarding improvements to the quay wall and that the Service was very grateful to have money to be able to provide initial plans. In the context of the pontoon, the Service was concerned because of the maintenance work over the summer and winter especially bearing in mind that the sea could be quite rough.

(ii) During the meeting proposed initial plans were submitted to members for improvements to the quay wall and it was suggested that the Members split up into two groups to study the plans and then submit questions/observations to the Service. The Senior Economy and Community Manager stressed that the plans had not been approved and that the budget was for the planning work and the concept only, in order to have a basis for further discussions.

(iii) Following studying the plans, the following points were highlighted by individual Members:

- Whilst accepting the concept of not having a pontoon because of the tide etc., a member was in a dilemma regarding the gradient of the proposed steps on the quay wall as they were at a shallow angle and it was anticipated that they would create a platform that would protrude and consequently cause a hazard to boats. It would be better to create more steep steps not at an angle with safety railings.
- Would it be an option to extend the steps to the sea bed if they were made steeper?
- It would also be beneficial to consider the possibility of improving access to the beach near Church Bay in order to make the harbour convenient to users.

(iv) The Chair suggested that it would be beneficial to have a 'drop in' session for harbour users to discuss issues that require attention linked to the proposed plan in Aberdyfi prior to proceeding with the final designs.

(v) Mr Huw Evans, representative of the Cardigan Bay Sea Fisheries Association, expanded on the developments to improve facilities by establishing a Davit crane for fishermen to land their catch on the wharf. It was explained that the crane would be installed on 14 March and central to the wharf, opposite the handrail with the intention of being available for use before the Easter holiday. In response to queries, it was explained that it would be able to move 200kg and that only designated users would have the right to use it.

(vi) In terms of the development of the RNLI building, it was noted that the work had been postponed until October in the hope of having better weather and in the meantime to resolve

some of the issues with the Council. In terms of the extension, it was proposed to look at it again, however, there would not be a huge difference in terms of the work on the building but perhaps in the operational work.

(vii) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer added that linked to the above work it was proposed to place a new lock in order to tighten the movements of vehicles on the quay. To be practical and to try and control the situation individuals were asked to contact the Harbour Master if a vehicle intends to stay longer than to merely load/unload.

(viii) Reference was made to the results of the bathing water quality and it was noted that the results for 2013 were disappointing when the water failed to reach the standard on two occasions during adverse weather. It was noted that officers from Natural Resources Wales had investigated to see why the water quality had failed, and it was understood that Welsh Water had been penalised because of the sewage works in Machynlleth. The tests were conducted at two hours each side of low tide and it was possible to adapt the period to taking samples 4 hours before and after high tide, that may possibly give a better result. The need to post notices to protect the public from bathing when the results were not up to standard was emphasised. Another option would be to designate Cemetery Beach as a bathing area as the quality of bathing water had been satisfactory for 2013.

(ix) In response to the above comment, a Member noted that it was important for the Council and for the Community Council to write to Natural Resources Wales to state an official complaint that no work had been undertaken to improve the bathing water quality considering that they were aware of locations, as well as caravan sites, that contribute to pollution in the sea. It was noted as a matter of interest, looking at the result charts, that the quality failed during school holidays. It would be interesting to conduct tests at high tide to low tide and then back at high tide to be able to discover where the pollution emanated.

(x) It was suggested that it would be useful to invite an officer from Natural Resources Wales to the next Consultative Committee meeting for further discussion.

**Resolved: (a) To request that the Assistant Engineer, Gwynedd Consultancy, organises a session as outlined in (iv) above at a location in Aberdyfi for organisations who are part of this Consultative Committee on Wednesday, 2 April 2014 in order to discuss and resolve any problems anticipated with the initial plan of improvement to the quay wall.**

**(b) To request the Maritime and Country Parks Officer invites a representative of Natural Resources Wales to the next meeting of the Consultative Committee to discuss the bathing water quality results.**

#### **(E) Harbour Staff**

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that Mr Paul Edwards, Aberdyfi Harbour Master had now retired since October 2013. In order to ensure a presence at Aberdyfi, Mr William Stockford had been appointed to the post temporarily and a shortlist of candidates for the post would be drawn up in the next few days. Mr Hefin Richards had recently been appointed as a Harbour Assistant and would commence his duties on 7 April 2014, and this meant that there were staff present in Aberdyfi for seven days a week for the period up to the end of September. There was a comprehensive work programme to be completed that included work in Tywyn and Fairbourne together with giving priority to navigational aids.

**Resolved:** To accept and note the above and request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer writes a letter of thanks to Mr Paul Edwards for his laudable work as Harbour Master and to wish him well on his retirement.

**7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved** It was noted that the next meeting of this Consultative Committee would take place on 11 November 2014.

**CHAIRMAN**