

**Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee
held on 24 September 2013 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi**

PRESENT

Councillors Anne Lloyd Jones, Dewi Owen, Gethin Glyn Williams (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Brian Bates, Cllr. David Richardson (Aberdyfi Community Council), Mr W Bracewell (Aberdyfi Partnership), Mr Dave Williams (Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee), Mr Josh Cooper (Dyfi Yacht Club), Mrs Rhian Cooper (Dyfi Yacht Club), Mr Huw Evans (Cardigan Bay Fisheries Association), Mr Paul Fowles (Aberdyfi Chamber of Trade).

Officers

Llŷr B. Jones	-	Senior Manager Economy and Community
Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr Ken Fitzpatrick	-	Maritime Officer - Harbours
Mr Paul Edwards	-	Harbour Master
Mr Huw Davies	-	Chief Engineer
Mrs Glynda O'Brien	-	Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer
Mrs Mererid Watt	-	Translator

Apologies: Councillors John Wynn Jones, Mike Stevens, (Gwynedd Council), Megan Reynolds (Aberdyfi Community Council), Mr Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club), Mr Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club)

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Dewi Owen as Chair of this Committee for 2013-14.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Resolved: To elect Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones as Vice-chair of this Committee for 2013-14.

3. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

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

4. **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 correct subject to the following amendments:

- (a) Amend the fourth line in the fifth paragraph in point (vi) on page 6 to read "The gap between Canolfan Dyfi and the Lifeboat building"
- (b) Amend the date in the last line but one of the fifth paragraph in point (vi) on page 6 to read "1993" rather than 1963.

4.1 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Cllr. Richardson referred to:

(a) Point 4 (A) Navigation and Moorings and noted that there had been a huge improvement in visibility following the attention given to the aids to navigation and the Fairway buoy was much more prominent.

(b) Point (ix) on page 7 – that it was necessary to deal with this issue without delay namely to draw attention to the dangers of the wall on top of May Bank slipway.

Resolved: To accept and note (a) above and request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer deals with point (b).

5. **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

(i) Reference was made to the Cabinet Member's report submitted to the Cabinet on 17 September 2013, to update operational arrangements and accountability for the management duties of the County's Harbours in accordance with the Marine Safety Code.

(ii) The Senior Manager Economy and Community set the context by noting that the Marine Safety Code was relevant to every Harbour Authority and set a national standard for port marine safety to promote the safety of those who use or work in ports, ships, passengers and the environment. The Code referred to specific duties and as a result of changing the governance arrangements within the Council from a Board to a Cabinet last year, it was necessary to ensure that the Council's arrangements were in accordance with the requirements of the Code. Attention was drawn to the three relevant elements of the Code namely, accountability for marine safety, documents and Harbour Committees. In terms of accountability for marine safety, the guidelines noted that the Duty Holder on behalf of the Harbour Authority was accountable for managing operations within the harbour and it was recommended that this person would be the Cabinet. It was fundamental for an effective safety management system that a 'Designated Person' was appointed to provide independent quality assurance of the marine safety systems and ensure that the authority was in compliance with the Code. It was anticipated that the Maritime and Country Parks' Services would submit an annual report to the Cabinet on the performance and activities of the service.

(iii) The Code noted the need for harbour authorities to consult with appropriate parties regarding harbour activities and it was considered that this was an opportunity to update the arrangements of the Harbour Committees by adopting a standard constitution and areas of work in accordance with the Code's guidelines.

(iv) Members were guided and referred to the specific terms of reference for existing Harbour Committees that addressed Membership, Chairman and Vice-chairman, Quorum and Voting, Frequency of Meetings and the Committee's functions.

(v) It was stressed that it would take time for the above arrangements to come into effect, however, it was a means to ensure consistency across all Harbour Committees within the County.

- (vi) During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted by individual Members:
- Concern and 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 current existed
 - Community councillors had been elected to represent their electors and the local connection and influence would be lost
 - That there were other local issues of interest such as beaches, and it should be ensured that these were not lost as it was such issues that attracted visitors to Aberdyfi.
 - By reducing representation on the Committee individuals with a wealth of experience in the field could be lost.
 - It should be ensured that the Harbour organisations/user groups were 'bona fide' asking them to submit official minutes of their Annual Meetings and their constitution
 - The importance that the RNLI was represented on the Committee as those members had years of experience
- (vii) In response to the above concerns, the Senior Manager Economy and Community and the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted:
- Whilst accepting the above observations, the need to have consistency was stressed in the operation of these Committees as there was a possibility for them to be too big.
 - The importance of having a member of the Community/Town Council present was recognised, however, it would be possible to elect a substitute if the Member could not attend
 - The Harbour Committee would not be closed and it was possible for other Members of the Community Council or the public to attend to listen to the discussions and report back to the organisations / groups on the matters discussed
 - In terms of other matters to be discussed in the Harbour Committee, it was stressed that safety and management of the harbour would be the terms of reference for the committees and it was possible to discuss peripheral issues that were important in terms of economic benefit at other meetings such as Area Forums
 - It was not anticipated that there would be any reduction in the quality of the service to the Harbour.
 - It had to be borne in mind that they were Consultative Committees without rights to make decisions but rather to make recommendations to the Cabinet
 - Whilst recognising that several members had extensive experience of water activities and that some of the organisations that already had representation on the Committee were similar to each other in terms of activities, they should perhaps join together under one body as it were.
 - It was suggested that the members could consider the Membership from now until the next meeting and confirm names of representatives, the ideas/arrangements at that time.

Resolved: To request that the Cabinet Member:

- (a) Re-considers the membership of the Harbour Consultative Committee to have more than one representative from the Town/Community Council to serve on Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee**
- (b) Ensures that the different organisations/harbour user groups invited are constitutionally 'bona fide' and to request that they submit suitable minutes from their Annual Meetings together with a copy of their constitution as a criterion**
- (c) Ensure that the RNLI was one of the seven organisations/bodies above.**

(B) Port Marine Safety Code

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that a copy of the Safety Code had been sent to Members of the Consultative Committee and during the meeting they were given the Gwynedd Action Plan stating that it was a generic plan for the whole of Gwynedd and the plan would be reviewed on a regular basis by the Maritime and Country Parks' Services and scrutinized by an independent expert in accordance with the Code's requirement. He noted further that the Safety Code was not statutory, however, it was a very good practice and the same guidelines existed in any Harbour throughout the land and therefore gave a secure framework for duties.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(C) Navigation and Moorings

(i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that it had been a very busy summer with favourable weather and he gave a report of two incidents one on Warren beach, and the other in Porthmadog Harbour which had raised concerns amongst the public. It was further noted that the Council via the Harbour Consultative Committees and local members were leading on this in a positive way through regulation and Anglesey and Conwy Councils, one authority in England and one in south Wales had adopted the same regulations. Unfortunately due to the number of objections the Government will not support any need for a qualification to drive personal watercraft which are used for pleasure. However, considering the extensive numbers which navigate the coasts only a very few accidents had occurred except for one tragedy in Padstow when a boat went out of control. Stemming from that accident the Services continue to stress that the 'killcord' on a boat is essential and reference was made specifically for the need for every user to sign the Registration Form for Personal Water Craft and Power Boats to confirm that they will abide by Gwynedd Council's rules whilst navigating within the County. It was difficult to prosecute any individual under the Harbour By-laws or Beach By-laws as a Personal Watercraft was not defined as a boat and therefore did not have to comply with regulations. However, it was necessary to tighten the rules as much as possible.

(ii) A Member noted that local government had to bring pressure to bear on central government to tighten regulations on the owners of personal watercraft. There should be pressure to ensure an appropriate qualification to drive them as often the owners had no idea of how to control them on the water and had no respect for other water users.

(iii) There had been an improvement and an investment of approximately £7,500 this year on aids to navigation. Whilst accepting that the Bar Aid was off station, it was noted that an instruction had been given to re-locate it and a notice had been sent out to mariners. A meeting would take place soon with the contractor to discuss the timetable for maintenance. Following inspection by Trinity House, it was confirmed that the Fairway buoy would be renovated during winter.

(iv) The Assistant Maritime Officer – Harbours added that a light of a superior quality would be installed on the Fairway Buoy and permission had been granted to illuminate buoy no.11. Consequently, each one on the buoys would be illuminated by 2014.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(CH) Maritime Statistics

(i) The following were submitted for information to Members during the meeting:

- Total number of registered Personal Watercraft
- Comparison of Boat Statistics
- List of names and length/draught of powerboats or yachts

From the statistics it could be seen that there was a reduction in the number of boats in Aberdyfi this year, however, it was hastened to add that this was a trend in every harbour especially at Hafan Pwllheli with 75 empty spaces and this was a reflection on the economic situation rather than the quality of the Harbours.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(D) Harbour Budgets

(i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer guided Members through the Harbour budget report for 2012-13, together with the projections for 2013-14, and noted that the expenditure total for running the Harbour was £77,858 with the actual expenditure £63,007.86. In terms of income, it was noted that a total of £37,157 had been allotted for the Harbour and £30,846.01 had been collected in income which meant a reduction of £9,853.99. Although the financial situation in Aberdyfi was fairly positive there was an over expenditure of £18,000 in Barmouth Harbour. It would be necessary to look at the reduction in expenditure for the remainder of the year, unless it was essential expenditure. It was anticipated that fees and charges would be increased by approximately 2% -2.5%. Discussions were on-going with the Crown Agency regarding charging a fee for each one of the authority's moorings and there might be no choice but to pass this on to the users.

(ii) In light of the fact that fees would likely be increased next year, it was suggested that it might be a good idea for the Service to be proactive by advertising that approximately 20/30 moorings were available in Aberdyfi in sailing magazines, which would be a way of increasing income.

(iii) In response, the Senior Economy and Community Manager noted in supporting the comment made, that it had to be borne in mind that Harbour activities were commercial but there was room to continue to market the harbour. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer added that there was no specific finance available for marketing and he was of the view that it would be more effective to keep the fees down in order to increase the growth in the market considering the cost of fuel etc, and that every Harbour across the country was battling to fill moorings.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(DD) Events

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that bathing water quality was very important in terms of the Beach Awards and problems had been experienced during the year, however, they would continue to try and overcome these. A notice was posted in 2013 regarding one anticipated failure in the summer as a result of high levels of E-coli and the likelihood was because of the more rigid guidelines to attain targets in accordance with the revised Bathing Water Quality Directive, that this would have an impact on the results in 2015. However, the bathing water quality at Cemetery Beach had reached a high standard every time and it would be an idea to have this beach as a designated bathing area and withdraw the Harbour area water in order to have positive results. It was further suggested that this should be discussed at the next Consultative Committee meeting with an invitation to officers from Natural Resources Wales to attend.

Resolved: To accept and note the above and discuss the matter further at the next Consultative Committee in March 2014.

(E) Concessions and Improvements

- (i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that an article marketing the Harbours of Aberdyfi and Barmouth had appeared in the Cruising Anglesey Guide.
- (ii) A meeting would take place with relevant officers following a meeting of this Consultative Committee to discuss if the structure of the wharf was strong enough to take a crane for the fishermen.
- (iii) Mr Huw Evans, Representative of Cardigan Bay Fisheries Association, added that Aberdyfi fishermen had fought over the years to land their catch on the wharf and the possibility of establishing a crane there would improve facilities.
- (iv) No objection was anticipated from the Consultative Committee as long as the quay structure could take the crane and that it was safe.
- (v) In response to a query regarding planning permission to install a crane, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that it was not anticipated that a planning application would have to be submitted, however, the application would be dealt with in accordance with the Harbour Empowerment Order. A topographic and bathymetric survey had been conducted. However, there were further discussions to be held regarding the planning application for the wall and pontoon and it was understood that the gradient of the pontoon ramp would not conform with disability regulations.
- (vi) That money had been earmarked for submitting a further report on the condition of Picnic Island Bridge to the next meeting of the Consultative Committee.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

F) Marine Equipment Security

The Assistant Maritime Officer – Harbours reported that PCSO Paul Duggan was responsible for maritime issues and it was stressed that Members should encourage all mariners to register their possessions with the Police.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(FF) Harbour Staff

- (i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that Aberdyfi Harbour Assistant's contract would terminate at the end of the week, and it was trusted that the same arrangements could continue for next year. This would be discussed further at the next Consultative Committee meeting.
- (ii) Although it was reported at the previous meeting of the Consultative Committee that Mr Ken Fitzpatrick would retire in August, he would now continue to work for the Council until Christmas.
- (iii) A work programme was submitted by the Harbourmaster of the duties to be undertaken over the winter.

- (iv) It was confirmed that the Fairway Buoy would be taken out of the water on 21 October 2013.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

6. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(a) The following were highlighted as matters requiring attention:

- It was necessary to repair the timber walkway at Cemetery Beach as it was used by the public.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that it was anticipated that the cost of the repair work required was significant and that further discussions were required regarding who was responsible for the walkway. A meeting was needed with representatives of relevant local organisations/bodies in Aberdyfi together with officers from Natural Resources Wales and the Maritime Service to discuss the best way forward and perhaps to share the cost of repair. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer gave an undertaking to arrange this.

- Was it necessary for the contractor's boat to be moored during the summer season

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would discuss this with the Maritime Officer- Harbours, the Harbourmaster and the contractor to identify a more suitable location to avoid impairing upon other activities in the Harbour.

(b) Correspondence regarding specifying fines for boat owners who do not wear a 'Killcord' on a vessel.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the Service did not have the resources or the authority to specify fines. Users were encouraged to ensure that the killcord was attached correctly and they had invested in appropriate stickers to be displayed on the vessel all the time.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

(a) It was reported that the next meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee would take place on Wednesday, 12 March 2014.

(b) Since this meeting today had been timetabled a little earlier than usual, a request was made for it to take place during the third or fourth week of October in order that the Maritime Service could include details of the budget etc, with the agenda.

Resolved (a) To accept and note the above.

(b) To request that the Democratic Services Manager timetables the next meeting in October next year on approximately the third or fourth week.

CHAIRMAN