

***Pwyllgor Ymgynghorol Harbwr
Abermaw
Harbour Consultative Committee***

27 Mawrth / March 2012

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

1 – Ffioedd a Thaliadau / Fees and Charges

- 1.1 The fees and charges relating to the financial year of 2012/13 have been agreed with the Portfolio Leader. In order to ensure that our clients are aware of the forthcoming charges, the Maritime and Country Parks Unit has corresponded with all clients and advised clients of the revised fees and charges to all clients.
- 1.2 A copy of the fees and charges relating to the harbours of Abermaw and Aberdyfi is appended, and Members will note that it is recommended that the harbour fees and charges for all vessels moored within the jurisdiction of Abermaw and Aberdyfi will be increased by **2.5%** in 2012/13.
- 1.3 The increase in inflation for the harbour of Abermaw for 2012/13 is forecast to be **1.69%** a figure which is based on a number of factors that fluctuate beyond the level of inflation (Electricity etc.) As Members will recall pay increases have remained static for the last two years although a small increase has been incorporated within the inflation index within each budget. In comparison with Abermaw, the Inflation Rate for Aberdyfi is forecasted to be **2.08%**.
- 1.4 With the aforementioned inflation rates having been considered, the overall increase in the income target for Abermaw for 2012/13 is **£780** bringing the total income target to a modest **£46,860** for the year. Whilst there is a significant deficit in income for Abermaw harbour it is anticipated that the increase in mooring fees at a level slightly above inflation once again in 2012/13 will bridge the continuously increasing total when comparing income target with actual end of year income that is generated. Meeting with the income target is important especially given that there will be an expectation to remain within budget on expenditure.
- 1.5 With regard to Aberdyfi harbour and with the inflation rate being forecasted to be **12.08%**, the overall income target for Aberdyfi for 2012/13 will be **£40,700**.
- 1.6 Members will be aware that the income target at Abermaw and the income target at Aberdyfi harbour continuously under achieve the required target and this has been consistent for a number of years. As expected in such serious financial circumstances, continuous further measures and efficiency savings have been identified and discussed. Innovative 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.
- 1.7 The fees and charges relating to the registration of Powerboats and Personal Watercraft have also been increased for the next financial year. Launching fees remain static at £12.00 per launch for daily launching. A copy of the fees and charges for Launching and Powerboat Registration is appended.

1.8 The increase in the overall income target for the Maritime Unit for 2012/13 is **£94,800** which compares with an increased target of **£57,330** in 2011/12. This increases the overall income target of the Maritime Unit (excluding Country Parks) to **£2,467,550** in 2012/13 a significant target of which will be a challenge to achieve under such ever changing and fragile economic climate.

2. - Cyllidebau / Budgets

2.1 The financial position of Abermaw and Aberdyfi harbours as of the third quarter of the financial year up to the 31st December 2011 is appended for information. Members will note that the income target relating to the harbour of Abermaw for 2011/12 is **£46,080**, and that the total income generated at Abermaw to the end of December 2011 is **£32,602**. This is in comparison with having achieved a total of **£32,569** income for the same period last year.

2.2 As of the 31st December 2011, the shortfall in income for Abermaw harbour is **£13,478**. The shortfall for the same period last year was **£13,531** and with a shortfall of **£16,601 in 2009/10**. The income total to date is identical in comparison to last year and 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 Abermaw harbour will not reach its target. We forecast the overall expenditure at Abermaw to be in the region of **£15,000** above the budget and this total includes having reduced the staffing number for the winter period in an effort to meet with the budget target.

2.3 The total overall expenditure has taken the income target into consideration and given the predicted significant over expenditure additional savings will most certainly need to be identified from all budget headings. It is unacceptable for expenditure to be continuously higher than the allocated budget as any over expenditure has to be identified from within the overall Maritime and Country Park Unit budget.

2.4 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 Abermaw and Aberdyfi both of which demonstrate a requirement for additional financial support. It is emphasised that the over expenditure coupled with the 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.

2.5 In comparison, the income target for Aberdyfi during the same period is **£39,870**, and a total of **£30,983** has been reached leaving a deficit at Aberdyfi of **£8,887**. However, it is expected that there will be a saving of approximately **-£10,000** in the expenditure budget which will in turn demonstrate an overall under expenditure of approximately **-£2,000** in Aberdyfi at the end of the financial year. Taking into account the reduction in overall expenditure at Aberdyfi, the total over expenditure for both harbours will possibly reduce.

2.6 At the previous meeting Members expressed concern that the Maritime Unit was providing clients with the opportunity of berthing their vessel at Hafan Pwllheli during the winter months and that this action was reducing the number of vessels wintering at Abermaw. The total number of vessels taking advantage of this excellent opportunity in 2011 was as follows; Pwllheli Outer Harbour = 26. Aberdyfi = 0. Porthmadog = 4. Abermaw = 6.

3 Mordwyo / Navigation

- 3.1** All Aids to Navigation leading to the harbour of Abermaw have all remained on station during the initial part of the winter months. Trinity House will be re inspecting all Aids to Navigation during the summer of 2012. Following a request by members at the previous meeting it has been assured that the positions of the Aids to Navigation situated on the 'Bar' have been checked and that the current positions are correct.
- 3.2** It is essential that work to maintain all Aids to Navigation positioned in the navigable channel will have been identified and completed before the Easter Festival which is during the first weekend of April. The Maritime Officer Harbours will be presenting a verbal report to members as to the work that will be undertaken on the buoys during the spring.
- 3.3** Funding will need to be identified from within the existing revenue budget in order to meet the cost of maintaining Aids to Navigation which is a statutory duty. At present there are no Notices to Mariners in force for the harbour of Abermaw.
- 3.4** The channel leading towards the inner harbour at Abermaw is very stable and the repositioning of Aids to Navigation is minimal. The advertised positions of Aids to Navigation at Abermaw are as follows:-

Fairway Buoy	52° 42.72' N	004° 04.91' W	– L Fl. 10s
Bar Buoy	52° 42.56' N	004° 04.33' W	– Qk. Fl G
No 2 Can Buoy	52° 42.57' N	004° 04.14' W	– Fl R. 2s
Inner Can Buoy	52° 42.64' N	004° 03.94' W	– No Lantern
Perch Beacon	52° 71.62' N	004° 06.21' W	– Light to be established.
Breakwater	52° 71.65' N	004° 05.20' W	– Fl.R.5s
Sewer Outfall Buoy	52° 43.19' N	004° 05.35' W	– Fl Y.5s

- 3.4** The Perch Beacon has been replaced and is now on station. The beacon was installed on the 7th March 2012 by a local contractor. Trinity House authorised for the Aid to Navigation to be changed from a Port Mark to a South Cardinal. The lantern has not been fitted to date but it is expected that the beacon will display the appropriate navigation light and that the light will be established before Easter 2012. The cost of the new Perch Beacon was £2,247
- 3.5** In a response to concern by members, the Maritime Officer Harbours has confirmed that all Aids to Navigation that remain afloat throughout the year have been dressed with reflective tape. Even though the Navigation Buoys are fitted with a lantern, Members did previously request that additional measures be taken which would enable the mariner to locate the buoy if the lantern has extinguished.
- 3.6** In previous years the Maritime and Country Parks Unit has aimed to ensure that a Craft Exclusion Zone could be identified close to the shore. However, a significant number of buoys and anchors were lost each year. Furthermore, the Craft Exclusion Zone at Fairbourne was identified as being ineffective due to the significant distance that the buoys had to be positioned offshore. At high tide the buoys were at such a distance from the shore that their effect was very minimal.

- 3.7 Given that the Craft Exclusion Zone marker buoys have been identified as being ineffective over recent years, consideration is being given to the possibility of not positioning buoys in the area in 2012 on a trial basis. This will also be the situation on Abermaw beach. The area to the east of the Abermaw railway bridge will be marked in accordance with the plan previously approved by Members and there is a requirement for the area to be clearly identified before the end of April 2012.

4 - Staff – Staffing

- 4.1 The post of Harbour Assistant for Abermaw for the forthcoming season has previously been advertised and interviews for the post were held on the 16th March. The successful applicant will commence duties on the 2nd April, and the appointment will extend to the 30th September 2012. This post will remain subject to review, and a decision will be taken on an annual basis on the requirement to re establish a full time Harbour Assistant post at Abermaw. However, given the present financial situation this is unlikely.

Given the severe reduction in funding that is available to Local Authorities it is essential that the Maritime and Country Parks Unit clearly demonstrates that the post of Harbour Assistant at Abermaw and Aberdyfi are required throughout the year. A detailed breakdown of the work completed at Abermaw for the period October to December will be presented to Members by the Maritime Officer Harbours and the details provided will be available for scrutiny. Emphasis is placed on the need to demonstrate productivity and efficiency in undertaking work at the harbour during the winter period and without productivity and efficiency, it would not be prudent to re establish a permanent and full time post at Abermaw.

The post of Harbour Assistant for Aberdyfi has also been advertised and the successful applicant will also be employed from the 2nd April, and the appointment will extend to the 30th September 2012.

- 4.2 For the main part of the summer season, it is anticipated that three beach officers will be appointed to manage the Blue Flag Award beach at Abermaw and those appointed will commence duties in mid June. It is not anticipated that a beach officer will be appointed for Fairbourne in 2012.

5 – Gwobr Traeth – Beach Award

- 5.1 We are pleased to report to Members that the Maritime Unit has submitted a Blue Flag Beach Award application in respect of Abermaw beach in 2012. The bathing water quality in 2011 achieved the Guideline Standard and therefore the application can be submitted for the International Blue Flag Award.
- 5.2 Details of the bathing water test results for Abermaw in 2011 is appended. Members will also be able to compare the Bathing Water Quality at Abermaw to those at Aberdyfi and Fairbourne.
- 5.3 Members will be aware there is a significant change in the current Directive and the timetable for the revised Bathing Water Directive is as follows.
- **2012:** It is imperative that appropriate signs be in place at all Designated Bathing Water beaches by the beginning of the bathing season, i.e. the beginning of May. The Environment Agency will

commence monitoring Designated Beaches using the parameters of the Revised Directive. Grant funding has been secured for the signage requirements and the Unit has submitted the application for grant aid.

- **2014:** Final Bathing Water report is published using the standards of the current Bathing Waters Directive
- **2015:** First set of classifications using the new parameters for Bathing Waters will be published and such classification will be based on the data set that commences in 2012.
- **2016:** New classifications will appear on the signs using symbols that are being prepared by the EC

5.4 As previously reported to Members the new strict 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. There will be four classifications of Bathing Water under the revised directive these are; Excellent; Good; Sufficient; Poor.

6 - Materion Cyffredinol / General Issues

6.1 **Beach Concessions** - The Maritime Unit authorises for a number of annual concessions to operate on the beach at Abermaw during the summer season. The application to sell consumable goods from a static position on the promenade was declined. Support to decline the application to sell consumable goods was received from the Town Council. A new application has been submitted whereby the applicant is requesting authorisation to hire Deck Chairs on the beach. The Maritime Unit will support the application upon confirmation of support being received from the Town Council.

It is envisaged that a new application will be submitted for a concession to operate leisure activities and donkey rides on the beach. One of the main attractions at Abermaw is the Land Train that operates on the promenade between April and September and an application to operate the Land Train on the promenade in 2012 has been received and authorised.

6.2 **Motocross** – The increasingly popular Motor Cross Event was held on the main beach at Abermaw during the weekend of the 29th and 30th October 2011. The event is very popular and attracts a significant number of visitors to the area. The event will be held once again in 2012 and the dates have been confirmed as the 27th and 28th October 2012.

The majority of the area used for the Motocross event is outside of the Special Site of Scientific Interest but a relatively small area to seaward of Ynys Y Brawd is within the conservation area. It is compulsory for organisers to ensure that the course is outside of the conservation area. It is also compulsory that the organisers ensure that no damage is caused to the embryonic dunes that are situated close to the causeway. It is envisaged that the dune system, once established, will prevent wind blown sand from encroaching onto the causeway.

6.3 **Compound Area** – The area allocated for the storing of marine related equipment continues to give cause for concern. The area continues to be used for the disposal of unwanted household furniture. Staff from the Maritime Unit manage the site on a daily basis and have removed several tonnes of material from the compound at a significant cost in time and resource.

Members will be aware that those Licensed to use the compound are charged a fee. The total income generated for the use of the land in 2011/12 was £3,800. The additional income generated from the storage of vessels in the compound area was in the region of £1,500.

Given that managing the area is a significant drain on budget and staff time the maritime unit is of the opinion that it would be preferable and beneficial for the compound be placed on the list of assets that could be considered for disposal. Approval to dispose of the asset would require the approval of the Area Committee. The opinion of members will be sought at the meeting.

- 6.4 Tide Tables** – For a number of years the maritime Unit publish tide tables with Abermaw being the recognised Standard Port. The Tide Tables are offered for sale and a number of local businesses sell the tide tables to the public. The maritime unit does not produce tide tables for any other harbour under its jurisdiction although private boatyards and chandlers do publish tide tables and either provide such information free of charge to customers or offer the information for sale to the public.

The cost of obtaining the tidal information from the observatory is £210.00. The cost of printing the tide tables is 0.60 per unit. A total of 3,000 tide tables were printed in 2012 at a total cost of £1,800. Total cost of producing the tide table is therefore £2,010. The tide tables are on sale at each harbour office for the sum of £2.00 per copy. A discount is applied to shops that purchase in excess of 50 copies. The income derived from the sale of tide tables in 2010/11 was £3,192 with the cost of producing the tide tables being identical to the cost in 2012.

Given that the income derived from the sale of tide tables does not include any administrative costs etc and given that such information is available from a diverse range of sources consideration is being given to the possibility of outsourcing the publication of tide tables for future years.

- 6.5 Pontoon Development** – It is most encouraging to report to the Committee that the exiting project to position a visitor's pontoon on the quayside at Abermaw is making excellent progress. The project is the initiative of members of Meirionnydd Yacht Club who have been successful in achieving grant support from the Environment Agency's 'Splash' funding opportunity and also from the Snowdonia National Park's 'Cae' grant aid.

The project did encounter technical difficulties but such difficulties were overcome. The cost of the Marine License and the Planning Application was through financial support from the Gwynedd Council. The cost of the Marine License itself was £2,275 and the cost of the planning Application was £731.00. The Planning Application cost included the requirement to advertise the application in the local press.

It is envisaged that the main elements of the pontoon project will have been completed before the end of March.