

**Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee
that took place on 16 October 2014 at the Dragon Theatre, Barmouth**

PRESENT

Councillors John Wynn Jones, Gethin Glyn Williams (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. R. A. Williams, (BRIG-Barmouth Resort Improvement Group), Mr Llew Griffin (Merioneth Yacht Club), Mr Mark James (RNLI), Mrs Wendy Ponsford (Barmouth Harbour and Estuary Users Association).

Also in attendance: Cllr.David Richardson (Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee)
- Observer.

Officers

Mr Llŷr B. Jones	-	Senior Manager - Economy and Community
Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr Glyn Jones	-	Harbour Master
Mr Kris Hughes	-	Harbour Assistant
Mrs Glynda O'Brien	-	Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer
Mrs Mererid Watt	-	Translator

Apologies: Councillors Louise Hughes, Eryl Jones-Williams (Gwynedd Council), Cllr Lark Davies (Barmouth Town Council).

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Gethin Glyn Williams as Chair of this Committee for 2014-15.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams as Vice-chairman of this Committee for 2014-15.

3. **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and specifically Cllr. John Wynn Jones, Cabinet Member for the Economy, Gwynedd Council.

4. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

Councillor Gethin Williams and Mrs Wendy Ponsford declared a personal interest in relation to matters dealing with the Yacht Club, as they were Members of the Club.

5. **MINUTES**

Submitted: Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee held on 20 March.2014.

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

6. THE MARITIME OFFICER'S REPORT

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

(A) Harbour Consultative Committees – Terms of Reference

(i) It was explained that the Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer had corresponded with each of the organisations with an interest in Harbour activities, and in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference had requested that they noted the reasons and opportunities whereby they could contribute as an organisation to the work of the Consultative Committee, together with evidence of appropriate minutes of their Annual Meetings and a constitution as noted in the criteria. It was noted that some organisations had sent the relevant documentation and the remainder would be expected in due course.

(ii) As only 6 organisations had been listed on the Membership List and there was room for up to 7 members to represent the different interests of Harbour users, a Member suggested that the Three Peaks Committee should be invited as the seventh member from an eligible organisation.

(iii) In response to a query regarding a report to the Cabinet, the Senior Manager Economy and Community explained that the intention was to present an annual report to the Cabinet reviewing Harbour activities over the year with a link to the minutes. The Cabinet Member for the Economy added that he might not be able to attend every one of meetings of the four Harbour Committees, but he certainly received the minutes to each one.

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

(b) To request that the Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer sends a letter of invitation to the Three Peaks Committee to nominate a representative to serve on the Consultative Committee, subject to them qualifying with the appropriate criteria.

(B) Port Marine Safety Code

(i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officers reported that the Members of this Consultative Committee had received a copy of the Port Marine Safety Code, and as no observations had been received, he took it for granted that the contents was acceptable to Members.

Resolved: To accept and approve the Port Marine Safety Code.

(C) Barmouth Harbour Management Arrangements

(i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that informal discussions had taken place with the Chair of the Consultative Committee in order to find out how the Harbour could operate more effectively and how the area's residents could take ownership to run daily activities in the harbour.

(ii) The Chair added that the Town Council was proactive in the town and was anxious to establish a Harbour Trust in accordance with expectations and the type of procedures that could be considered. The Chairman had already presented observations on behalf of the Community to the Senior Manager Economy and Community. As a starting point, it was suggested that the

Maritime and Country Parks Officer investigates and provides a memorandum of understanding of the assets for the consideration of the stakeholders, in order that they can organise a suitable business plan.

(iii) A representative of the Harbour and Estuary Users Association noted that there was a consensus of opinion to proceed and it would be possible to do so as soon as possible subject to the Council receiving a business plan and it was important to receive information on the assets in terms of buildings, what areas can be managed, owned or leased. It was noted that it was important for any asset to be in a good and safe condition.

(iv) The Senior Manager Economy and Community stressed that there were two principles to be considered, namely:

- Accountability and local ownership
- Emphasis that the Harbour needed to be financially viable

and to this end, it was necessary to consider what already exists in Barmouth and that the budget was subsidised. It was further noted that transition to run the Harbour commercially was a matter for consideration. Naturally, legal advice would be required regarding the different means, namely:

- A Harbour Trust that would be an independent statutory body.
- A method in accordance with the Municipal Port Review
- Harbour Management Committee (it would be necessary for the duties to be the responsibilities of the full Council)

(v) The Cabinet Member added how important it was for any business plan to be underpinned and sustainable in the future. The Committee was reminded that the Council was facing challenging cuts and that it would not be possible to take any Harbour responsibilities back.

Resolved: (a) As a starting point, to request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer:

- (i) Investigate the possibility of organising a memorandum of the assets together with the legality of any proposal**
- (ii) Discusses with Mr Huw Davies, Engineer, the condition of the quay walls and any responsibilities that existed in accordance with Coastal Protection Legislation.**

(CH) Harbour Staff

- (i) It was reported that the employment period of Kris Hughes, Barmouth Harbour Assistant, had been extended up to the end of October and that he had accepted a full-time post as Dock Master for Holyhead Towing Company. A tribute was paid to him and he was thanked for his praiseworthy service over the last three years and best wishes were extended to him in his new career.
- (ii) A member noted that it was sad to lose industrious staff from Barmouth and he also took the opportunity to pay tribute to Glyn Jones, Harbour Master, for saving the life of an individual on the beach over the summer.

- (iii) Assistance would be received in accordance with the usual procedure from Aberdyfi and Porthmadog and a work programme would be circulated to Members in due course for November/December, January/March.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(D) Navigation and Moorings

- (i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that Trinity House in accordance with procedure had inspected the aids to navigation and on the whole they had reached the requirements. The importance that the aids to navigation were on station was noted.
- (ii) It was noted that the Harbour Master had removed some of the moorings from the water and examples of these were seen during the meeting and attention was drawn to their poor condition. They had to insist that moorings of acceptable quality were used to hold a boat as well as looking again at the arrangements, considering the movement of the sand.
- (iii) It was added that the Harbour Master should give the location for the boats in order to keep control and owners should be asked to complete and return relevant forms and the arrangements to implement them at once. In response to a query, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that if the owner of a mooring does not submit a mooring certificate then this could have an impact on insurance terms. It is trusted that there is collaboration between the contractors/users and an appeal was made for the Members to encourage users to conform to the relevant regulations. The only eligible moorings would be those with a certificate or boat on it.

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

(b) To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer sends a copy of the byelaws to the Members of the Consultative Committee and all users who operate in the Harbour.

(DD) Maritime Statistics

- (i) Members were referred to the statistics showing the number of boats in Barmouth and it was noted that the number had decreased and this was not a reflection of Harbour activities but was rather due to the situation of the economy.
- (ii) A comment was made that 54% of boat owners were local and this was heartening compared with Pwllheli Marina with only 17% local owners.
- (iii) It was noted that 140 moorings in Barmouth was not a fair reflection as so many boats could not be accommodated. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that this figure was historical and the Harbour Master would review the situation in the future. It would be an interesting investigation to find out the actual Harbour capacity with a request for a further report to the next Consultative Committee meeting.
- (iv) It was further suggested that if the power boats were moved to the Aberamffra area then there would be sufficient room for yachts. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that they had to be watchful regarding moving boats to Aberamffra and more research was required regarding site safety, closing gates, parking etc.

- (v) The Chairman suggested that it would be useful to send a questionnaire to customers who leave the Harbour, to find out the reasons why, and it would be a means for the Maritime Service to have a better understanding of the needs of users and to improve facilities in the future.

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

(b) To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer arranges further investigation into the number of moorings in Barmouth and the possibility of moving power boats to Aberamffra.

(E) Harbour Budgets

- (i) A budget spreadsheet was submitted to Members during the meeting and they were guided through the information and it was noted that the Harbour's income target for 2013-14 was £31,089.33 and in terms of expenditure there was a budget of £63,300 with an underspend of £12,393. It was noted that the balances for the last financial year reflected an over-investment in the Harbour.
- (ii) In terms of the current financial year to the end of September 2014-15 the total expenditure was £31,856 with an underspend of £12,459.03 in terms of income.
- (iii) Reference was made to the fees and charges for next year that entailed an increase of approximately 1%.

Resolved: To accept and note the budgets.

(F) Proprietor and Boatman Licences

- (i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer referred to documentation sent to Members under separate cover regarding the above and the officer was aware that there had been difficulties with the ferry operation. The Maritime Service had received one formal complaint during the year however the issue was resolved quickly. They would monitor the situation over the next season and if the relevant regulations are not adhered to there would be no option but for ferries to receive MGM 334 licences from the Coastguard.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(FF) Events

- (i) **Pontoon Use and Management** – It was reported by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer that the Service continues to undertake the maintenance of the pontoon and the service would ask the opinion of an engineer to design a new plan to link the fingers to the pontoon and it was envisaged that this would make things much better in the future.
- (ii) **Yacht Tender Racking System** – It was reported that a rack had been constructed by Harbour staff which was a much safer system and this had been welcomed by users and an apology was given for the short notice given to the users.

- (iii) In terms of the suitability of the racking system's colour, this should correspond to the colour of the Harbour furniture, and a representative of the Merioneth Yacht Club was asked to send information regarding the appropriate paint to the Maritime and Country Parks Officer for consideration.
- (iv) It was further noted that some identification of ownership was required be that a number with a link to the mooring.
- (v) **Winter Storm Damage** – it was reported that considerable work had been completed following the winter storms with grant funding from the Welsh Government to repair the gardens, viaduct and the promenade.
- (vi) **Beach Award** – it was noted that the bathing water results for Barmouth had met the requirements and the Blue Flag would be flying next year. Unfortunately, the red flag had been damaged and the Town Council was concerned that it was not flying. However, it was proposed to re-locate the red flag to the end of the seawall, Ynys y Brawd and Penrhyn Point. It was proposed to submit a report to the next Consultative Committee meeting by the RNLI stating that they favour signs rather than red flags.
- (vii) **Concessions** – it was noted that these would be reviewed during the winter months.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

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

- (a) What traffic calming/control measures that could be put in place to improve safety for pedestrians using the harbour and for those accessing the quays and slips with watercraft and equipment?

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer confirmed that he would contact Dafydd Williams, Senior Transportation Manager regarding the above.

- (b) Concerns were expressed by users regarding the structural integrity of the quay and the quay wall. The view was expressed that there were substantial 'voids' within the structure, partly as a result of 'hydraulic mining' of fines during rough weather.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer confirmed that he would consult Mr Huw Davies, Senior Engineer, regarding this issue.

- (c) It was asked if the Council would consider 'ploughing' the harbour near to the quay to mobilise sediment which would be taken away on the ebb tide. This would allow the profile near to the quay wall to be flattened in order that boats do not tip away from the wall when they settle at low water. A local user had offered to undertake this using his own equipment providing that his fuel (diesel) costs are met.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that it was necessary to ensure that any user had the appropriate licences especially as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited Barmouth regularly.

- (d) Consider making provision of a 'foot bath' and foot scrapers to allow users, such as operators of personal watercraft, to wash off sand before using harbour facilities or accessing buildings.

It was noted that there were six freshwater taps in the Harbour and it was suggested that the Harbour users' representative should have a further word with the Harbour Master to discuss what would be possible to do to solve this problem, and the possibility of erecting a sign to direct people to the taps.

- (e) Concern regarding the condition of the plinth at the bottom of the ferry steps.

It was noted that the above would receive attention over the Winter.

- (f) **Visitor berths/berthing on pontoon.**

It was noted that the pontoon had been funded for visitors and not for the benefit of local people to leave boats there for weeks. The main purpose of the pontoon was for boats to berth over a short period and it was the responsibility of harbour Service officers to ensure that this occurred.

- (g) **Slime on the main slipway.**

It was noted that the slipway had been cleaned and was totally clean. In response to a query regarding weekly cleaning, it was noted that weekly reports were presented with each of the slipways being cleaned as required. Members were encouraged to contact the Harbour Master if there was any concerns in the future.

Resolved: (i) To accept and note the above.

(ii) To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer deals with points (a) and (b) above.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved It was noted that the next meeting of this Consultative Committee would take place on Thursday, 19 March 2015.

CHAIRMAN