

# ***Pwyllgor Ymgynghorol Harbwr Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee***

*12 Mawrth / March 2008*

## ***Adroddiad yr Uned Morwrol – Maritime Unit Report***

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

- 1.1** The fees and charges relating to the next financial year, 008/09, has been forwarded to the Statutory Officers and the Portfolio Leader of the Life Long Learning Service for approval.
- 1.2** A copy of the fees and charges relating to the harbour of Porthmadog is appended, and Members will note that it is recommended that the charges for those residing permanently within Gwynedd be increased by 3%, whilst the increase for those residing outside of Gwynedd be increased by 4%.
- 1.3** The inflation for the harbours of Gwynedd for 2008/09 is forecast to be 3.97%. This equates to a required increase of £11,270 in our income target for 2008/09. Members will be aware that the income target at Porthmadog reaches its target. Appropriate measures will need to be taken in order to ensure that the overall expenditure, and income targets achieve their targets in 2008/09.
- 1.4** The fees and charges relating to the launching and registration of Powerboats and Personal Watercraft have been increased by an average of 7%. Whilst some fees remain unchanged, there is a small increase in postal registration charges and the annual launching permit fee is also increased. A copy of the recommended fees and charges is appended. The fees and charges for entry on to the beach at Morfa Bychan is also appended, and members will note that the entrance fee of £3.00 will apply throughout the summer season
- 1.5** The overall increase in the income target for the Maritime Unit for 2008/09 is £62,040, increasing the overall income target of the Maritime Unit to £2,070,880.

### **2 – Ferry Licence**

- 2.1** Whilst the waters of Porthmadog Harbour is included within the register of Categorized Waters, the Maritime Unit has not received an application in respect of a 'Proprietors Licences' for vessels operating within the Categorized Waters of Porthmadog harbour (Category C waters) for a number of years. By virtue of the Public Health Acts Amendments Act, the licence can commence from seven days before Easter to the end of October. The embarkation and disembarkation points should be identified on the Licence, and the vessel will only be authorised to carry a maximum of twelve persons (defined as over one year of age.)
- 2.2** In 2008, Easter is relatively early, and technically, the license to operate a ferry within the Categorized Water can be issued to commence from the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2008, provided that the vessel has been surveyed both ashore and afloat by a certified Yacht Surveyor. In defining a 'Yacht Surveyor', the individual shall be a member of the YDSA.

- 2.3 Even though no Licence has been issued at Porthmadog, the Maritime Unit is required to ensure that applications from prospective operators is given due consideration. In order to ensure continuity and consistency within all Categorised Waters in Gwynedd, Members are requested to provide comment on the requirements listed in 3.4 to 3.7. The list is not extensive or exhaustive. Additional vessel inspection forms and the equipment list for proprietors is appended. This will ensure that similar requirements apply for all Categorised Waters within Gwynedd.
- 2.4 It is essential that equipment recommended as minimal by the Council, is available on board the vessel at all times. The list and recommendations is derived from the Inland Small Passenger Boat Code.
- 2.5 In order to be a Master of a vessel duly authorised to carry passengers within the Categorised Waters, the Master of the vessel is required to be duly Licensed by the Council. Such Licences are issued by virtue of the Public Health Acts Amendments Act, and is issued subject to the applicant being suitably qualified or/and experienced.
- 2.6 Prior to being issued with a Licence, the applicant is required to apply to the issuing Authority for a Licence, and a short proficiency test afloat will be undertaken by the Harbourmaster or other suitably qualified and experienced officer from within the Maritime Unit. Only upon successful completion of the short test afloat will the License be issued.
- 2.7 The Proprietors Licence and the Boatman's Licence shall specify that the vessel, if used for the carrying of passengers for reward, shall only be used during the hours of daylight and in good weather. To operate during the hours of darkness, a separate application and assessment of the Boatman undertaken afloat shall be required.

#### 4 - Cyllidebau / Budgets

- 4.1 The financial position of Porthmadog harbour as of the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008 is appended. Members will note that the income target relating to the harbour of Porthmadog for 2007/08 is £75,020, and that the total income generated to the end of January 2008 has reached £76,159. It is not anticipated that a significant amount of income can be generated during February and March, and it is therefore anticipated that the income target will be slightly higher than the target.
- 4.2 As members will note The expenditure to date has exceeded the budget on a number of headings and this is causing concern as additional expenditure is anticipated during February and March. The financial report to the end of December 2007 is also appended. The budget heading of NT 53 12 01 (£11,740) was established in order to complete other minor improvements within the harbour such as the recently completed diesel facility and extension to the slipway. The budget was included within the harbour budget and was a vierment from a general budget within the Maritime Unit which can be used within other harbours and on beaches.
- 4.3 2008/09 will be a challenging year for the Maritime Unit and especially for the harbour of Porthmadog, Pwllheli Aberdyfi and Abermaw. It is emphasised that the over expenditure and the deficit in income at some harbours will need to be overcome, especially given the current financial climate facing the Authority.

## **5 Mordwyo / Navigation**

- 5.1 Most Aids to Navigation leading to the harbour of Porthmadog have remained on station during the initial part of the winter months. The No 5 Starboard buoy is not presently on station, and came adrift during December. The buoy was recovered from Harlech Point and has been maintained in preparation for repositioning on station as soon as practically possible.
- 5.2 The Fairway Buoy has been maintained and will be replaced during the Spring. A new lantern has been installed at a cost of £1,000. The temporary winter seasonal markers will be brought ashore after the Easter festival, and the summer navigational buoys will be replaced. All navigational lanterns remained on station throughout the winter months. This is on a trial basis, and the situation will be subject to review in September 2008.
- 5.3 At the request of the RNLI and Members of this Committee, two guiding marker buoys have been positioned in the channel that leads to Portmeirion. Two other markers have been prepared and are ready for deployment. The channel has been changing constantly during the winter months and it has proved to be a difficult exercise in maintaining the 'navigable' waterway.
- 5.4 All harbour moorings have been inspected and maintained in order to ensure that vessels can be secure in the harbour during the forthcoming sailing season. A detailed report on the condition of the moorings and on the work that was undertaken on each mooring will be available from the Harbourmaster during the meeting.

The total cost of mooring chain and shackles that is to be used for maintaining moorings and Aids to navigation within the harbour of Porthmadog during the spring of 2008 is £2,800.

## **6 - Staff – Staffing**

- 6.1 Given that a number of officers from within the Maritime Unit are on secondment in other areas of the service, it is possible that the present position regarding the post of Harbourmaster at Porthmadog will remain for the summer months. Further details and clarity of the situation will be reported to Members at the meeting.

## **7 - Cwch Rheoli Harbwr – Harbour Patrol Boat**

- 7.1 The present Harbour Patrol vessel has been servicing the harbour of Porthmadog since 1998 and has been beneficial in ensuring that activities within the estuary is reasonably controlled. Of recent, a new 'Powercat' model of boat has been purchased and should be available at the harbour before the first bank Holiday in May. The overall cost of ensuring that the new vessel is operational will be in the region of £21,000.

## **8 - Materion Cyffredinol – General Issues**

- 8.1 The yacht tender racking system that was installed during the early part of 2007 has proved to be of benefit to the mariner. The security fencing will be extended during the spring in order to ensure that the area is adequately protected. The cost for installing the extension to the security fence will be approximately £1,800.

- 8.2 During January 2008, it was reported that a significant amount of narcotics were washed ashore at Tywyn. It is understood that the parcel washed ashore contained Heroin, and the street value was in the region of 1.6 million. The general public have been advised to be vigilant when walking on the beaches and to report any suspicious activity to the Police Authority immediately.
- 8.3 During the winter months, a number of incidents were reported whereby motorised vehicles, namely 'Quad bikes' were observed operating within the sand dune area. The dune area is a Special Site of Scientific Interest and causing damage to such a site is an offence.

Staff from the Maritime Unit have been on additional patrols on the beach during a number of weekends in order to improve on management of the situation. The Maritime Unit will be contacting the Countryside Council for Wales in order to request additional assistance with the management of the dune area during weekends especially during the winter months. In order to improve upon the management of the beach area, one additional member of staff will be employed from the 19<sup>th</sup> of March onwards on a seasonal basis. Two 'casual' members of staff will also be available as required.

- 8.4 On the 15<sup>th</sup> of February, a member of the public reported that a turtle had been sighted on the beach at Morfa Bychan. The report was investigated by the Maritime Officer Beaches and it was identified that the amphibian was a Loggerheads Turtle. The turtle was collected by the Marine Stranding Officer and was taken to London Zoo for post mortem.
- 8.5 The Maritime Unit has recently received an application from the Welsh Highland Railway Construction Ltd requesting authorisation that would permit for the company to construct a suspended walkway alongside the existing roadway. Authorisation for the extension is required as the walkway will be suspended above waters that is within the jurisdiction of Porthmadog harbour.

From the proposal presented by the company, it is not foreseen that the project will have a detrimental effect on the management of the harbour and will not obstruct, or be a hazard to navigation. A full copy of the drawings will be available for inspection at the meeting.

## **9 - Is ddeddfau Harbwr – Harbour By laws**

- 9.1 Whilst the draft harbour By Laws have been approved by the Harbour Committee, the by laws have not been confirmed by the Welsh Assembly Government. We have been informed that the Legal Unit of Cyngor Gwynedd are currently in discussion on this matter with officers from the Welsh Assembly Government and that it is hoped that the by laws will be confirmed in the very near future.