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**PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE,  
7 MARCH, 2012**

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**PRESENT:**

Councillor Ieuan Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors Selwyn Griffiths and Trevor Roberts (Gwynedd Council), along with Messrs Gwyn Davies (Porthmadog Town Council), Robert Owen (Commercial Interests), Dr John Morris (Leisure Interests Representative) and Peter Lunt Williams (RNLI).

**ALSO PRESENT:** Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), David O'Neill (Harbour Master) and Ioan Hughes (Committee Officer).

1. **APOLOGIES:** Councillors Dyfed Edwards (Chairman, Gwynedd Council Board), Alwyn Gruffydd (Gwynedd Council), David Eastwood (Harbour Interests) and David McLean (Landowners' Interests).

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

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

3. **MINUTES**

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 5 October 2011, as a true record.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

In response to an enquiry, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted the following:

- That further enquiries were being undertaken regarding the work of clearing material that continued to be in the river following the work of constructing the wall near Llyn Bach. The officer had discussed the issue with the Council's Consultancy Unit and he emphasised that priority would be given to ensure no loss of moorings.
- That discussions were ongoing regarding the annual payments to the Crown Estates and the proposal to charge for each mooring was a cause for concern because individual customers would ultimately shoulder any additional cost.
- That discussions were ongoing regarding a right of way by boats to Pen Cei but the Officer and members were of the opinion that this would not be practical because of the number of moorings that would have to be dropped in the navigation channel.

5. **REPORT OF THE MARITIME UNIT**

a) The report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer was submitted and the following matters were addressed individually:

- Fees and Charges
- Budgets
- Navigation/Moorings
- Staff
- Improvements

### **Fees and Charges**

b) The Officer confirmed that the fees and charges for the 2012/13 financial year had been agreed by the Portfolio Leader and clients had been informed of all the amendments.

c) The Officer guided members through the report and elaborated on the following main points:

- The increase in inflation for Porthmadog Harbour in 2012/13 was likely to be 3.25%;
- The fees and charges showed an increase of 3.5% for every boat that moored under the Porthmadog Harbour authority in 2012/13;
- This would mean an increase of 3.5% per meter as far as harbour tolls were in question along with an increase of 3.5% for a mooring fee;
- It was intended to consider the possibility of not charging inflation on the harbour fees;
- The increase in fees and charges was a subject of concern because it would affect the users ultimately;
- There was a need to ensure that any increase would not have a detrimental effect on the harbour with boat owners deciding not to take moorings in any harbour in Gwynedd;
- As a consequence of an increase of £2,450, the target income for Porthmadog Harbour in 2012/13 would be £77,910;
- Launching fees would remain fixed at £12 per boat for daily launching.

ch) The Officer emphasised that measures and further efficiency savings would have to be identified and discussed with staff if the income decreased and failed to achieve the target for 2012/13. He therefore noted the need to consider innovative steps to ensure that the general expenditure and income budgets achieved their targets without compromising standards and safety.

d) The officer explained further that the increase in the general target income of the Maritime Unit for 2012/13 was £97,590. This established the income target for the Maritime Unit in 2012/13, without including rural parks, as £2,467,550. He emphasised that the target was extremely challenging in the current fragile economic climate.

dd) The Officer noted further that the use made of the pontoons was heartening and that the work achieved in Porthmadog had inspired similar work in Barmouth. He emphasised that much of the success resulted from voluntary efforts and this was appreciated.

### **Budgets**

a) The target income for Porthmadog Harbour for 2011/12 was £75,460 and the total income generated up to the end of December 2011 was £70,227. This was in comparison to the income created in the same period last year of £71,281. As a substantial income was not expected during February and March, it was unlikely that the target income achieved would reach the required target in this financial year.

The Officer added that it was expected that the status of the general budget of Porthmadog Harbour on 31 March 2010 would show a surplus of £11,000. This was as a result of savings in the maintenance budget of moorings and the officer noted that such savings were crucial in Porthmadog to ensure that the general deficit of the Maritime and Country Parks Unit was within the target.

In terms of the Beaches, it was anticipated that the total would be approximately £10,000 higher than the target income.

He emphasised that a very challenging year faced the Maritime Unit, especially the harbours that repeatedly failed to achieve their income and expenditure targets. He referred to the general decrease in the budget that was available for Gwynedd Council and the savings that needed to be identified and the officer emphasised that this underlined the need to overcome the overspend and income deficit.

### **Navigation/Moorings**

a) The Officer reported on the latest situation regarding the moorings and navigation aids and he noted the following:

- Most of the Navigation Aids leading to Porthmadog harbour had remained on station despite very strong winds during the autumn and beginning of the winter;
- It was proposed to install permanent lights on all the navigation aids;
- A total of 12 Notice to Mariners had been submitted for Porthmadog in 2012 thus far;
- Previous investment meant that the ground chain would not have to be inspected before the beginning of the 2012 sailing season;
- All the moorings on the foreshore at Borth y Gest would be inspected by the Harbour Master;
- As in 2011, none of the moorings on this foreshore would have to be moved before the beginning of the sailing season;
- It was intended to raise old mooring blocks that appeared in Borth y Gest.

b) Specific reference was made to the possibility of not retaining Number 1 buoy as part of the system of navigation aids in Porthmadog. The Officer noted that this buoy, along with number 2 buoy, were in safe waters. Therefore, it was suggested that number 1 buoy could be removed from the system.

c) In response, a member noted that this depended on how the change would affect the distance between buoys. The member stated that he had no objection to the idea if it was possible to see from one buoy to another in foggy weather.

ch) Another member suggested that the navigation buoy could be moved to the current position of buoy Number 1. It was explained that permission would have to be received from Trinity House for this along with the consideration of the distance between the navigation buoy from the bar.

**RESOLVED that officers should consider the observations made by members and take the appropriate steps regarding the positions and the reduction in the number of buoys.**

### **Staff**

a) The Officer explained that the post of Harbour Assistant for the harbours of Porthmadog and Pwllheli would not be advertised for next season as efficiency savings had to be identified within the budget. It was also a requirement to identify work priorities.

The work rota of the Harbour Maritime Officer and the Beaches Maritime Officer was to be adapted to ensure that sufficient support was available for the harbours of Porthmadog and Pwllheli.

b) Beach officers would be appointed to control the beach at Morfa Bychan and in general these posts would commence on 1 April in order to ensure sufficient supervision on the beach during the Easter holiday period. There would be additional resources on the beach during the busiest periods of the summer season.

The Officer emphasised that it would be difficult to accept the cuts and the main priority would be taking care of the safety of users and the public.

c) The Officer thanked the staff for their commitment and his observations were endorsed by a member who referred to the conscientious work undertaken by the Harbour Master and all the staff and the way in which they responded promptly to every case and the way in which they dealt with people.

### **Improvements**

a) The Officer reported on the following improvements in Porthmadog during the latter part of 2011 and the early part of 2012.

- Re-surfacing the side of the quay;
- Re-surfacing the pavement in the car park;
- Rack for tender boats;
- Maintenance of land and amenity facility at Borth y Gest

Arrangements had also been made for a scheme worth £200,000 to develop a new toilet in Morfa Bychan. A grant of 42% had been received from the Convergence Fund towards the development. The current building would be demolished in September and the work would be completed by 1 April 2013.

The decision to extend the area prohibiting vehicles from going onto the dunes in Morfa Bychan was welcomed. The Officer referred to the success of work that had already been achieved and a grant of £5,000 had been received from the Countryside Council for Wales towards the latest scheme.

b) Reference was made to the possibility of commencing a long-term scheme that would include placing stakes and installing pontoons on them in Porthmadog

c) The Officer added that consideration was being given to charging for using the car park to the rear of the harbour office. Any income resulting from this would contribute towards the Porthmadog harbour income target.

It was confirmed that the Harbour Master would collect the money and it would not involve any cost because a machine was available.

### **RESOLVED:**

**a) To agree to commence the scheme on 1 April 2012 and to charge £4 per day.**

**b) To consider the possibility of allowing free parking for short periods for those wishing to pay boat registration charges.**

### **Ferry**

In reply to an enquiry, the Officer noted that an individual intended to run a ferry service from Porthmadog during the holiday season.

### **Thank you**

The Chairman noted that he would not be running for election in May and he thanked the officers and members for their co-operation throughout a period of 13 years.

In response, the Officer thanked the chairman for his support throughout the years and wished him well in the future.