

PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 5/3/14

PRESENT: Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd (Chairman)
Councillor Selwyn Griffiths (Vice-chairman)

Councillors: Jason Humphreys (Gwynedd Council), along with Messrs Gwyn Davies (Porthmadog Town Council), David Eastwood (Harbour Interests Representative), Dr John Jones-Morris (Leisure Interests Representative) and Robert Owen (Commercial Interests).

ALSO PRESENT: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), David O'Neill (Harbour Master) and Bethan Adams (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 9 October 2013, as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

A member referred to the suggestion made by a member regarding changes to the Town Council representation on the Committee. In accordance with a legal opinion sought by Porthmadog Town Council on the matter, he noted that the Porthmadog Harbour Review Order 1998 would have to be amended in order to change the co-opted membership.

In response to the observation, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that when a formal response would be received by the Town Council, including the legal opinion they had obtained, that the Council would respond accordingly. It was emphasised that the Town Council should forward any observation to the Council without delay.

4. MARITIME SERVICE REPORT

a) Terms of Reference

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that there had been a change in the matters being discussed by the Committee, with direct matters relating to the harbour, such as navigation, safety and the budget being considered.

In response to a member's observation in relation to holding a discussion in the context of other assets surrounding the coast, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would be happy to attend meetings that involved other assets, and if matters arose, the Chairman could grant permission for them to be discussed. He added that because the Harbour Master was responsible for beaches also, that it was difficult to differentiate, but in principle, matters concerning navigation, safety and the budget would be considered by the Committee.

b) Port Marine Safety Code

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that as observations had not been received on the document, a copy of the final Port Marine Safety Code would be shared

with the organisations. He informed the members that an annual standing item would be included on the Committee's agenda to consider the Code.

He noted that the service's website was now live on the internet and that the code would be included on it.

c) Navigation and Moorings

Despite the inclement weather, it was reported that not much damage had been caused in Porthmadog Harbour and that buoys numbers 11 and 12 had moved from their position. He noted that he was grateful to staff for their dedication and their flexibility in terms of working hours during the period of inclement weather.

It was reported that the dunes were in a healthy condition on Morfa Bychan beach as they had been protected by the posts installed on the beach. A footbridge in this area had moved but it was hoped that it would be re-installed before the Easter holidays.

It was noted that it was intended to force boats to launch from the launch site located near the main entrance of Morfa Bychan beach rather than Cwt Powdwr, in order to ensure the safety of all users.

It was noted that the work of inspecting moorings would be undertaken during September and October, rather than January and February, as the weather would be more favourable at that time.

Gratitude was expressed to the Lifeboat for its assistance last weekend when a boat had capsized in the harbour.

It was reported that the service was looking to establish a pyrotechnics storage and disposal site behind the Harbour Office because of the success of the scheme of receiving and disposing pyrotechnics from individuals. It was noted that there would be an investment of almost £3,000 in the scheme that would ensure the safety of users.

ch) Statistics

As a result of corresponding with individuals, it was reported that the service had received 103 requests for moorings thus far. It was noted that the numbers were disappointing, therefore, the service would contact once again with individuals in the coming weeks. It was noted that the situation would be the same in the other harbours because of the economic situation.

In response to an observation regarding a business plan for the harbour, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that plans were in place for the harbour, such as the plan with the Sailing Club of locating additional pontoons and the permission that had been obtained to locate moorings along the harbour wall.

It was noted that the dire financial situation meant that the Council had to discover different ways of operating with less resources.

A member noted that members could consider ideas of how to improve the harbour. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the services welcomed members' ideas and that they would be considered.

d) Budgets

It was reported that the income received was relatively favourable and that it was anticipated that the budget would be £12,000 more than the requirement.

(dd) 2014/15 Fees

It was reported that the 2014/15 fees compared with the 2013/14 fees had increased in line with inflation and that a 2% increase in the income target was anticipated. It was noted that there had been no change in the registration or launch fees.

e) Improvements

The improvements were elaborated upon, including an investment in the Morfa Bychan toilets.

It was reported that Morfa Bychan beach had secured the Blue Flag beach award in the past and that the Council would seek to obtain a contribution towards the cost of applying for the award from others, e.g. Porthmadog Town Council.

f) Water quality

It was reported that the quality of Morfa Bychan bathing waters had been given an 'Excellent' standard. It was noted that the quality of the water was important in order to protect users and staff.

(ff) Harbour Staff

It was reported that interviews for Seasonal Assistant posts would be held on Friday and that the appointments would be for the period running from 7 April to 30 September.

It was noted that the Harbours Assistant Maritime Officer was retiring at the end of the month. It was noted that there had been a delay in advertising the post because it was possible that the money would be required to bridge the deficit, with existing staff shouldering the burden.

g) Porthmadog Harbour Channel Plan

A member noted that 'Cwt Powdwr', rather than 'White House' should be noted on the plan as this was the recognised and historical name for this area. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the plan would be amended to this end.

5. Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 8 October, 2014.

The meeting commenced at 5.30pm and concluded at 6.40pm.