

PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 16.10.07

Present: Councillor Michael Parry (Chairman)

Councillors Michael Sol Owen, W. Roy Owen, M.L. Vaughan, Alan Williams (Gwynedd Council), Councillor E.J.Hughes (Pwllheli Town Council), W. Williams (Yacht Haven), John Morris (Pwllheli Maritime Traders Association), R.J. Wright (Lifeboat Association), Stephen Tudor (Pwllheli Yacht Club), David Peters and David Dewsbury (Hafan Pwllheli Berth Holders Association), David Hughes (Pwllheli Chamber of Trade), Dr. J.L. Jones-Morris (Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee), Councillor B. Bracewell (Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee), Councillor Trevor Roberts (Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee).

Also Present: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Ken Fitzpatrick (Assistant Maritime Officer - Harbours), Neil Garton Jones (Chief Engineer – Construction and Engineering), Huw Davies (Group Engineer) and Gwyn Parry Williams (Committee Officer).

Apologies: Councillor R.P. Hughes (Gwynedd Council) and Dafydd Phillips (Pwllheli Harbourmaster).

1. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Michael Parry as Chairman of the Committee for the year 2007/08.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor E.J. Hughes as Vice-chairman of the Committee for the year 2007/08.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor W.Roy Owen declared that he would not participate in the discussion on the item involving the Management of the Pwllheli Harbour and Hafan, or the voting thereof, as he was linked with the matter as Portfolio Leader.

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 27 March 2007 as a true record.

5. MARITIME DEPARTMENT

Submitted – the report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer on the activities of Pwllheli Harbour, with particular reference to the following:

(i) Navigation

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that all navigation aids in Pwllheli were inspected by an officer from Trinity House on 10 September 2007. Maintenance was needed to a number of the navigation aids as they were in an unacceptable condition. A number of lanterns on the key navigation aids had extinguished and there was a need to purchase new lanterns immediately. The present condition of the navigation aids was not acceptable and staff from the Maritime Unit would need to ensure that they inspect them regularly. Unfortunately, a

number of pleasure boats still attempted to navigate over the sea wall, but fortunately, no damage had been done to the boats.

It was inevitable that harbour staff would prepare and implement a maintenance programme in the harbour, including a navigation aids maintenance programme over the winter months. It would be necessary to ensure that the water depth tables, and the main slipways, would be included within the work programme, and that the work would be completed before Christmas.

The staff of the Coastal Protection Unit completed a hydrographical survey of the marina basin, and of the channel. It appeared that there was sufficient water depth in the channel at this time, although the width of the channel had reduced slightly in the area opposite the Harbourmaster's office, and that the depth of water also reduced as the channel reached open sea. Although the entrance to the inner harbour had reduced slightly since the last dredging operation, this did not cause a restriction in this area. It would be necessary to ensure that the Harbourmaster re-assessed the effectiveness of the temporary buoys and relocated them to the appropriate area according to need.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

ii) Harbour Management

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that Yacht Haven Management Ltd had been managing Hafan Pwllheli on behalf of the Council over a number of years. In November 2006, the Development Scrutiny Committee was given a presentation by 'Bic Innovations' on the study completed, looking at the possible options to ensure that the Council received the maximum benefits for Pwllheli harbour in the future. Following the presentation, and in accordance with the recommendations of 'Bic Innovations', the Development Scrutiny Committee decided to internalise the management of Hafan Pwllheli for the short term, and that the Council considered further options for the future. On 18 September, 2007, a further report was presented to the Development Scrutiny Committee, and the Committee confirmed that the management of Hafan Pwllheli should be internalised, bringing to an end the contract between the Council and 'Yacht Haven Management Ltd'. The report was presented to the Dwyfor Area Committee (Planning) on 15 October when it was decided to recommend to the Council Board that the management of the Hafan should be internalised from April 2008, combining it with the management of the harbour. The report would also be presented to the Council Board on 23 October 2007.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

iii) Hafan Pwllheli Local Discount

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that it was decided in the last committee that the officers would explore the possibilities regarding giving a discount on fees and payments for mooring boats on the pontoon at Hafan Pwllheli for those customers who lived permanently and full time in Gwynedd. A reduction would be offered in fees on some moorings for pleasure boats in the outer harbour. There were no discounts on fees and payments for boats that were moored on the piles. Full time fishermen received a reduction in mooring fees, and received a reduction on the costs of using the fishermen's compound. All the advantages and disadvantages of introducing a reduction in boat mooring fees and payments at Hafan Pwllheli were considered, and it was decided that a reduction would not be beneficial. It would be very difficult to prove who exactly lived permanently and full time in Gwynedd, and offering a reduction in fees would reduce income. The Maritime Unit would continue to recommend a reduction in the mooring fees of some specific moorings in the outer harbour.

A member suggested that a discount could be considered for customers who lived for ten years or more in Gwynedd, but a discount should not be permitted for those with second homes.

RESOLVED that the members should send details of any suggestions to the officer.

iv) Events

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer provided details of the events held in Pwllheli during 2007, and drew attention to the pinnacle, namely the “Cadets” class international competition.

In relation to the “Wakestock Festival” a member drew attention to the fact that the road near the harbour was closed on the Friday as well as the Saturday. In addition, reference was made to the possibility of holding this festival earlier in the season. The officer stated that a meeting would be held with the event organisers during the following week and it was intended to discuss these matters with them.

The Pwllheli Yacht Club representative reported that they employed an events officer for a period. He referred to the fact that the new pontoon had been an asset in the harbour.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

v) Harbour Statistics

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer drew the committee’s attention to the statistics appended to the report noting that 1049 personal water crafts had registered with the Council in 2007 compared with 1208 in 2006. It was noted that the number of personal water crafts and power boats registered in Pwllheli Harbour had reduced substantially during 2007 compared with 2006 but that there was a substantial increase in the number who had registered with the Maritime office by using the postal service. In 2005, a scheme was introduced which ensured that every power boat or personal water craft had registered with the Council before they were permitted to launch from any harbour slipway, or from any beach in Gwynedd, except for Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn. 185 power boats had registered in the Pwllheli harbour and 102 at Abersoch beach this year. The registration fee for power boats and personal water crafts was £14 by post, or £20 on the beach, or from the harbour office. The launching fee is £12 a day or £124 for the season.

He also noted that there were 164 boats moored in the outer harbour this year, which was rather fewer than the number in 2005 and also 2006. This caused concern, especially considering the high number of customers that were on the Hafan waiting list. There were no vacant moorings in the Hafan, and there were 412 boats in the pontoon moorings. In the outer harbour, 32% of the boats were power boats, and 68% were sailing crafts. In the Hafan, 48% of the boats were power boats, and 52% were sailing crafts. There were 455 boats on the waiting list for a mooring in the marina. In accordance with Council regulations, every individual on the waiting list had paid £50 to ensure that their application was valid.

A member referred to the fact that some of the moorings in the outer harbour had dried out and that consideration should be given to charging different fees on the boats in this area. In response, the officer stated that a detailed review of the moorings would be undertaken over the winter, as well as reviewing the fees, and a report would be submitted to the Council Board in December 2007.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

vi) Analysis of Customer Questionnaire

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported on the results of the Pwllheli harbour customer questionnaire 2006/07. The Maritime Unit would be distributing the report on the questionnaire results to all the harbour customers in January 2008. The report would be attached to the letter that was being circulated to customers inviting them to submit an application for a mooring in

the harbour in 2008/09. It was not foreseen that a new questionnaire would be circulated with the correspondence in 2008/09.

A member drew attention to parking problems around the lifeboat building and to the possibility of erecting signs to prevent parking there. The officer agreed to arrange a meeting with the member on the site to discuss the matter.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

(vii) Budgets

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer provided details to the committee on the Pwllheli harbour budget for the financial year 2006/07 and also the expenditure finance and income targets of all the harbours for the year 2007/08. He emphasised that there was a need to be very vigilant to ensure that the service did not commit monies beyond the budget for the current financial year. The Harbourmaster was preparing a detailed work programme for autumn and winter, in order to identify expenditure priorities.

The income target in the outer harbour for the financial year 2006/07 had been reached, and the harbour was receiving income that would be higher than the target. The income target for 2007/08 was £113,540 and £122,709 was collected as income up to now. In the Hafan, this year's income target was £1,418,000 and the income collected up to now was £1,291,866. It was foreseen that the budgets would reach their expenditure and income targets.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

(viii) Crown Estate

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that since the Hafan in Pwllheli was developed, the Council had been paying a fee to the Crown. The current fee was 10%, based on the total gross income of the Hafan. The current lease would be reviewed after 21 December 2007, but it was not foreseen at the present time that there was a way to reduce the lease costs for the future. The new contract would begin on 1 April 2008 and stay in force for five years before the next review.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

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

a) Price rises 2008

A member asked for discretion to be given by the Council when considering the proposed payments in the marina and harbour for 2008.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that the Maritime Unit was reviewing all payments in the marina and harbour for 2008 and a report would be submitted to the Council Board in December 2007.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

b) Dredging

A member asked for details regarding the latest situation on the dredging of the marina basin and the channel to the sea.

The Chief Engineer – Construction and Engineering stated that it was intended to go out to tender during the autumn to appoint a contractor to undertake the dredging work. It was originally intended for a contractor to prepare a strategy, but whilst working on the documents and list of specifications during the summer, it became apparent that it would be better for the Council to enlist independent specialists to prepare a dredging strategy rather than put the strategy in the hands of a contractor. Following recent developments with the sailing centre, research must be undertaken into dredging more of the harbour. He was of the opinion that it would, therefore, be worth linking this work by looking at the whole harbour and the channel. It was, therefore, intended to link both schemes in order to have a strategy for the whole harbour should the sailing development proceed. It was important to have one strategy for the whole harbour, but in the meantime it was intended to solve the problems in relation to the levels in the channel. It was intended to undertake dredging work on the channel in November 2007, and also before the sailing season started next year. In addition, it was intended for the specialist report and the strategy to be in place during the next few months, and go out to tender early in the New Year.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

c) Internalisation of marina management

In relation to the proposed change in the management of the marina, a member drew attention to two reports prepared by consultants, namely one noting that the Council should not run the marina and the other noting that the Council should run it. He also claimed that he was given to understand that a third report was being prepared. He was of the opinion that the management would be improved if an external company would run the marina as it would create less income under the Council's management.

Another member was disappointed that the Council intended to do away with the professional services of Lymington Yacht Haven Ltd and were going to take over the responsibility of running the marina themselves.

In response to the aforementioned points, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that a third report was not being prepared on the management of the marina and that an initial report referring to the fact that the Council should not manage the Hafan was not commissioned. He referred to the following advantages of internalising the management of the Hafan and combining it with the management of the harbour –

- a) Produce small savings immediately
- b) Produce further savings in due course following the rationalisation of the staffing structure
- c) Allow management of the budget of the Hafan
- ch) The existing staff of the Hafan would be managing and maintaining the Hafan and that no change in the quality of the facilities was expected.

(See also minute 5(ii) above).

RESOLVED to accept the report.

ch) Letter from the British Marine Federation

Submitted, for information, a letter received from the British Marine Federation following a discussion in the last meeting in relation to charging higher fees for power boats in the marina.

RESOLVED to note the content of the letter.

d) Renaming the consultative committee to have a more relevant name

The Chairman expressed disappointment that the matter of the harbour management did not come before this committee for discussion, despite it being a consultative committee.

dd) Does the Council have a Business Plan which has been considered and drawn up appropriately?

A member asked whether the Council had a Business Plan which had been considered and drawn up appropriately.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that a business plan was being prepared before any business commenced and, therefore, the Council had a Business Plan for the Hafan. An expenditure and income budget existed in the Hafan and the service there was of a high standard.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

e) Will the Council be reconsidering extending the facilities of the marina in the future?

In light of the fact that the true value of the marina to the local economy lay in the business revenue, which was worth millions of pounds, created by the spending power of the occupiers of moorings and their guests, rather than the comparatively small amount of profit contributed to the coffers of the Council Tax, would the Council reconsider extending the facilities of the marina in the future?

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that a company of specialists was looking into the proposed development and their observations on the number of moorings etc. would possibly be included in the report prepared by them. Consideration would be given to the number of boats coming into the harbour and the number of visitors who would come there in order to compare them with other harbours. In addition, the economic benefit for the town of Pwllheli would be looked at.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would be held on 25 March 2008.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and ended at 8.00pm.