
**PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
12-10-10**

Present: Councillor Peter Read (Chairman)

Councillors Robert J. Wright, Ioan Thomas (Gwynedd Council), Councillor Michael Sol Owen (Pwllheli Town Council), David Dewsbury and Brian Edmunds, (Pwllheli Marina Berth holders Association), Glynne Roberts (Llyn Fishermen Association), John Morris (Marine Traders Association)

Also present: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Wil Williams, (Manager, Hafan Pwllheli), Huw Davies, (Chief Engineer), Llyr B. Jones (Senior Manager – Economy and Community), Ken Fitzpatrick (Harbour Assistant Maritime Officer) and Gwyn Parry Williams (Committee Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Sion Roberts (Gwynedd Council), Owie Roberts (Llyn Fishermen Association) and Pwllheli Harbour Master

1. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Peter Read as Chairman of the Committee for 2010/11.

2. VICE-CHAIR

Resolved to elect Mr David Dewsbury as Vice-chairman of the Committee for 2010/11.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Consultative Committee held on 23 March 2010, as a true record.

5. REPORT OF THE MARITIME UNIT

Submitted - the report of the Maritime and Rural Parks Officer, providing details of individual matters:

Navigation and Dredging

The officer reported that all navigation aids in the harbour had been inspected by a Trinity House officer, and the inspector had reported that the majority of them were in good condition, and that this was very praiseworthy. A detailed administrative inspection was also conducted on all navigation aids in Gwynedd by Trinity House.

It was noted that the sewer outfall pipe at Hafan y Môr, which belonged to Welsh Water, and was located near the beach at Marian y De, was in the correct location by now, but that the lantern had not been placed on the navigation aid. Trinity House has made every effort to contact Welsh Water regarding the issue, and it was expected for the utilities company to address this need during the winter months.

It was essential for the harbour staff to prepare and implement the harbour maintenance programme for the months of October to December, which would include a comprehensive programme for the maintenance of navigation aids. Whilst these aids were placed in the most favourable locations for the mariner when the marina was designed, their present positions required review. Gaining access to the navigation aids on the training arm proved to be challenging work, and it was essential that the risk posed to staff maintaining the aids was minimised. Despite this, it was vital that the aids were seen to before the beginning of the sailing season in 2011.

The Fairway Buoy had been replaced, and the original buoy had been brought ashore for maintenance. The two Port Buoys, which were presently located near the harbour entrance, required complete overhaul, and there was a need to consider relocating these two important navigation aids in due course. The natural deposition of beach material near the entrance to the harbour had narrowed the width of the channel. Given the potential difficulties with relocating the port navigation aids, there was a need to give further consideration to placing lanterns on the temporary markers that indicated the width of the channel at the harbour entrance.

Following the relatively successful dredging operation that was undertaken in the harbour nearly every month since January 2010, a hydrographic survey of the nearby area was recently undertaken which covered the whole of the marina basin and the marina approach channel. It appeared from the survey that the depth of the water in the channel and the marina basin complied, at present, with the depths in the original marina design, and that the dredging operation had achieved its aim. It was expected for the dredging campaign to have been completed by the end of March 2010, but due to technical and operational complications that arose, the dredging work had continued until July 2010.

A member enquired when it would be necessary for the harbour to be dredged again. In response, the officer notified the committee that this would be dependent on securing the necessary funding, but that dredging would have to be undertaken should vast complications arise in the harbour.

In response to a question from a member, the officer notified the committee that the water flowed through the piles and perhaps it would be necessary for the future to move the piles to the other side so as to ensure that the navigation channel was kept clean.

Events

The officer gave details of national and international sailing events held in Pwllheli during 2010.

Pwllheli Sailing Club were thanked for their commitment and co-operation during the events.

He noted that Pwllheli beach and Hafan Pwllheli had been awarded the International Blue Flag award in 2010, and that Hafan Pwllheli had also been awarded the "Five Anchors" award. Glandon Beach had been awarded the Green Coast award, and the application for a Rural Beach Award for Glandon Beach had also been successful. Should the quality of the bathing water meet the required standard this season, the Maritime Unit would submit a Beach Award application for 2011 to Keep Wales Tidy in November.

Given the relatively heavy rainfall experienced during the summer, it was possible that some beaches in Gwynedd might not meet the requirements in terms of bathing water quality.

Harbour Statistics

The officer referred to a number of appendices attached to the report, and asked the members for their opinion regarding what they wished to include in these appendices from now on.

The officer reported in full on the number of vessels that had moored in Hafan Pwllheli and the outer harbour, as well as personal watercrafts and powerboats that had been registered with the Council.

It was reported that 140 pleasure boats had moored in the outer harbour this year compared with 151 in 2009. This indicated that 77% of the moorings had been occupied, namely a reduction of 1%. Of these moorings, 52% of them had been occupied by local residents who lived in Gwynedd on a permanent basis, and 48% by people who lived outside the county. In the marina, 99% of the moorings had been occupied, with the two remaining moorings reserved for visiting vessels. The number of individuals registered on the marina waiting list was currently 195.

He noted that many boats, during the summer months, had attempted to launch on the beaches at Abersoch and Morfa Bychan using forged registration permits. The Police had been informed and approximately twenty forged permits had been confiscated. There was no evidence to date as to who was responsible for producing these permits.

In response to an observation by a member regarding some poor facilities in the harbour, the officer noted that further consideration would be given to the matter.

In response to an observation by another member regarding the waiting list, the officer notified the committee that each individual registered on the list had had to pay £50, and consideration had been given to increasing the fee to £100. He noted that it was positive to see several boats on the waiting list, and the Manager of Hafan was trying to convince everyone who made enquiries to register on the waiting list. He emphasised the importance of not having a vacant mooring in the harbour, so as to maximise the income to the Council. A member referred to the possibility of having a two-tier waiting list, namely one for those who had made enquiries, and one for those people whom the Manager had contacted once or twice.

Budgets

Submitted - for information, the final budget reports of Pwllheli Harbour and Hafan Pwllheli for the 2009/10 financial year. Also submitted were the expenditure budget and income targets for all the harbours and beaches for the 2010/11 financial year.

He stressed the need to be cautious during the coming winter months in order to ensure that the service did not commit more money than what was available in the budget. A detailed maintenance programme was provided for the autumn in order to identify expenditure priorities in the harbour.

He noted that the income target for the outer harbour was £118, 280 for the current financial year. The income thus far from the outer harbour had reached £98,510, namely £19,770 lower than the target. It was not anticipated that there would be a substantial addition to the income between October 2010 and March 2011.

He also noted that the income target for Hafan Pwllheli for the current financial year was £1,562,630 and that the income thus far had reached a total of £1, 445,393, namely a shortfall of £177,236 by the end of August 2010. Despite the present shortfall, it was anticipated that the income target would be achieved at Hafan.

In response to a question from a member regarding having further details on the budgets, the officer promised to address the issue further.

Fees and Charges for 2011/12

It was reported that, in the coming weeks, the Maritime and Country Parks Unit would be reviewing the current fees, and would be undertaking research into the market in order to recommend fees and charges for harbours, marinas and beaches for the next financial year. It was anticipated that the report will be submitted to the Statutory Officers and the Portfolio Leader for approval. As a result of the uncertainty and vulnerable condition of the economy in general, it was not anticipated that the majority of mooring fees and charges at Hafan Pwllheli and the Outer Harbour of Pwllheli would be increased in excess of inflation in the 2011/12 financial year. Consideration would be given to amending the current system of charging for winter berthing and amending the charges that apply to electricity, also during the winter. The officer stressed the need for careful consideration, as any increase in VAT from January 2011 onwards would increase the cost to the client but would also increase net revenue to the Council. As there were some substantial changes involving some moorings in the outer harbour, the Maritime Unit would once again need to consider reducing some fees as the water depth under the keel was reducing.

Moorings Maintenance

It was reported that, during the winter months, the work of inspecting and maintaining harbour moorings would be coordinated in preparation for 2011. The Maritime Unit would be inspecting moorings in the drier areas of the harbour. All other wet moorings within the jurisdiction of Pwllheli harbour would be inspected and maintained by the appointed contractor, and it was expected for work to commence in January 2011. Suitably qualified contractors were invited to tender for the work. It was noted that the cost of inspecting and maintaining moorings in the outer harbour was £1,850.

Severe Gale of July 2010

The officer noted that the harbours and beaches of Gwynedd had been struck by a severe gale on the 15th and 16th of July 2010. Wind speeds of up to 85 miles per hour had been recorded at Aberdaron during the early hours of the 16th of July, and it was estimated that wind speeds in the inner harbour of Porthmadog had reached Beaufort force 10. Only minor damage was sustained at Pwllheli, but there had been considerable damage at Porthmadog harbour.

Harbour Committee Meetings

The officer reported on a request submitted by Aberdyfi Community Council for Gwynedd Council to consider holding one additional Harbour Committee meeting either during the summer months, or at the end of December/early January, which would include representatives of all four Harbour Committees.

Members were reminded that representatives from the other Harbour Committees were already co-opted members of each of the Harbour Committees, and that this initiative had been introduced by the Maritime and Country Parks Unit in order to ensure that information relating to each harbour was being shared between the Harbour Committees. He noted that the Maritime and Country Parks Unit was of the opinion that the current system functioned in accordance with the Municipal Ports Review and enabled Members to be updated and to contribute and comment on the relevant harbour's Port Marine Safety Code.

The officer further noted that the request was being considered by the Harbour Committees of Porthmadog and Barmouth, and that Aberdyfi Harbour Committee would be considering it the following week. Porthmadog Harbour Committee members had been of the opinion that an additional meeting should not be held, whilst members of Barmouth Harbour Committee had been in favour of holding an additional meeting.

The officer noted the intention to look at the constitution of the Committee Harbours of Pwllheli, Barmouth and Aberdyfi over the coming months. Consideration would also be given to the recommendations made by the harbour committees being fed into the relevant committee within the Council.

RESOLVED to refuse the request by Aberdyfi Community Council to hold an additional meeting of the Harbour Committee.

RESOLVED to accept the report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer.

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

Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association

a) Electricity Charges for Hafan Pwllheli

A member referred to the fact that a number of the Association's members were being charged unfairly for electricity at Hafan Pwllheli, as the charges were based on the length of the vessel rather than the use made of electricity. He noted that the fees were increasing annually to correspond with the mooring fees. He was of the opinion that those with small boats were paying more for electricity than what they were using.

RESOLVED that the relevant officers consider the matter further.

b) The budgets of Hafan and Pwllheli Harbour

A member stressed that a dependent budget should be secured for the Hafan and Pwllheli Harbour. The officer noted that it would be possible to increase the income charges, but that this would be difficult without increasing the expenditure costs. It was intended to discuss every possibility further and to discuss the matter further with the Finance Department.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

c) Navigation Aids near the harbour entrance

A member referred to the fact that one of the buoys near the harbour entrance needed to be relocated, as the navigation aid was not placed in a location suitable for guiding mariners into the harbour. The officer promised to address this.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Pwllheli Harbour Consultative Committee was to be held on 29 March 2011.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.45pm.

CHAIRMAN