

***Pwyllgor Ymgynghorol Harbwr  
Pwllheli  
Harbour Consultative Committee***

***12 Hydref - October 2010***

***Maritime and Country Parks Unit Report***

***1 - Navigation and Dredging***

**1.1** All Aids to navigation in Pwllheli harbour were inspected by the Trinity House officer on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2010 and the inspector reported that the majority of the aids to navigation were in a favourable condition and that this was very praiseworthy. A detailed administrative audit of all Aids to Navigation in Gwynedd was also undertaken by Trinity House on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

Unfortunately, the Hafan y Môr sewer outfall pipe belonging to Dwr Cymru/Wales Water which is located adjacent to the beach at Marian y De remains off station and requires replacing. Trinity House has made every effort to contact Dwr Cymru/Wales Water regarding the matter and we hope that the utilities company will attend to this requirement during the winter months. The navigational aid is a useful marker for vessels on passage between Abersoch and Pwllheli.

**1.2** It is essential that harbour staff prepare and action the harbour maintenance programme for the months of October to December which will include a comprehensive programme for the maintenance of the navigation aids. There remains a requirement for the Maritime Unit to maintain all aids that had been located on the training arm, and despite the fact that this had been programmed for action since 2008 the work has yet to be completed. Whilst the aids to navigation were located in the most favourable positions for the mariner when the marina was designed, the present position of the navigation aids requires review. Gaining access to the aids on the training arm is proving to be challenging and it is essential that the risk posed to staff maintaining the aids is minimised.

**1.2** The Fairway Buoy was replaced on the 10<sup>th</sup> July and the original buoy has been brought ashore for maintenance. The Port mark, FIR.2.5s and Port mark Q.R which are presently positioned near to the harbour entrance require complete overhaul and consideration needs to be given to re positioning these important Aid to Navigation in due course. The natural deposition of beach material close to the harbour entrance has narrowed the width of the channel. Whilst periodic dredging by land machinery has been undertaken at the entrance, the Aids to Navigation remain a fair distance from the preferred position as it is not envisaged (or practical) for the width of the channel to be dredged to the edge of the current position of both the aforementioned the Aids to Navigation.

**1.3** Given the difficulties that could be experienced with re locating the aforementioned fixed Port Aids to Navigation, further consideration has to be given to the fixing of lanterns to the temporary markers that indicate the width of the channel at the harbour entrance.

**1.4** Following the relatively successful, albeit longer than anticipated dredging operation that was undertaken in the harbour throughout most of the months since January 2010, a hydrographic survey of the nearby area was recently undertaken and the survey covered the whole of the marina basin and the marina approach channel. It appears from the hydrographic survey that the depth of water in the channel and the marina basin does, at present, comply with the original marina design depths and that the dredging operation achieved its objective.

- 1.5 Members will be aware that the dredging campaign was due to have been completed before the end of March 2010. Unfortunately, due to technical and operational complications that arose, the dredging campaign continued until July. Members will recall that the contract to dredge the marina basin and the harbour approach channel was awarded to 'Keating's Ltd' who were experienced in maintenance dredging work and the contract was supervised by 'Mouchelle Ltd'.
- 1.6 The main dredging works was undertaken in two dredging operations with the first phase having been undertaken using a 'Damen Suction Dredger' attached to 20 ton long reach excavator positioned up on a floating Barge. For the second operation, the 'Versi Dredger' and the 'Damen Suction Dredger' worked together and this combination proved to be successful during the initial stages of the campaign. A draft copy of the hydrographic survey will be available for inspection at the meeting.

### 3 – Events

- 3.1 A number of prestigious sailing events were once again held in Pwllheli during 2010 and the committee and members of the Pwllheli Sailing Club were very active throughout the season and we are all very grateful for the commitment, eagerness and co-operation of the volunteers and officers who ensured that the events were successful and memorable. To date, it is estimated that the total number of participants sailing days is 4,450 which will have been of significant benefit to the local economy.
- 3.2 There were many highlights during the summer, and a number of prestigious National and International events were held in Pwllheli. The national competition for the *Toppers* class event, the '420' World Championship Qualifier and the 'UK Fin' National class, were all held and all events were an astounding success. In 2011 one of the largest youth dinghy event in the UK, namely the National 'Optimist' class event will be held during August and over 500 'Optimist' dinghies are expected to participate. Given that this is a youth event, the number of visitors to the area will be significant as the event brings families from all over the UK and Europe to the area. The aforementioned in only one of many events that will be held in Pwllheli during 2011.
- 3.3 Pwllheli beach and Hafan Pwllheli was awarded with the prestigious International Blue Flag award in 2010, with Hafan Pwllheli also being awarded with the prestigious "Five Anchors" award. Glandon beach was awarded with the Green Coast award and the application for a Rural Beach Award for Glandon was also successful.

Should bathing water quality meet with the required standard this season, the Maritime Unit will submit a Beach Award application relative to 2011 to Keep Wales Tidy in November.

Given the relatively heavy rainfall experienced during the summer, is possible that some beaches in Gwynedd might not achieve the water quality requirements. Initial water quality results indicate that it is possible that the bathing water quality of some beaches might not meet the required standard. However, the sampling period has yet to be concluded and the Environment Agency will be confirming Bathing Water Quality results towards the end of the year.

The popular 'Wakestock' event was held in the inner harbour and on Abersoch main beach between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2010. The weather was very favourable with thousands of visitors viewing the event from the North Quay. The increasingly popular Llyn Land and Seafood Festival was also a huge success and was held at Penrhyn Glandon from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

### 4 – Harbour Statistics

- 4.1 As will be noted from the table in the appendix, a total of **965** Personal Watercraft registered with Gwynedd Council in 2010. This compares with **892** for the same period in 2009, an increase of **73** in 2010. A total of **1389** Powerboats were registered with Cyngor Gwynedd with the majority of vessels, a total of **714**, registering through direct correspondence with the Maritime Office.

Whilst the management of powered vessel has improved, there continues to be a minority of users that are intent on non compliance with the regulations.

4.2 It is noted that the number of Personal Watercraft and Powerboats registered at the Harbour office in Pwllheli and on the beach at Abersoch in 2010 was once again comparable with the total number registered in **2009**. As noted in the table, **160** Powerboats and **63** Personal Watercraft registered their permit with Pwllheli harbour, with **217** powerboats and **124** Personal Watercraft registering on the beaches of Abersoch, Warren and Machroes. The registration fee for powerboats and Personal Watercrafts is identical to the previous year with no increase to take account of annual inflation. The registration permit fees remained at **£15.00** by postal application or alternatively, the applicant could register directly at the beach for an increased fee of **£20.00**. The launching fee remains at **£12.00** a day or **£130.00** for the season. Given the VAT increases in 2011, it is anticipated that the fees will have to be increased although this will not affect the net income to Gwynedd Council.

4.3 It is noted from the table in the appendix that **140** pleasure boats moored in the harbour this year and this is in comparison with **151** in 2009. This indicates that **77%** of the moorings were occupied a **1%** decrease. Of these moorings that were occupied, **52%** of the moorings were occupied by local residents who reside on a permanent basis in Gwynedd, and **48%** were occupied by persons who live out-of-county. In the marina, **99%** of the berths were occupied with the remaining two berths being reserved for visiting vessels. The number of individuals registered on the marina waiting list is currently **195**.

4.4 During the summer months, a number of craft were attempting to launch on the beaches at Abersoch and also Morfa Bychan using forged Registration Permits. Whilst the registration permits were good quality forgeries, staff at Morfa Bychan identified differences between those issued by Cyngor Gwynedd in comparison with the forged permits and the vigilance of maritime staff is commendable. The Police Authority were informed and Officers assisted harbour staff by inspecting other vessels in the vicinity. Approximately twenty forged permits were confiscated.

## **5** **Budgets**

5.1 Appended, for Members' information, is the budget report for Pwllheli Harbour and Hafan Pwllheli for the **2009/10** financial year. Also appended are the expenditure finance and income targets for all the harbours and beaches for the **2010/11** financial year.

5.2 Due to the very unfavourable weather that was experienced during the main summer month of August this year, it is very likely that the Maritime Unit's income headings will not reach the income target during the current financial year. There will be a need to exercise extreme caution during the coming months in order to ensure that the service does not commit money beyond the budget. The Harbourmaster and the Maritime Officer Harbours will be providing a detailed maintenance programme for the autumn in order to identify expenditure priorities in Pwllheli harbour.

5.3 There are concerns regarding the income target of Pwllheli harbour this year and Members will note in the appendices that the overall income target for the current financial year is **£118,280**. The Pwllheli harbour income thus far has reached **£98,510** namely **£19,770** lower than the target. It is not anticipated that there will be a substantial addition to the income between October and March 2011.

5.4 Members will note in the appendices that the overall income target for Hafan Pwllheli for the current financial year is **£1,562,630**. The income thus far has achieved the total of **£1,45,393** a shortfall of **£117,236** to the end of August 2010. Despite the present shortfall, it is anticipated that the income target will be achieved at Hafan Pwllheli.

## **5.5 Fees and Charges for 2011/12**

In the coming weeks, the Maritime and Country Parks Unit will be reviewing the current fees and charges, and will be undertaking research into the market in order to recommend fees and charges for harbours, marinas and beaches for the next financial year. It is anticipated that the report will be presented 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 is not anticipated that the majority of mooring fees and charges at Hafan Pwllheli and the Outer Harbour of Pwllheli will be increase in excess of inflation in the 2011/12 financial year. Consideration will be given to amending the present system of charging for winter berthing and the charges that apply for electricity during the winter period. However, careful consideration will need to be given as any increase in VAT as from January 2011 will increase the cost to the client whilst not increasing net revenue to the Council.

As there is a substantial change involving some moorings in the outer harbour, the Maritime Unit will once again need to consider reducing some fees as the water depth under the keel is reducing. It is emphasised that natural siltation in this area was expected and that the siltation is not due to the lack of dredging.

## **6.0 Mooring Maintenance**

- 6.1** During the winter months, the Harbourmaster and the Maritime Officer Harbours, will co ordinate the work of inspecting and maintaining harbour moorings in preparation for 2011. The inspection of the moorings in the drying areas of the harbour will be undertaken by the Maritime Unit.
- 6.2** All other wet moorings within the jurisdiction of Pwllheli harbour will be inspected and maintained by the appointed contractor and it is expected that the work will commence in January 2011. Suitably qualified contractors will once again be invited to tender for the work. The cost of inspecting and maintaining moorings for the outer harbour in 2010 was £1,850. Gwynedd Council has made a substantial investment in chain maintenance and replacement in the past five years, and it is not anticipated that a substantial investment will be required in 2010/11.
- 6.3** A detailed copy of the mooring service record report will be distributed to Members of the committee at the meeting. Members will note the improved quality and standard of the inspection report that was provided by the appointed contractor in 2009/10.

## **7.0 Severe Gale of July2010**

- 7.1** During the night and early morning of Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> and Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2010, the harbours and beaches of Gwynedd were affected by a severe gale. Wind speeds of 85 miles per hour were recorded at Aberdaron during the early hours of the 16<sup>th</sup> of July and it is estimated that wind speeds in the inner harbour of Porthmadog at one point reached beaufort Force 10 with a similar wind strength having been experienced in Pwllheli. This was an exceptional gale, and one that had not been forecasted although a strong wind warning was in force.
- 7.2** Whilst there was only very minor damage sustained at Pwllheli, Maritime Unit staff were called to Porthmadog at midnight by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Staff were on scene before 01.00 together with the Criccieth Lifeboat crew and members of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.
- 7.3** On arrival at the harbour, it was noticed that a large power vessel had come adrift from its mooring that was situated further to seaward and the vessel was in danger of being driven onto the road bridge. The vessel was secured to a temporary mooring and fortunately the mooring held fast until the gale had subsided when the vessel was secured to her permanent mooring the following morning. By 03.00 the gale had subsided all vessels that had come adrift were made safe.

7.4 Maritime Unit staff returned to the harbour at 08.00 and work commenced immediately to re secure a number of vessels to their mooring. Significant damage had been caused to a number of vessels. In surveying the situation, it became clear that the mooring strops had come adrift on either the bow or stern of a number of vessels. The mooring equipment from the mooring riser to the anchors were undamaged demonstrating the effectiveness of the investment committed by Cyngor Gwynedd to maintain the moorings in recent years.

#### **8.0 Harbour Committee Meetings**

8.1 A request has been submitted to Cyngor Gwynedd by Aberdyfi Community Council requesting that Gwynedd Council considers introducing one additional Harbour Committee meeting to the calendar of all Council committee meetings that are already scheduled. Aberdyfi Community Council is requesting that the additional harbour committee meeting be a joint meeting of representatives of all Harbour Committees and would be convened at a mid way point between the existing Committee meetings either during the summer, or at the end of December/early January.

8.2 Members are reminded that representatives from other Harbour Committees are already co opted on to each of the Harbour Committees and that this initiative was 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. The representatives from other Harbour Committees are invited to attend with the intention that information to be filtered directly to those Harbour Committees which they represent.

8.3 The views of Members as to the proposal by Aberdyfi Community Council to establish a joint meeting of all Harbour Committees in addition to the existing half yearly Harbour Committee meetings is requested. The Maritime and Country Parks Unit is of the opinion that the present system functions in accordance with the Municipal Ports Review and allows for Members to be updated and to be able to contribute and comment on the relevant harbour's Port Marine Safety Code.