
PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 31/03/15

Present: Councillor Michael Sol Owen (Chair);
Councillor Peter Read (Vice-chair)

Councillor Robert J. Wright (Gwynedd Council); along with David Dewsbury (Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association), Clive Moore (RNLI), W. A. Partington (Marine Traders Association) and Stephen Tudor (Pwllheli Sailing Club).

Also in attendance: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Llŷr B. Jones (Senior Manager – Economy and Community), Wil Williams (Pwllheli Harbour Manager) and Bethan Adams (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Andrew Picken (Pwllheli Chamber of Trade) and Councillor Mici Plwm (Pwllheli Town Council).

1. WELCOME

The committee welcomed Clive Moore who was attending his first meeting of the Consultative Committee on behalf of the RNLI.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Consultative Committee meeting held on 28 October, 2014 as a true record.

4. MARITIME SERVICE REPORT

(a) Port Marine Safety Code

It was noted that the Code had been circulated to the members and no observations had been received between the previous meeting and this meeting.

In response to a member's question regarding the procedure for raising a concern under the Port Marine Safety Code, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that any concerns could be referred to the Maritime Service or the Harbour Manager. He explained that the service would investigate the matter unless it was related to an accident, where they would report to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB). He emphasised the need for members to make contact when the concern became evident.

A member noted that a timeframe should be set for responding to concerns in relation to the Code. Concern regarding the quality of the red diesel provided at the Marina had been highlighted at the previous meeting, and an inadequate response had been received.

In response to the above comments, the Senior Manager – Economy and Community noted that the Service had analysed the situation and had concluded that the quality of the red diesel was acceptable, but the Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association disagreed with this. It was acknowledged that there may have been a lack of communication with regard to the issue, and a meeting would be held tomorrow to discuss the matter.

(b) Harbour Consultative Committees

It was reported that steps had been taken to confirm the membership of the Consultative Committee. It was noted that it was necessary to receive the minutes of the last annual meetings of these organisations together with their constitutions. It was explained that it was important to receive the minutes to ensure that the information provided in the Committee was passed on by the organisation's representative.

Concern was expressed regarding the attendance of the representative for the Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association at the meetings. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer was asked to contact the representative.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the members ensure that the minutes of the last annual meeting of their organisation and its constitution are sent to the Member Support and Scrutiny Officer;**
- (ii) that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer contacts the representative of the Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association regarding his attendance.**

(c) Dredging Pwllheli Harbour and the Dredging Strategy

It was reported that 10,500m² of sand had been removed from the Harbour entrance, and a hydrographic survey had been conducted before and after the work, with another survey to be undertaken in April. He noted that the Coastal Protection Unit had arrangements in place to move the sand to the Carreg y Defaid beach. Overall, the dredging work had been successful.

Following a workshop that had been held with Arup Associates in relation to a new Dredging Strategy for Pwllheli, it was noted that there had been a delay in completing the draft document because the company had been in discussions with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The discussions had highlighted that:

- they were required to undertake an assessment of impact under the Habitat Regulations which meant that the scope of the work had been extended;
- statutory rights under a Marine Consent were required.

It was noted that a copy of the draft document had been sent to the members and that observations/corrections by the members would be appreciated in order to enhance the quality of the document.

A member suggested that a meeting should be held with the Committee members to discuss the draft document.

A member noted that a clear Dredging Strategy was essential to the future of the Marina and the Harbour, and they should proceed to do the work.

In response to a member's observation that there was no reference in the document to the Inner Harbour, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the strategy addressed the needs of the Harbour basin, the entrance, the Academy and the Navigation Channel. The member added that the document should address the Inner Harbour even if no work was to be undertaken there.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the members send observations on the Draft Dredging Strategy to the Senior Manager – Economy and Community by 24 April 2015;**
- (ii) to hold a meeting with the members of the Consultative Committee the following week.**

(ch) The Sailing Academy

A representative from Pwllheli Sailing Club gave an update on the development of the Sailing Academy. He reported that the All Wales Boat Show would be held in Plas Heli from 8 - 10 May 2015. He noted that the building work was on schedule to be completed by 11 July 2015, when an event would be held.

(d) Navigation and Moorings

It was reported that the navigation aids were in their correct positions and that the beach zone markers would be in place by Whitsun.

It was noted that it was necessary to complete work on the general moorings on the front and rear chains in the Outer Harbour where small boats were kept and it was intended to invest around £10,000 in the autumn to bring these moorings up to standard.

(dd) Maritime Statistics

It was reported that a higher number of application forms for a permit had been received this year compared with last year, and it was hoped that more would be received.

A member noted that statistics regarding the berths in the Marina and the Harbour showed that the numbers were down 18% compared with last year. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the processes for 2015 had not been completed yet and he was confident that the same level as last year would be reached. He added that the market was not healthy in general and that an effort had been made during the winter to raise income by inviting boats from other harbours to Pwllheli.

It was noted that consideration should be given to offering bargains in order to increase numbers at the Marina and the Harbour.

A member suggested that one way of increasing numbers was to take advantage of the new market of green tourism in Ireland and attract vessels back to Pwllheli, he noted that he was also of the view that it was very realistic that vessels would also be repaired in Pwllheli.

In response to a member's question regarding the old lifting equipment, the Harbour Manager noted that it had been sold and would be taken away in the next fortnight.

(e) Budgets

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer expanded on the budget up to the end of February 2015.

A member noted his wish for a percentage of the profit made by the Marina at the end of the financial year to be reinvested in the Marina.

In response to a member's observation that the Crown Lease amount was too much, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that there had been discussions in the past regarding the payment and that the situation had improved as the payment was now based on the number of vessels.

In response to observations by members regarding the format of the budgetary information, it was noted that the information would be summarised from now on. A member added that they should consider including a column which contained information about the previous year.

(f) Fees in 2015/16

It was reported that the fees for 2015/16 had increased with inflation and attention was drawn to comparative information from other harbours.

In response to a member's observation with regard to charging a fee for processing credit cards, it was noted that there was no charge at present, but it would be a matter to consider.

A member drew attention to the fact that the comparative information was based on fees per metre rather than the banding procedure which was used in Pwllheli. He noted that Pwllheli fees on average were higher than many harbours.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Pwllheli Harbour Manager had carried out detailed work when collecting the information but he would check the information.

In response to a member's question, it was explained that £13.26 was charged per visiting vessel in the Marina for a maximum of four hours because individuals used facilities, car parks and the pontoon. It was added that an effort was made to help local businesses by not charging 10% on leisure boat fees on commercial vessel owners from Gwynedd. The owners of commercial vessels from outside Gwynedd still paid a 10% surcharge to keep a vessel in the Marina.

The Committee members' opinions were sought regarding the current arrangement of differentiating in terms of charging a higher fee on a charter vessel than a fishing vessel. The members were generally happy with the current arrangement.

RESOLVED to continue with the arrangement.

(ff) Fuel Costs

The Committee's opinion was sought in respect of the current arrangement of charging commercial users an additional 2p on the price of buying in red diesel, and selling petrol at the pump price.

RESOLVED to continue with the arrangement.

(g) Staff

An update was provided on the staffing situation of the harbour, it was noted that a member of staff would be appointed to assist on the fuel pontoon.

(ng) A Surcharge on Direct Debit Payments

A member noted that they should reconsider the surcharge which was charged on individuals who made payments through direct debit in order to keep individuals and attract more individuals to the Marina.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the matter had been placed on the Service's work programme to help users without affecting income.

RESOLVED that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer contacts the Finance Department regarding the matter.

5. Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 20 October, 2015.

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