

PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 16/10/18

Present: Councillor Hefin Underwood (Chair)
Councillor Peter Read (Vice-chair)

Bborz Ykowski (Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association), Ifor Hughes (Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association), Michael Sol Owen (Plas Heli), W. A. Partington (Maritime Traders Association), Councillor Mici Plwm (Pwllheli Town Councillor) and Alwyn Roberts (RNLI).

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

Others invited: Clive Moore (RNLI) for item 10 on the agenda.

Apologies: David Dewsbury (Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association), Stephen Tudor (Pwllheli Sailing Club and Plas Heli) and Councillor Ioan Thomas (Cabinet Member - Economic Development).

1. CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Hefin Underwood as Chair of this Committee for the year 2018/19.

2. VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Peter Read as Vice-chair of this Committee for the year 2018/19.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

4. URGENT ITEM

A member noted that he had received complaints regarding plastic coming to the surface at Glandon beach. He explained that he had contacted Natural Resources Wales and that they had noted that this was a matter for the Council. He noted that he had contacted the Maritime and Country Parks Officer some time ago, but that the plastic continued to come to the surface.

In response to the above, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that materials had been buried on the beach when the harbour was developed and that the plastic was coming to the surface as a result of erosion over the years. He noted his appreciation of the work of individuals who cleaned up the beach. He explained that as a starting point, it was intended to lay material on top of the plastic in order to cover it, and take samples.

The member noted that a contractor would clear the slip as part of the work to improve access to the beach, and that he could assist with this work. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would welcome a conversation with the member once a work programme to improve access to the beach had been confirmed.

5. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 20 March 2018, as a true record.

In response to observations from some members, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the draft minutes of the Committee's meetings were published on the Council's website quite soon after the meeting, but a hard copy of the draft minutes would be sent to Councillor Hefin Underwood along with representatives of the Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association and the RNLi.

6. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that that he had been absent from the work for a period of five weeks due to an injury, and that he had returned to work the day before the meeting. He explained that the Harbour Manager had drawn up the report and that he apologised that he was unable to be present due to personal commitments. He noted that the Pwllheli Harbour Deputy Manager was present to respond to enquiries.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer guided the members through the report, drawing attention to the following main points:

- Following a review last year by the Coastguard Agency, the inspectors would revisit the Council in spring 2019. It was suggested that a follow-up review take place on the same date as the meeting of the Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee, to which all members of the Gwynedd Harbour Consultative committees would be invited, and at which the inspectors would give a presentation on matters involving the Port Marine Safety Code.
- That the inspectors had commented on the lack of width in the harbour's navigation channel. Improvements would be made within the resources.
- The need to review the location of the navigational aids that were near the sea wall in order to identify the most suitable location.
- In terms of staffing matters, following a review of staff at the Harbour, changes were made to the hours of some posts to be in-keeping with working conditions. Consequently, no staff were present at the beginning of the day or at the end of the day. No complaints had been received thus far.
- Reference was made to a summary of the Harbour and Hafan's budgets and current financial situation up to the end of the second quarter. The estimations given for the Hafan's final budgetary situation, considering the income targets, were positive and the officer was confident that they would be in line with what was noted.
- In relation to the Harbour and Hafan's proposed fees and charges in 2019/20, the service intended to amend the fees in line with the rate of inflation. Confirmation about the rates to be used was awaited. It was noted that a more detailed review of the fees would be held during 2019, taking to account periods of less than a year, such as 3, 6 or 9 months. Any change in the current regime would be in accordance with a financial risk assessment.
- That he was disappointed that the number of berth holders were falling at the Harbour and the Hafan, but that this was in line with the trend at all harbours/ He noted that he was confident that the numbers would increase as a result of the investment made in the dredging work.
- A number of national and international events had been attracted and held at Pwllheli by Plas Heli Cyf. Plas Heli Cyf was congratulated, and it was noted that the service's staff collaborated with the company for the benefit of the community.

The Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association representative drew attention to the fact that there was very little difference in the total fuel sold at the Hafan in the current financial year, considering the weather. He elaborated that fuel could only be paid for with card at the Hafan, not with cash. The possibility of introducing self-service machines should be investigated.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that arrangements were in place to install a self-service facility for a petrol pump at the Hafan's Petrol Quay. The diesel pump would continue to be an attendant only service for the time being, due to the legislative requirement for customers to fill in a statement when buying red diesel.

The Plas Heli representative shared a document that showed the Crib Groyne in its original form. He noted the need to extend it substantially in order to divert materials to Abererch beach. The Economy and Community Senior Manager noted that repair work to the Crib Groyne had been included in the Dredging Strategy. He explained that environmental modelling work would need to be completed if it was intended to extend it and, due to the time and costs associated with this, the necessary repair work would be carried out.

The Maritime Traders Association representative noted that the channel was shallow and much narrower compared to its original form. He added that it was difficult to bring boats in and out near his business, especially when the tide flowed across.

In response to a comment that there was no light on a scaffold tube post at the harbour entrance, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that it was intended to make an application to Trinity House to remove the mark.

A member asked when the Service would be able to keep a portion of the budget rather than transferring it to the Council's central funds. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that in the next financial year, there would be a reduction in the Hafan's target income but this was only temporary.

Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association representative noted that he understood that a condition was in place where the pontoons in Plas Heli would only be used when the Hafan was full or when events were held at Plas Heli. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted the need, ideally, to support activities in the harbour as a whole.

The representative noted that he was supportive of Plas Heli, but not at the expense of local tax payers. In response, the Economy and Community Senior Manager noted that Plas Heli Cyf was required to submit proposed fees to the Council. He noted that Plas Heli extended the range of facilities available in Pwllheli. Plas Heli pontoons could not be compared with the moorings and facilities in the Hafan.

In response to an observation by the representative in terms of using Council land for caravans and charging for parking in the car park when an event is taking place in Plas Heli, the Economy and Community Senior Manager noted that events brought economic benefit to the area and that accommodation provision was required for the events. He explained that there were occasional arrangements between the Council and Plas Heli Cyf in terms of using the land in question as a caravan site when an event was held. He noted that the car park was under the control of Plas Heli Cyf, and that it was appropriate for them to charge a parking fee.

The Plas Heli representative noted that it had been quite a good season for Plas Heli, with various events. He explained that Plas Heli was run by volunteers and that Plas Heli Cyf had a turnover of approximately £0.5m per annum. He noted that Plas Heli was important to Pwllheli as it attracted a large number of visitors and competitors, bringing benefit to the local economy.

The Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association representative noted that he welcomed the fact that visitors were attracted to the area because of Plas Heli, but it was important that the company stood on its own two feet. He referred to information he had received from the Council under a freedom of information request about the number of grants Plas Heli Cyf had received. In response, the Economy and Community Senior Manager noted that

the grants were contributions to hold events, and that there was one specific plan in the Council's Strategic Plan for holding major events in the County.

The Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association representative noted that fishing boats were moored on Plas Heli pontoons where they should not be, and the need to look at a reduction in external harbour fees for local people in order to ensure use of the moorings. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would discuss the fishing boats matter with Plas Heli Cyf, and that the possible reduction in external harbour fees for local people could be considered as part of the review of fees in 2019/20.

RESOLVED to note and accept the report.

7. HARBOUR SAFETY

Members were given the opportunity to note any matters in relation to harbour safety.

The Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association representative referred to an incident where three boats got into trouble halfway up the channel. He noted that he had assisted them and that it had taken half an hour to move them. He explained that he had photographs of the incident that he could share with the service. He suggested that it would be sensible to inform mariners that they should not come into the channel an hour or two before the tide turned until the dredging work had been completed.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted his gratitude to the representative for assisting the mariners. He reminded the members that a system had been set up at the previous meeting to record incidents where boats had struck the seabed by filling a form that was available at the Hafan office. He noted that he encouraged individuals to inform the Hafan office of any such incidents.

The Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association representative noted that the almanac noted that there was 24 hour access to the channel. He noted that such incidents gave Pwllheli a bad reputation.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would contact Reeds and McMillans to note in the almanac that visitors should contact the Hafan office, but the almanac for 2019 might already have been published. In response to an observation by a member, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Hafan's VHF radio was open 24/7, although there were times where a staff member was not present at the office.

The Pwllheli and District Berth Holders' Association representative suggested that staff should be present at the office for the two hours near tide and high tide.

The Pwllheli and District Berth Holders' Association representative drew attention to the fact that individuals were still speeding boats and jet skis in the area near the former office, especially between 5pm and 6pm. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted his wish for anyone who witnessed individuals speeding to make a note of the boat's registration number and present it to the office soon after the incident. He added that the CCTV provision had been improved and with all users registering and signing a statement, prosecution steps could be taken against individuals breaking the speeding rules.

In response to a further observation by the Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association representative, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that as a result of the incredible weather during the summer, a substantial number of people had used the harbours, meaning an increase in officers' workload in regards to managing boats and collecting litter.

RESOLVED to note the information.

8. HARBOUR DREDGING PROGRAMME

A report was submitted by the Economy and Community Senior Manager, who gave an update on the harbour dredging programme. It was explained that the attendance of an officer from Gwynedd Consultancy was expected at the meeting to elaborate on the programme; unfortunately, however, the officer was not in attendance. He distributed a sheet that detailed the work and noted the timetable.

In response to an observation by a member regarding depositing the materials removed from the harbour basin directly on Abererch beach, the Economy and Community Senior Manager explained that there was too much mud in the material removed from the basin. In line with the suggestion made at the previous meeting, he added that it was intended to pump the sand from the channel over the sea wall. He noted that doing so would minimise the problem of sediments to be disposed of, and would likely reduce costs. He noted that if the pumping work was successful, consideration could be given to options to widen and deepen the channel.

The Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association representative noted a concern about the health and safety risk deriving from pumping the sand to Abererch beach. In response, the Economy and Community Senior Manager noted that to reduce the risk, it was intended to complete the pumping work during the winter, and install buoys in the area.

The Plas Heli representative noted that the erosion to the coast in the Carreg y Defaid area, started where the sea wall ended, and adding to it would minimise the dredging work at the Harbour entrance. He suggested that the matter should be discussed with Natural Resources Wales and Gwynedd Consultancy. He noted that the only option was to reinforce and extend the Crib Groyne.

The Economy and Community Senior Manager explained that there was a need to be pragmatic and complete the urgent work as further developments would mean environmental work that would extend the timetable.

The Maritime Traders Association representative noted that he welcomed the fact that the work was being completed, and consideration should be given to sending the work programme to former users of Holyhead Harbour.

A member noted that the work programme was the best advertisement to attract more users to Pwllheli.

RESOLVED to note and accept the report.

9. PROPOSED PLANS FOR A NEW LIFEBOAT STATION

The background and context of the presentation was set by the RNLI representative. He noted that the new building would enable the Lifeboat to launch directly into the water. He informed the Committee that a planning application had been submitted for the new station.

Clive Moore (RNLI) was welcomed to the meeting. He gave a presentation to the members, and showed the plans. He explained that Pwllheli had been selected by the RNLI to receive a new boat, and due to the size of the boat, a new building would be necessary. He noted that it was not possible to have a building that was in-keeping with the requirements on the existing site. He explained that discussions were being held with the Council in terms of locating the new building on land near Plas Heli, and that the discussions were moving forward.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions, he responded to the questions and noted the following main points:

- That the existing building was on lease to the RNLI by the Council, and the building would be transferred back to the Council. The building was not listed.
- In terms of the height of the new building, it would be slightly lower than the Plas Heli building.
- There would be a concrete strip up to where the dune was level.
- The building would be purpose-built to this end, with training facilities as part of the building.
- In terms of the timetable, it was intended to begin the work in May 2019, and it would take a year to build. Members of the Committee would be invited to visit the new building.

Members noted their support of the proposal, and welcomed the investment that would benefit Plas Heli and the Hafan.

The Committee noted their thanks for the presentation.

RESOLVED to note the information.

10. REVIEW OF PWLLHELI HAFAN AND HARBOUR

A presentation was given by the Economy and Community Senior Manager, in which he gave an update on the management model review for the Harbour and the Hafan. Members were reminded that a presentation was given at the previous meeting, on 20 March 2018, on the first step of the review. An update was given on step one, the short-list of possible management models, along with the next steps. It was noted that it was intended to complete step two, where detailed work would be held to assess the options noted in the short-list and develop an outlined business case by the end of March 2019. It was explained that there was a programme in place to respond to the feedback received during the discussions with stakeholders. The intention to send everyone who participated in the discussions a letter to give an update by the end of the month was noted.

In response to an enquiry by the RNLI representative in relation to the Glandon area, the Economy and Community Senior Manager noted that the former Sailing Club was on lease to Plas Heli Cyf and that an application was made to Visit Wales to improve the car park surface.

The Plas Heli representative noted that Plas Heli Cyf was looking at options to develop a bunkhouse in the former Sailing Club building, but the development would depend on substantial grants. In response to a question, he noted that the proposal would be viable with grants and there was not enough accommodation available in the area.

In response to an enquiry, the Economy and Community Senior Manager noted that a developer had been appointed in regards to a hotel development in Cae Ceffyl, and that they were in discussions with a national company. He elaborated that Cae Ceffyl had been proposed as a site in terms of the Visit Wales hotels' campaign.

RESOLVED to note the information.

11. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 19 March, 2019.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 8.25pm.

CHAIRMAN