
BARMOUTH HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 23/10/18

PRESENT:

Members: Cllr. Gethin Glyn Williams (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Eryl Jones Williams (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Louise Hughes (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. R Triggs (Barmouth Town Council), Cllr. Mark James (RNLI), Mrs Wendy Ponsford (Member of Merioneth Yacht Club)

Officers: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Glyn Jones (Barmouth Harbour Master), Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer) and Mererid Watt (Translator)

Others invited: Mike Scott (Fairbourne Amenities Trust) for item 8 only.

1. ELECT CHAIR

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

2. ELECT VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams as Vice-chair of this Committee for 2018/19.

3. APOLOGIES

Councillor Ioan Ceredig Thomas (Cabinet Member - Economy), Dr John Smith (Barmouth Viaduct Access Group), Mr Martin Parouty (Barmouth Harbour Users Group) and Mr Mike Ellis (Three Peaks Race Committee)

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following members declared a personal interest in the following items for the reasons noted:

- (a) Cllr. Gethin Williams – member of the Community Trust
- (b) Mrs Wendy Ponsford – member of the Yacht Club, member of the Community Trust
- (c) Cllr. Rob Triggs – member of the Community Trust, member of the Yacht Club

Members did not vote on the matters that dealt with their personal interest.

5. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 6 March 2018, as a true record.

Glynda O'Brien (Member Support Officer) was wished a happy retirement and she

was thanked for her contribution and service to the Committee over the years.

Matters arising from the minutes:

(a) Maintenance

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer to ask the Senior Harbours Officer and the Harbour Master about the winter maintenance work programme.

(b) Events

It was accepted that there was room for improvement with the process of reminding organisers to contact the Maritime Service first to get permission to hold activities and to strengthen day-to-day arrangements.

It was reported that discussions had taken place regarding the Motorcross event clashing with Gwynedd Half Term holidays and the lack of communication between the organisers and Barmouth Town Council. It was noted that Mr Arnold (Motorcross organiser) required confirmation of the dates for 2019, before December in order to organise the event. It was added that it was not possible to change the date for 2018 as the Motorcross events programme across the country had already been published. A suggestion was made that October half term weekends (Gwynedd) should be avoided and Remembrance Sunday should also be considered.

The 9/10 or 16/17 of November were suggested in order not to clash with half-term. It was noted that the event was important for the area and they did not want to lose it. The need to confirm the dates with Mr Arnold before December 2018, was emphasised.

(c) Fairbourne Emergency Telephones

It was highlighted, following the Committee's decision to express to the relevant Cabinet Member their wish to dispose of the emergency telephones due to a lack of use, that this had not occurred. Prior to disposal, it was suggested that there should be further consultation with the Coastguard and the RNLI regarding the use of the telephones.

(ch) FLAG Activities (Fisheries Local Action Group).

It was reported that the activities had been successful and it was proposed to expand the venture in the future. All who had been part of the arrangements were thanked.

The Town Councillor noted that he could not attend FLAG Group meetings in the area and he suggested that membership should be offered to someone else. It was confirmed that the FLAG Group's wish was for any one member from Barmouth Town Council to be a representative.

(d) Sand Clearance

It was stated that it was not possible to see the sea from Barmouth, and it was noted that following meetings with Gwynedd Consultancy it was not possible to remove the sand. However, it was highlighted that positive statements had been made in a magazine stating that the beach was an excellent resource, the seawall was popular and the channel was clear.

(dd) Dredging

It was anticipated that only Victoria Dock and Pwllheli Harbour would be dredged.

(e) Arthog Community Council - controlling the in-flow of traffic

With a substantial flow of tourist traffic into the area, it was reported that a meeting had taken place with the Transportation Department and it appeared that nothing had been done in response. It was highlighted that Arthog Community Council was working with a Group in Fairbourne to try and reinstate some of the issues which included action to prevent overnight parking. It was confirmed that the relevant Cabinet Member received a copy of the Committee agenda and was therefore aware of these issues.

In response to a comment that Bala Town Council had employed an enforcement officer themselves, it was suggested that Councillor Louise Hughes should contact the Town Councillor for relevant details of the enforcement act in order to raise the matter at the next Arthog Community Council.

(f) Damage to railings outside the Dora building

It was reported that Gwynedd Council had shouldered the burden of paying for the damage. It was added that discussions had taken place with the owner with a warning that if there was further damage then the Council would take action to recover the costs.

6. HARBOUR SAFETY

It was noted that no issue regarding harbour safety had been submitted within the period, however, attention was drawn to the concern that young children were climbing along the buildings, boats, pots and fishing tackle in Aberdyfi. A comment was made that it should be ensured that the site was safe and a request should be made to the owner of any fishing tackle to complete a risk assessment.

7. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

a) Senior Harbours Officer's Report

A report was presented by the Senior Harbours Officer giving a brief update on Harbour matters for the period from March 2018 to October 2018. Following an exceptional Summer, with a significant increase in numbers visiting the area, it was reported that the Service's resources were not sufficient to respond to all the issues and this was highlighted as a high risk. It was added that one fatal accident had occurred and the response to the Coroner had been implemented. It was also noted that staff had to deal with very difficult situations and in response to this it was highlighted that a meeting had been organised with the Coastguard to discuss the situation further. It was reported that the Service was under pressure.

In response to a question regarding the reduction in the number of moorings, it was reported that this was a pattern that could be seen in other natural harbours. It was added that the industry itself was suffering, but despite the reduction this did not have an

impact on the economic benefit when looking at the whole situation e.g. a positive increase was seen in the number of powerboats. The Harbour Master noted that a change in culture was one reason for the reduction in the number of yachts and the need for power and speed had increased. It was added that customers needed to 'buy a resource' such as moorings as an item and that the current process was protracted.

To address this it was suggested there should be a way of facilitating payments and a request was made for a report to the next meeting listing the possible options available.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer added that a review was being undertaken by the Service asking why mooring owners had left and a report on the findings would be submitted (to all Harbour Committees) in March 2019.

In the context of installing moorings, it was highlighted that Barmouth Town Council had considered funding the costs of moorings and they intended to raise money for pontoons. The need to confirm the arrangements for ownership was highlighted and it was suggested that the Town Councillor should meet with the Senior Harbours Officer and the Harbour Master to discuss this further. In terms of dredging, an operational licence would be required. As the Council's budgets were tight and were facing further cuts, it would not be possible for the Council to fund the dredging of the Harbour. It was suggested that the Town Councillor should consult the Maritime and Country Parks Officer to agree on a letter to be sent to Natural Resources Wales to be able to operate. It was suggested that the community was willing to raise the money.

Barmouth community was praised for its willingness to collaborate and to get the best for the town in light of the cuts to Gwynedd Council budgets. They should be applauded and congratulated on their good work.

It was reported that the Coastguard Agency's inspectors had been due to revisit the Service in October as a follow-up to the inspection in 2017. However, due to unexpected circumstances, it was noted the visit had been postponed until March 2019. There would be an invitation to all Members of the Consultative Committee to attend the meeting in Porthmadog.

Members' attention was drawn to the Service's intention to employ a full time harbour assistant to work in Barmouth, Aberdyfi and Porthmadog harbours. In response, it was stated that the service should carefully consider where the posts were advertised and there was also a suggestion to seek apprenticeships. A request was made for the Service to share the advertisement with the Town Council.

(b) Harbour Master's Report

A report was presented by the Harbour Master detailing navigational, operational and maintenance matters. Attention was drawn to the need to undertake more work on the following:

- Barmouth beach safety signage had been successful although there was need for more similar signs in the Harbour due to the increase in the number of people who walk through the Harbour.
- That the fishermen's compound needed to be cleared and the area should be re-lined. It was suggested that a new contract should be created with a condition to keep the site clean.
- That the Compound Road land could be used for parking. Clarity was required on who the landowner was and enforcement arrangements needed to be checked.

An application had been made by the Committee for a traffic order on the land as there were 16 spaces available. A parking space could be offered with the Fishermen's Compound for an additional cost.

- Management of harbour pontoon - A member of the Barmouth Viaduct Access Group to arrange a meeting with the Harbour Master to discuss this further.
- Winter boat storage - need to encourage users to stay. A request for the Harbour Master to get ideas from Harbour users for possible incentives.
- Events - it was necessary to ensure that the events were recorded by Gwynedd Council Events Manager as successes.

RESOLVED to accept the reports.

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

(a) Consider allowing a representative of Fairbourne Amenities Trust as a co-opted member on the Committee.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer referred to the Harbour Committee Terms of Reference and confirmed that the membership was:

- up to 4 local members of Gwynedd Council
- The Gwynedd Council Cabinet Member who is responsible for the Harbour Authority portfolio
- One member of the Town Council
- Up to 7 other members representing the various interests of the harbour users

Since the current membership of Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee was complete an additional request would be beyond the Council's enforcement framework.

It was highlighted that Arthog Community Council had an empty seat and it was suggested that one representative could be appointed that would represent both bodies.

It was noted that the Barmouth Viaduct Access Group representative had resigned and that it was the Group's responsibility to elect a new representative.

It was noted that the Three Peaks Race representative also wished to resign and that it was that Committee's responsibility to elect a new representative.

It was emphasised that there was a responsibility on the above bodies to inform the Maritime and Country Parks Officer or the Member Support Officer of the new nominations.

Mr Mike Ellis (Three Peaks Race Committee) was thanked for his distinguished contributions to the Committee over the years.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will take place on 26th March, 2019.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.30 pm

CHAIRMAN