
ABERDYFI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 29/03/22

PRESENT:

Gwynedd Council:

Councillors: Dewi Owen (Chair), Anne Lloyd Jones (Vice-chair) and Mike Stevens.

Co-opted Members: Jim Lee (Outward Bound Wales), David Williams (Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertisement Committee), Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club), Guy Shaw (Aberdyfi Rowing Club).

Officers: Llyr B Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department), Barry Davies (Maritime Service Manager), Will Stockford (Aberdyfi Harbourmaster) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democratic Services Officer).

Others invited: Owain Griffith (Chief Engineer, Gwynedd Consultancy)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by Councillor Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member - Economy and Community), Councillor Bob Tyrrell (Aberdyfi Community Council), Al Crisp (Outward Bound Wales), Josh Cooper (Aberdyfi RNLI) and Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

3. URGENT ITEMS

Update on Quay Wall and Picnic Island (Bryn Llestair) bridge projects

Aberdyfi Quay Wall

Owain Griffiths (Chief Engineer, Gwynedd Consultancy) was welcomed to the meeting to provide an update on the quay wall project. It was reported that having received three tenders for the work the Unit had followed the process of assessing the applications and was in the process of offering the work to a company specialising as a Marine Contractor in Civil Engineering called Teignmouth Maritime Services Ltd (TMS) from Devon.

It was accepted that the process had been long, however, a letter had by now been received from the Welsh Government confirming the grant terms together with match funding from Gwynedd Council to pay for the work. It was highlighted that the next step would be to set an amended programme and to fully discuss the business case period with the company. It was noted that there was no specific date to commence the work, however, once the amended programme is to hand the information would be released. It was confirmed that the funding was secure and the company had already visited the site and had met some stakeholders. It was added that YGC's wish was to establish one

group to engage with the community that will meet virtually once a month to discuss matters relating to the project - it was intended to hold the first meeting in April.

Following the ensuing discussion, the following observations were noted by members;

- The news was positive and was to be welcomed
- It would be wise to have the Aberdyfi Community Council Clerk as a member of the community group
- A work programme should be drafted and prepared for the pre-commencement period - it was possible to organise stores, move equipment and prepare access - suggest a period of approximately 6 weeks.
- It would be necessary to consider the impact of the work on the local economy - the work was likely to be implemented during the busy period / school holidays. If funding was in place was it not better to wait to have less disruption and impact on the community?
- The prices of equipment, steel, fuel and resources were increasing
- Heavy plant transporting steel would disrupt movements in the town - it was necessary to prepare for this

In response to a comment about delaying the work, it was considered that it would be better to implement it as soon as possible as starting on the work in the Autumn months would be at risk from harsh weather and an increase in the costs of resources. It was added that concerns already existed regarding the purchase of equipment (sheet piles) to create a foundation - this was the matter that would determine when the work would commence. It was ensured that the concerns were being considered, however, it would be prudent to continue and deal with any matters as they arise.

Picnic Island (Bryn Llestairs) Bridge

Mr Barry Davies (Maritime Service Manager) highlighted, despite the delay, that it was proposed to complete the work in 2022. It was noted that the work was being funded by contributions from Gwynedd Council, Outward Bound Wales, FLAG and Network Rail, however, by now the cost of steel had increased significantly and therefore the budget was short of approximately £30k. It was suggested that further discussions should take place with the partners to find a way of trying to meet the financial deficit. The Chair noted that the media were eager to produce a programme on the work as there was interest and enthusiasm in the local community to complete the work.

The officers were thanked for the updates.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 2 November 2021, as a true record.

There were no matters arising from the minutes

5. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The following reports were presented, and members were invited to give observations on their content and to ask questions.

a) The Senior Harbours Officer's report, giving a brief update to the committee on harbour matters for the year ending March 2022.

In the absence of the Senior Harbours Officer the Maritime Service Manager noted that it was pleasing to announce that it had been a successful year with an increase in the number of visitors and customers reflecting the gradual relaxation of Covid restrictions and barriers to overseas travel.

Attention was drawn to the following matters:

Moorings and Boat Registration

It was reported that the on-line registration and payment facility would be open for customers to register their vessels via the Council's website on 31 March 2022. It was reported that the system introduced in March 2021 had been very successful and for the first time there was a waiting list for moorings in Pwllheli Harbour.

Port Marine Safety Code

It was noted that the Service regularly reviewed the Port Marine Safety Code to ensure that they continued to fully conform to the safety standards in Gwynedd harbours - an external audit of the code would be undertaken by a designated individual. It was added that a compliance statement had been signed and submitted to the Coastguard Agency. Serious concerns were highlighted regarding the condition of the quay in Aberdyfi (not in terms of its structure but the high risk to other users). Although there was information and signage on the quay highlighting the risks and concerns to public safety, more had to be done and it was inevitable that the Maritime Unit should act urgently to ensure the site's safety. It was noted that the risk of not moving / putting fishing tackle away had been addressed by creating a storage area within the compound and it was accepted that cooperation was needed from the fishermen to prioritise public safety. It was added that when the clearance work commenced for the quay wall, the equipment would be moved permanently to the compound.

Members were encouraged to submit regular observations regarding the suitability of the Port Marine Safety Code.

Staffing Matters

All the staff (harbour and beach) were praised for their service throughout the pandemic to ensure the safety of the harbour and beach by fully complying with the Welsh Government guidance. It was noted that there were 2 permanent posts in Aberdyfi Harbour and it was intended to employ 2 seasonal posts there and 3 in Tywyn. It was added that the response to the posts had been very disappointing, however, it was pleasing to report that Mr George Watson would return - he was experienced in the field, a strong team leader and a good communicator.

Financial Matters

It was highlighted that the proposed fees and charges for Aberdyfi Harbour, together with the powerboats and personal watercraft launch fees for the 2022/23 season, would increase in line with the rate of inflation.

The members expressed their thanks for the report. It was pleasing to report that the financial situation was positive and although the income was small, the contribution of Aberdyfi Harbour and beach were valuable to the local economy.

(b) The Harbourmaster's report, summarising the Navigational and Operational matters that had arisen between October 2021 and March 2022, including maintenance matters.

The Harbourmaster expressed his thanks to the Maritime Unit for their support and for all the messages he and his family had received during his wife's illness.

It was noted that two Local Notices to Mariners were in operation regarding the navigational marks in the channel - the service had been in contact with a local contractor to undertake the essential work when weather permits.

It was reported that the Outward Bound Trust had conducted a full programme of events on the river and commercial fishing activities had continued over the winter months. It was noted that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency had been operational in March with a team undertaking random checks on commercial fishing boats.

Reference was made to a low water check undertaken on 03/03/22 in the Cliffside area near the former RNLI slipway. It was noted that officers would continue to monitor the situation before the moorings contractor commences the work.

It was reported that maintenance work would continue during the next few months in preparation for work on the quay wall and the busy season of visitors and events.

The members expressed their thanks for the report. Wil Stockford (Harbour Master) and Oli Simmons (Aberdyfi Harbour Assistant) were thanked for the clearance work undertaken around the Harbour and for facing all sorts of challenges from visitors.

In response to a question regarding the arrangements for removing sand that collects in the car park prior to the Easter holidays, it was noted that the promenade area and the RNLI area had been cleared and discussions were being held with the Transportation Unit and YGC regarding slipway maintenance. It was added that the responsibilities of the Maritime Unit regarding Harbour management were being implemented.

In response to a supplementary question regarding the suggestion of using the money from the car park to pay the Maritime Unit for sand clearance, it was noted that there were no arrangements in place to transfer money, however, it was possible to encourage more collaboration between departments. Although accepting that the side-effects of the savings were evident by now and that removing sand was a battle against nature, it was recognised that a plan was needed in response to local concerns.

D George highlighted that members of the TMS company when they visited the site had suggested using their machinery, that would be on the site, to remove sand. It was suggested that Aberdyfi Yacht Club could make a contribution to any costs, with further contributions possibly from Gwynedd Council and the Boat Club.

RESOLVED

To note and accept the reports.

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

None to note

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 25 October, 2022.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.20 am

CHAIRMAN