

PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 05 MARCH 2024

PRESENT:

Cyngor Gwynedd: Councillor Hefin Underwood (Chair),

Co-opted Members: Barry Simmonds (Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association representative), Michael Sol Owen (Plas Heli), Alwyn Roberts and Andy Vowell (Representing Pwllheli Lifeboat Institution) and Councillor Mike Parry (Pwllheli Town Council).

Officers: Gerwyn Owen (Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer)

Others Present as Observers: Desmond George (Observer, Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee), Ruth James (Secretary, Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association) and Nia Jeffreys (Cabinet Member – Economy and Community).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Llyr Beaumont Jones (Assistant Head – Economy and Community Department), Councillor Gwilym Jones (Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee) and Stephen Tudor (Pwllheli Sailing Club).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

An update was given of the Chair's discussions with Cyngor Gwynedd following the observations received regarding the Urgent Items matter at the 10 October 2023 meeting. It was explained that the Full Council had approved a policy that allows meetings of the Full Council, the Cabinet, Scrutiny and Planning meetings to be conducted as hybrid meetings, with an invitation for the public to attend or watch the webcast. It was reported that every other meeting would be held virtually only. Assurance was given that the public could attend other meetings conducted virtually only, although it was not possible for them to contribute to the discussions, by contacting the Democracy Service.

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 10 October 2023, as a true record.

5. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Reference was made to the report created by the Commercial Manager of Hafan Pwllheli and Harbour, and it was reported as follows:

It was reported that a notice to mariners had been issued as a pre-warning that the work of dredging the channel would continue on 8 March for a period of a week. It was recognised that this work remained a challenge for the service and that officers were working with Gwynedd

Consultancy to find a solution to the situation. It was explained that approximately 12,000 tonnes would be removed from the harbour mouth during this period. It was ensured that a hydrographic survey had been completed on the appropriate area and contractors would use specialist appliances to ensure they work in the correct location and remove the right amount of sand from the site.

It was explained that work had been carried out on 'hen ynys' following a delay in agreeing contractor costs. Local Councillors were thanked for assisting in engaging with local residents in Bron y De and Morfa Garreg about the work completed by officers. It was noted that the distilling lagoon would be partly emptied. It was explained that officers had recently mown the grass on the island and had found out that the land was too wet to place the wet sediment on it to dry. Consequently, it was confirmed that approximately 10,000 tonnes would be removed from the distilling lagoon instead of emptying it completely.

It was confirmed that it was desired for the work on the island to be completed during March before moving on to dredging sand from certain sections. It was reported that it would be possible to dredge around 10,000 tonnes from the marina basin once work on 'hen ynys' was complete. It was elaborated that a hydrographic survey would be carried out at the site to ensure the correct works were undertaken. It was acknowledged that communication with neighbours about this work had been lacking at the start of the process, but every effort was being made to improve this in the future.

In response to a query on receiving a permit from Natural Resources Wales for pumping the sediment onto the nearest beach (Glandon beach) rather than transporting it further, the Commercial Manager confirmed that the sand had been assessed and it was clear and will be used at Carreg y Defaid beach because it is under the Council's control. It cannot be transported to Glandon beach because the beach is under the control of Natural Resources Wales and the sand does not pass their tests sufficiently to be pumped there. It was explained that the service had developed a joint plan with Gwynedd Consultancy to formulate 4 options for the future. It was confirmed that one of the strongest options was to dispose of the basin's sediment into the sea, obtaining a marine licence from Natural Resources Wales. It was elaborated that the service had had initial meetings with Natural Resources Wales and they were very positive.

It was assured that officers were working with Gwynedd Consultancy on several options to determine the future way forward and that a number of the options were dependent on receiving a marine permit. It was explained that the process was dependent on various requirements and was a time-consuming process. It was explained after preparing the processes, Natural Resources Wales also needed to look at the application. It was stressed that the process was challenging and therefore it would take time for it to be accepted. It was ensured that officers were collaborating with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to press on Natural Resources Wales to work with officers.

Members were guided through the financial performance of the harbour and noted that there had been expenditure to upgrade several assets. The berthing association were thanked for carrying out a survey on the harbour to receive feedback from customers. Assurance was given that the service listened to the customer satisfaction feedback. An example was shared of upgrading the Wi-Fi to improve customer satisfaction levels in the future. It was stressed that overall customer and staff satisfaction had increased.

It was pointed out that the numbers of boats anchored near the Hafan had increased by 60% since 2020. It was explained that harbour income had increased in line with inflation. It was noted that overall harbour expenditure had not increased at the same rate, as the harbour had used around £250,000 of funds for harbour improvements and updates. There was pride that the harbour had reached the total number of possible berths and it was confirmed that there was a waiting list of people wishing to anchor their boats there. It was reported that officers had held discussions with the Council's principal officers on how the harbour could be developed in the

future and how that would influence the local economy, keeping in mind that the Council was currently leading through a financial crisis.

It was reported that fees and charges for the year 2024/25 had been approved since December 2023. It was elaborated that contracts had now gone out to customers using a new electronic system. Assurance was given that three quarters of customers had updated their agreements to date. It had been observed that not many customers are cancelling their contracts so far compared to last year where 10% of customers had cancelled their contract. It was noted that the increase in fees for the year was in line with inflation.

An update on staffing issues was provided and best wishes were extended to the harbour Team Leader who had recently received surgery for a medical condition. It was updated that he had returned to work, and he continued to recover and receive treatment. Best wishes for a speedy recovery were extended to him. It was also confirmed that the harbour Sub-Manager/Harbourmaster had begun a flexible retirement period. It was noted that this meant he continued to work for three days a week to continue to assist and support the team. Members were reminded that he had been working with the harbour for a long time and had a great deal of knowledge about the harbour. He was thanked for continuing to work during the Team Leader's illness.

Everyone involved in the recent consultation on the Strategic Plan were thanked. It was updated that the consultants were pleased with the number of responses received at Plas Heli, the Town Council, and electronically. It was clarified that the consultation had now concluded, and a finished draft of the plan had been developed to consider the next steps. It was emphasised that four main objectives had been set out in the plan including:

1. Dredging
2. Maritime Infrastructure (Pontoons) – It was explained that a survey of the Pontoons had already been completed to solve the problems with the Pontoons to further develop the area.
3. Long-Term Investment – It was confirmed that officers were currently looking at suitable investments. It was elaborated that officers had put in a Bid to the Asset Management Fund. It was also noted that officers had applied to the Council to re-consider where harbour profits were located, striving to ensure that a proportion of harbour profits is earmarked for improvements.
Cohesive decisions – It was noted that this objective considered how the harbour incorporates into the Town Centre Plan and the Gwynedd Nature Partnership and several different schemes that the harbour can contribute and benefit from.

It was assured that the scheme would be used continuously to realise these objectives and to develop the harbour in the future.

It was acknowledged that Pwllheli Lifeboat station had experienced a challenging period in recent months forcing the station to close for a short time. It was confirmed that the station had reopened since 15 February and that training had resumed. It was hoped that the station could be operational and able to answer calls by Easter, depending on the development of the training and the numbers of individuals involved in the crew. It was noted that the main aim of the station at this time was to get the main lifeboat back. It was confirmed that recruitment issues over the past few weeks had been very positive, and the community were thanked for their favourable response. It was elaborated that 13 individuals had put their names forward to volunteer and they were thanked for their time and support.

It was noted that the Plas Heli sailing championships were expected to be very busy over the summer as a large number of names had been received to take part. It was also noted that a number of improvements had been made to the site including tar on part of the road down to the beach and it was hoped that more showers could be installed for the benefit of users. It was

pointed out that there were several defects in the building which had not been addressed by officers. It was elaborated that a quantity surveyor had been to the site and it was hoped that his report would be received soon to resolve any faults.

Everyone was thanked for their work over the winter and for their commitment to the harbour and the hafan.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will take place on 8 October 2024, subject to approval of the committees' calendar by the Full Council in its meeting on 7 March, 2024.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.20pm.

CHAIRMAN.