
PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 04/03/25

PRESENT:

Councillor Gwilym Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd) (Chair)
Councillor June Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd) (Vice-chair)
Councillor Richard Medwyn Hughes (Cyngor Gwynedd) (Cabinet Member for Economy and Community)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Llyr Beaumont Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department), Bryn Pritchard-Jones (Maritime Service Manager), Daniel Arthur Cartwright (Senior Harbour Officer), Malcolm Humphreys (Porthmadog Harbourmaster), Richard Hughes (Porthmadog Assistant Harbourmaster), Sioned Jones (Democracy Services Officer) and Jasmine Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

OBSERVER: Desmond George (Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee).

APOLOGIES: Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Cyngor Gwynedd) and Chris Fisher (Cricieth RNLI).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Cyngor Gwynedd) and Chris Fisher (Cricieth RNLI).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. URGENT ITEMS

It was noted that three individuals had put their names forward to represent different interests on this committee:

- Jenny Howell (Porthmadog Sailing Club) – representing leisure interests.
- Richard Owen (Robert Owen Marine) – representing industrial interests.
- Richard Aherne (Rowing Club) – representing the rowing club.

It was reported that following consultation with legal advisers, it had been decided that these individuals would need to be formally appointed by the Cabinet. The members of the committee were asked to consult on the matter, and to commit to deciding whether these individuals should be admitted as members of the Committee.

The members of the committee agreed to admit the three individuals to represent different interests on this committee.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 01/10/24 as a true record.

5. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The reports below were submitted, and members were invited to give feedback on safety matters and harbour operational matters.

- (1) The Senior Harbours Officer's report gave a brief update to the committee on harbour matters for the period between October 2024 and March 2025.

Porthmadog Moorings and Boat Registration

It was reported that the restoration and maintenance of the l chains and moorings, which are located in the harbour, was being completed by a locally appointed mooring contractor. It was confirmed that customers wishing to have a mooring in the harbour or register their watercraft for the upcoming season were expected to complete the relevant on-line process promptly from 1 April onwards, via Cyngor Gwynedd's website. If assistance or guidance was required to complete the necessary processes, it was emphasised that customers were welcome to contact the harbour office, where staff would be happy to help. Hope was expressed that this year's summer period would be a busy one.

Port Marine Safety Code

It was reported that the service regularly reviewed the Marine Safety Code for the harbours within its jurisdiction, to ensure that it continued to fully comply with the current requirements of the Code. It was noted that, as part of the review process, it was necessary to receive the comments and views of the Consultative Committee Members on the suitability of the Marine Safety Code, and to receive regular comments on its content.

Staffing Matters

It was reported that Mr Daniel Cartwright, former Harbourmaster of Barmouth Harbour, had been appointed as Senior Harbours Officer to replace Mr Arthur Jones. Mr Daniel Cartwright took up responsibility for his role on 1 December 2024, as Mr Arthur Jones officially retired from the Service on 31 March. Mr Arthur Jones was thanked for his work in the service and on this Committee over the years.

It was noted that the Harbourmaster, Mr Malcolm Humphreys, and his assistant, Mr Richard Hughes, continued to provide a service to visitors and customers of the harbour, with maritime staff based in Barmouth and Aberdyfi harbours also available to assist if required.

It was noted that officers had undertaken maintenance work in the harbour, as well as additional work at Borth-y-Gest and on the nearby beaches of Morfa Bychan and Cricieth. It was further noted that seasonal beach officers would be appointed at Morfa Bychan and Cricieth beaches for the busy summer season.

It was reported that the owner of the 'Terra Marique' transport vessel had contacted the Senior Harbours Officer to discuss the possibility of returning to Black Rock. It was noted that a further report would be submitted to the Committee when further details became available.

Financial Matters

The Maritime Service Manager provided a brief summary of the Harbour's budgets for the period 01/04/24 – 31/03/25 (November 2024 Review), included as an appendix to the report. It was specifically noted:

- That there was an overspend under the Employees heading due to overtime costs. It was noted that Harbour staff had been assisting in other harbours and on Morfa Bychan beach. It was further noted that additional costs had risen as Mr Arthur Jones had remained in office longer than anticipated. It was underlined that this overspend had been anticipated.
- There was significant underspending under the Property heading, as no significant damage had occurred as a result of the storms. It was noted that this money could be used to meet overspending under other budget headings, such as Services and Supplies.
- There was also underspend under the Transport heading, but it was anticipated that the expenditure would increase in the coming weeks as the Dwyfor tanks had been filled with diesel.
- There was an overspend under the Services and Supplies heading for many reasons, specifically due to the significant cost of purchasing and maintaining specialist equipment. The view was expressed that an insufficient budget had been earmarked for this heading.
- That expenditure figure from the Maritime Fund was likely to increase, as the compound was going to be resurfaced. It was anticipated that around £10,000 would be spent on upgrading it. It was noted that the £525 already identified addressed planting work and the improvement of the back of the compound.
- An underspend in the total expenditure was anticipated, but, nevertheless, it was noted that the service had not managed to meet its income target, mainly due to the bad weather experienced.
- It was anticipated that the costs of running the Harbour for this period would be £38,728, with a shortfall of around £8,000.

The changes to the registration process for jet-skis and powerboats, which was now on-line, was emphasised. As a result, all income now goes to the Beaches budget rather than the Harbour, as it was under the previous system. It was further noted that the Harbour budget had been negatively impacted by the reduction in the number of jet-skis registered with Cyngor Gwynedd this year (a reduction of 368), which meant that fewer launch fees had been paid to the Harbour.

Fees and Charges 2025/26

It was reported that the Service intended to adjust the fees in line with the inflation rate at the time, which was 2.89%. It was elaborated that the harbour's income target rose at the same rate to £88,590, and therefore the additional funding needed to be found to meet this target. It was noted that the Service had charged some fees above the inflation rate and some lower, to ensure consistency between harbours.

It was reported that powerboat registration fees brought in approximately £200,000 to the Beaches Service. Despite this, it was noted that the annual registration fee needed to be increased from £70 to £75; and the annual launch permit fee from £180 to £190. For boats with less than 10 horsepower, the one-off fee would increase from £40 to £42. It was further noted that it was intended to increase the daily launch fee from £22 to £23. It was elaborated that caution needed to be exercised with charging this fee, as there was a risk that consumers could turn to launch sites in other areas if the price rose excessively.

- (2) The Harbourmaster's report summarised the Navigational and Operational matters that had arisen between October 2024 and March 2025, including maintenance matters.

Before submitting his report, the Harbourmaster thanked Mr Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer) for his hard work over the last 11 years. Daniel Arthur Cartwright was welcomed to the Service in his new position as Senior Harbours Officer.

It was reported that a Local Notice to Mariners had been issued for Buoy No. 11 and the "Fairway Buoy". It was elaborated that Buoy No. 11 had recently been repositioned, and that the Fairway Buoy was expected to be relocated within the next two weeks – the service was currently awaiting the contractor.

As the registration fee for jet-skis and powerboats had increased, it was noted that an increasing number of people were now choosing to pay for an annual launch permit. As a result, the harbour was missing out on income. It was further noted that the service was trying to encourage customers to switch to the new digital system for boat registration. It was elaborated that many people were reluctant to use the new system because it was on-line.

It was reported that work was underway following the inspection carried out on 3 December 2024, to install new lifting chains on 13 moorings. Hope was expressed that this work would be completed within the week. It was noted that work was continuing to resurface the compound, but there was uncertainty as to whether the entire area would be able to be completed due to the size of the site and the associated costs, which exceeded the earmarked budget. It was further noted that new timber had been received for the benches in Borth-y-Gest.

It was reported that 40 Griselinia plants had been planted in front of the harbour's wooden fences facing the harbour slipway, with the aim of making the area more visually attractive. In addition, it was reported that, following advice, the dragon named "Dixie" was now located on a bed of slate behind the harbour office, in a safe environment. It was hoped that Committee Members would contribute ideas on words to be placed on the decorative buoy located on the side of the bridge.

Councillor Gwilym Jones suggested that words relating to the harbour's 200th anniversary should be included on the decorative buoy. Councillor June Jones suggested that the names of all boats built in Porthmadog Harbour could be included on the buoy, with input from the Maritime Museum in Porthmadog. Hope was also expressed to restore an old winch from Cob Crwn, Llyn Bach, which could possibly be placed in Porthmadog Harbour as part of the 200th anniversary celebrations. It was elaborated that there was a need to find out who was responsible for the winch, and Councillor June Jones agreed to look further into the matter.

Gratitude was expressed for the report. The Maritime Service Manager added that he had received notice of the possibility that the Terra Marique vessel would be visiting Porthmadog (Black Rock Sands) before the summer holidays. It was noted that the craft had visited twice in the past, and that the arrangements had worked effectively on both occasions. However, it was noted that welcoming the boat was a significant project which involved significant changes to the village of Morfa Bychan. It was elaborated that Committee members would be updated as required as more information became available.

RESOLVED To note and accept the report.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 30/09/25.

The meeting commenced at 5.30pm and concluded at 6.20pm.

(Chair)