

PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 18/10/16

Present: Councillor Michael Sol Owen (Chair)
Councillor Hefin Underwood (Vice-chair)

David Dewsbury (Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association), Ifor Hughes (Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association), Alwyn Roberts (RNLI) and Stephen Tudor (Pwllheli Sailing Club).

Also in attendance: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Wil Williams (Pwllheli Harbour Manager), and Bethan Adams (Members Support Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Peter Read (Gwynedd Council), W. A. Partington (Maritime Traders Association), Councillor Mici Plwm (Pwllheli Town Councillor) and Councillor Mandy Williams-Davies (Cabinet Member for Economy).

1. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Michael Sol Owen as Chairman of this Committee for 2016/17.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Hefin Underwood as Vice-chairman of this Committee for 2016/17.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Consultative Committee meeting held on 22 March, 2016 as a true record.

5. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer guided the members through the report, which provided a brief update of the period between April 2016 and October 2016, drawing attention to the following main points:

- 58 boats were moored in the outer Harbour, and 18 boats were moored at the Plas Heli pontoon. This temporary offer was made due to uncertainty as to the condition of moorings in Areas 5 and 6. In general, this meant a total of 83 boats being moored in 2016 compared to 87 boats in 2015.
- It was confirmed that 287 were on annual pontoon mooring at the Hafan, namely 68% of the total number of pontoon moorings available. This compared with 292 boats on pontoon moorings in 2015.
- Members were asked that any matters relating to the Maritime Safety Code be brought to the attention of the Service.
- The Senior Harbours Officer would review the safety code and the Senior Coastguard Inspector would visit the Council in February 2017 to inspect and give feedback on the code.

- The Service continued to develop Performance Measures in relation to harbour management. The draft measures would be circulated for the attention of members and it was hoped that members could contribute to the measures in 2017-18.
- Trinity House Lighthouses Authority conducted an inspection on 26 July 2016. The 2016 report confirmed improvements in the condition and locations of navigational aids at harbours in Gwynedd.
- The 'Hafan y Môr' navigational aid remained off-station. Although the Council was not responsible for the navigation aid, it was the Council's responsibility to ensure that the owner of the navigational aid conformed to the requirements of Trinity House. The Service had sent correspondence to Hafan y Môr managers stating the requirement to re-locate the navigational aid on its station as a matter of urgency.
- Following consultation with the Consultative Committee, minor improvements were made to the setting of buoys in the high speed zone of the Glandon area; and, during the summer season, additional buoys were installed because power boats were straying close to the shore, occasionally at high speeds. It was noted that despite the minor improvements, there had been several complaints by the public about power boats navigating at high speeds in the area. The Service has identified the boat and a warning letter was sent to the boat owner.
- The Harbour and the Hafan's financial situation up to the end of September 2016 were mentioned in detail.

Areas 5 and 6 were referred to, noting the need to plan substantial work on the moorings due to accumulated mud in the area and the increasing size of banks. It was noted that a number of customers moored in Areas 5 and 6 in 2016 had taken the opportunity to moor at the Plas Heli pontoon in 2016 and Plas Heli was thanked for its cooperation.

It was reported that a quotation of approximately £8,000 had been received (for equipment only) to remove all the existing moorings from Areas 5 and 6, reinstating one row of moorings on the most favourable line, and leaving the existing chains in place that could have an impact in future if dredging was required. It was explained that, in the long term, dredging was being considered in order to increase capacity but that this was not a viable plan at present. It was noted that the Service understood that local people were eager to remain in this area but that it was not cost effective at present to continue with the situation as it stood.

Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association's representative noted that there needed to be a better deal for local people and his concern that if arrangements to moor boats at the Plas Heli pontoon continued, that local boats would be expected to move whenever an event was held.

The Pwllheli Sailing Club and Plas Heli representative noted that retaining the existing chains would be a reason not to dredge this area. A member drew attention to the fact that this area had not been included in the existing Dredging Strategy.

In response to the members' observations, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the need for moorings in the area had been acknowledged and that a solution would be sought that would be acceptable to local people and the Council. It was agreed that the officer would ensure that one row of moorings would be made available in Areas 5 and 6 for 2017.

The Pwllheli Harbour Manager provided details of the maintenance work programme and members were asked to inform the service of any other work that needed to be done.

In response to a concern raised by the RNLI representative relating to the strength of the light on the Fairway buoy, the Pwllheli Harbour Manager stated that he would look into the strength of the light.

It was noted that the Service, in view of the financial challenge, was reviewing its safety supervision and night supervision procedures. Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association's representative noted his deep concern that there would be health and safety risks along with a risk of an increase in crime if supervision was not in place 24/7.

An update was given on the work completed in accordance with the Dredging Strategy to date, noting that the work undertaken by the bed leveller had been successful. It was stated that the work of dredging the harbour entrance would be completed by Easter 2017. The need to carry out a hydrographic survey of the basin and channel to confirm the levels was noted. It was reported that a brief had been drawn up for Gwynedd Consultancy to cost the work of returning the groin to its previous form. It was noted that there would be substantial costs involved with increasing the size of the groin due to the licenses that would have to be obtained under habitat regulations before taking action.

The Pwllheli Sailing Club and Plas Heli representative noted his hope that this would be implemented in accordance with the Dredging Strategy and that he was of the opinion that increasing the groin, though costly, would mean less dredging work in future. He also stated his concern that income would fall if the strategy were not implemented. He added that use of the cuttersuction dredging machine should continue in order to improve the water depth of the channel and the basin of the Hafan.

Members noted that the dredging strategy would need to be implemented in order to avoid future deterioration that would affect the Harbour and the Hafan's income along with that of the area in general.

RESOLVED to request confirmation that the Council will operate in accordance with the Dredging Strategy.

A tribute was paid to the late Mr Tony Hughes who had been employed by the Council for many years following a successful career with the Royal Navy.

It was reported that an increase in fees of between 0.5% and 1% at the Harbour, and 1% at the Hafan would be recommended for 2017/18. It was noted that an application would be submitted to the Finance Department to bridge the over spend at the Harbour during the current financial year, along with an application to reconsider the target income.

Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association's representative stated that increasing fees as noted would be acceptable if investments were made in the Harbour and the Hafan.

It was noted that there were two tiers of fees in the Hafan, with a historical system where some customers pay for the Length Overall of the boat (LOA) and more recent customers would pay the maximum value of the pontoon mooring in a 'banding' arrangement. Consideration was being given to adjusting the fees arrangements, using only the LOA for the Hafan. Attention was drawn to the fact that adjusting the fees would mean a reduction of around £53,000 in the income that the Council received.

Members noted their unanimous support for adjusting the fees arrangement at the Hafan, noting that the change would attract individuals to bring their boats to the Hafan.

RESOLVED to recommend that the Council adjust the fees arrangements at the Hafan by charging an LOA based fee only.

Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association's representative referred to cases of speeding through the Harbour and noted the need to consider how this situation could be controlled. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would talk to

the company that assisted with managing the slipway, and that consideration could be given to focusing one of the closed circuit television cameras on the channel.

Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association's representative reiterated the need to place more user information that would draw people's attention to the maximum speed limit for this area, which is four knots; and that consideration should be given to including the maximum speed limit on the sign placed on the boats.

7. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 21 March, 2017.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.40pm.

CHAIRMAN