

PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 8/3/17

PRESENT:

Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd (Chair)
Councillor Selwyn Griffiths (Vice-chairman)

Councillors: Jason Humphreys (Gwynedd Council), along with Gavin Buckley (Porthmadog Town Council Representative), Dr John Jones-Morris (Leisure Interests Representative), Robert Owen (Commercial Interests Representative) and Peter L. Williams (RNLI Representative).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Llŷr B. Jones (Senior Manager - Economy and Community Department), Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), Malcolm Humphreys (Porthmadog Harbour Master) and Bethan Adams (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mandy Williams-Davies (Cabinet Member for Economy)

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 12 October, 2016, as a true record.

The representative of the RNLI referred to support by members to the carrying out of a safety inspection of the areas of the Glaslyn estuary and Black Rock Sands and to a subsequent talks about how the situation could be improved using existing resources. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer had confirmed that he would contact the RNLI in relation to the safety inspection. He expressed his dissatisfaction that this had not taken place and that the Officer had stated in January that officers from the service would complete the safety inspection. He noted that he had emailed the Senior Manager - Economy and Community Department but had not received a response.

The Chairman highlighted the fact that this was a Consultative Committee and, as such, there was no necessity on officers to act.

The Senior Manager – Economy and Community Department noted that he appreciated the observations of the RNLI representative and accepted his concerns. He noted, because of the scarcity of resources and the likelihood of not being able to implement risk mitigating measures, that they were avoiding carrying out a high number of inspections. He emphasised that the Council welcomed partners' input, including the RNLI, and cooperated with the institute in mitigating risks at Barmouth. He apologised that the representative had not received a response to his email and that he would give the email due consideration.

In response to an observation by a member that it would be useful to have the RNLI's input with regard to Porthmadog, the Senior Manager - Economy and Community Department stated that the Service prioritised according to risk.

The member expressed his disappointment that the RNLI's input was not sought as regards the inspection of the Glaslyn estuary and Black Rock Sands areas, noting that the Council could consider the matters highlighted by the Institute and prioritise actions to mitigate the risks.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Service did take the opinion of the Consultative Committee into consideration. It was reported that experienced officers from the Service had carried out an inspection and were, consequently, in the process of installing more signs in the area as well as revising information leaflets given to beach users emphasising the risks at the North Bank.

The RNLI representative noted that the institute wished to continue collaborating with the Service and offered the same assistance at Porthmadog as was provided at Barmouth and Tywyn. He added that he acknowledged that expertise existed within the Service but that he was dissatisfied that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer had not contacted the RNLI having confirmed at the previous meeting that he would do so.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that a risk assessment of the Morfa Bychan area had been completed by the RNLI two years previous, and it was not considered timely to revisit.

The Harbour Master confirmed that a new sign (in accordance with the RNLI design) had been installed on Lôn Gwydryn and three more signs would be installed, along with another at Borth-y-Gest, upon which would be a tides table.

A member noted that it would be useful for the Council to seek the opinion of outside organisations and that this should be welcomed.

In response to an enquiry by a member regarding the latest on the Porthmadog Sailing Club's plan to install pontoons at the Harbour wall, the Leisure Interests Representative noted that investigation and assessment work was ongoing.

3. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer guided the members through the report, drawing attention to the following main points:

- No observations had been received relating to the Marine Safety Code since the previous meeting.
- The Service had expected an inspection to be carried out by an inspector from the Coastguard Agency in January. However, lack of capacity meant that the inspection has not taken place and the Service was waiting the inspection to be re-arranged. It was anticipated that the inspection would take place in September 2017.
- A detailed inspection would be conducted by Trinity House Lighthouse Authority inspectors on 31 July 2017. It was anticipated, on account of recent investments, that the report would confirm the continued improvement of the condition and stations of the Porthmadog Harbour Aids to Navigation.
- Two Mariners' Notices were in operation at Porthmadog Harbour. The notice for Buoy Number 1 (Sandbank) was up to date - it was not on station (notice no. 10). Buoy aid No. 3 (notice no. 9) was also off station and mariners were being warned to navigate with care in this area until the aids had been re-located to their correct stations. Trinity House had been informed of the situation at Porthmadog via the PANAR system, in keeping with requirements.
- The Porthmadog Harbour navigation channel had changed significantly over the past few weeks, particularly in the Cwt Powdwr area. It was noted that the Service regularly inspected the channel at low tide in order to try to ensure that the aids to navigation were in the most suitable locations. The constant shifting of the channel made it difficult to ensure that the aids were in their correct positions.
- As reported in the previous meeting, the Harbour Assistant's employment period had been extended to the end of December 2016 in order to ensure support and continuation of the service across the County. It was noted that the period of

employment had been further extended to the end of March 2017 on a three day a week arrangement. It was reported that the Harbour Assistants' positions would be advertised for the period of 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017.

- A boat that had been abandoned near Ballast Quay had been secured and moved to the slipway area. It was noted that the Service would contact the owners and inform them of the intention to sell or dispose of the boat unless it was removed from the Harbour during the next two months. It was noted that if members were aware of any projects wishing to take on the boat, they were to contact the Service.
- The budgetary situation up to the end of January 2017, noting that it was anticipated that the income target would not be met for the financial year.
- That a new Powercat boat would be located at Porthmadog.
- That the draft fees for Porthmadog Harbour for the 2017-18 financial year had been submitted at the previous meeting. The intention to increase fees by an average of 2% in order to meet the budgetary challenge and the service's target income was confirmed. It was explained that the Cabinet Member for Economy would confirm the fees by the end of March 2017.
- In 2017 the Council would have to charge a fee for each mooring at every Harbour under Council management. It was explained that the fee had been added by the Crown Estate that would claim £25.00 from each mooring at each harbour. It was noted that the Council, as the Harbour Authority, would be required to charge and collect this fee on behalf of the Crown Estate. It was added that the additional fee was also payable for visitor moorings and this payment would need to be funded via the Harbour budget.

The Senior Harbours Officer was welcomed back following a period of ill-health.

The Harbour Master provided details on the spring maintenance work programme. Members noted that management measures to prevent cars from parking on the boat storage site at Borth-y-Gest had improved the situation.

In response to a question from a member about standardising Harbour Toll fees so that there would be no difference between a Local Fee and Other Fees, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that, even though Harbour Tolls had been standardised, for other fees a discount for local people continued. It was noted that, despite an above inflation rate increase in fees at Borth y Gest, this was believed to be reasonable.

In response to an observation by a member, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that the demand for permanent moorings was falling with the number of visitors increasing and a means of attracting more customers was being considered. The Harbour Master confirmed that 76 individuals had confirmed permanent moorings, which equated to 50% of the available provision. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer added that some individuals would not confirm until May.

RESOLVED to note and accept the report.

5. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 11 October, 2017.

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

CHAIRMAN