

PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 21/3/17

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), W. A. Partington (Maritime Traders Association), Councillor Mici Plwm (Pwllheli Town Council), Alwyn Roberts (RNLI) and Stephen Tudor (Pwllheli Sailing Club and Plas Heli).

Also in attendance: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Llŷr B. Jones (Senior Economy and Community Manager) and Bethan Adams (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Peter Read (Gwynedd Council)

1. CONDOLENCES

Condolences were extended to Wil Williams (Pwllheli Harbour Manager) following the recent death of his father. The Chairman noted that he would send him a card on behalf of the Consultative Committee.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the Consultative Committee meeting that took place on 18 October, 2016 as a true record.

4. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

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

- Members were requested that any matters relating to the Maritime Safety Code be brought to the attention of the Service.
- The Service had expected an inspection of the code by an inspector from the Coastguard Agency in January. However, unfortunately, due to the lack of capacity the inspection has not taken place and the Service was awaiting for the inspection to be re-organised. It was anticipated that the inspection would take place in September 2017.
- Following a comment made at the previous meeting, the light on the Navigational Buoy had been changed so that it could now be seen at a further distance from the sea. Reference was made to the strength of the security lighting of the Blue Marine Water company, the Maritime Traders Association Representative noted that he would raise the matter with the company.
- The Service, jointly with the RNLI, had commenced a review of the safety signage in the Harbour area and on Pwllheli beaches. The Service would respond to the recommendations of the review and it was hoped that any new sign would contribute to safety on this section of the Gwynedd coast.
- Details were given of the Harbour and the Hafan's current financial position and it was noted that the Service was confident that the budget would be in accordance with the target except for an income shortfall in Hafan.

- How financial information is presented to the Consultative Committee would be reviewed.
- The Council had supported the Service's request to reconcile the charging process in Hafan. From 1 April onwards, the process for charging a fee for a pontoon mooring would return to a boat Length Overall (LOA) arrangement in Hafan Pwllheli. It was anticipated that this would reduce the cost of an annual mooring for 95% of the customers on a banding charging arrangement and it was hoped that this would attract new customers to Hafan over the next three years.
- In 2017 the Council would have to add a fee for each mooring in every Harbour under the Council's management. It was explained that the fee has been added by the Crown Estate who would claim £25.00 from each mooring in the external harbour. It was noted that the Council, as the Harbour Authority, was 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.

An update was given on the work to be undertaken in accordance with the Dredging Strategy, it was noted that an inspection of the channel would be undertaken during the next most favourable low tide and a hydrographic survey would be done to identify if bed levelling work would need to be commissioned in the channel. It was noted that the work of dredging the harbour mouth would be undertaken during April prior to undertaking the bed levelling work before Whitsun, if it was required. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would send a copy of the Dredging Strategy to members who had not received a copy.

In response to a question from a member regarding increasing the size of the groin, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that it was proposed to return the groin back to its previous form. It was noted that there would be substantial costs involved with increasing the size of the groin due to the licences that would have to be obtained under habitat regulations before taking action.

A member noted his frustration regarding the speed of implementing the Dredging Strategy which was vital to ensure future success. In response, the Senior Economy and Community Manager noted that he accepted the comment regarding taking time to operate, however, the dredging workload was intense and there was no simple solution. He confirmed that the Dredging Strategy had been identified as a priority by the Economy and Community Department for the 2017-18 financial year.

The Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association Representative noted that the association had conducted a survey of their members' views and they had highlighted their desire for more facilities such as restaurants and public houses closer to Hafan as they felt that they were too far to go into the town. He added that dredging was vitally important but it was necessary to consider other matters as this alone would not attract everyone back.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer referred to Area 5 of the External Harbour, it was noted that area 5 and 6 had been combined and there had been an investment in a row of moorings together with three stake moorings that were available for the same fee. It was explained that the Pwllheli Harbour Manager would consider the applications received.

In response to a comment by the Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association Representative, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the first three stakes were ear-marked for local people. It was noted that the Council would have the right to anchor boats side by side on the first 3 stakes in order to increase local capacity.

It was reported that there would be no renewals for customers if their account was in debt. In response to a comment by the Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association

Representative, it was noted that this was not directed to specific individuals, it was a general comment for all customers and the Council had a responsibility to safeguard the money owed to ratepayers.

The Pwllheli Sailing Club and Plas Heli Representative noted that the arrangement with the Council regarding boats from Area 5 mooring at Plas Heli was still open to customers.

In response to comments in the context of attracting people to take a mooring at Plas Heli at the expense of Hafan, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Council was working with Plas Heli to try to facilitate access to local people as the Hafan fee was higher due to the additional facilities that were available.

The Pwllheli Sailing Club and Plas Heli Representative noted that Plas Heli had been funded by European grant funding and that one of the aims when Plas Heli was established was to provide moorings for a lower market price to local people.

The Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association Representative suggested that consideration should be given to reducing Hafan fees in order to try and fill the empty places. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Service would consider the matter.

It was noted that the Service would continue to consider options and to review the night security supervision procedure at Hafan. The Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association Representative noted that the Association members were in agreement that the safety supervision at Hafan should continue to be 24/7.

The need to use a portion of the Hafan annual surplus towards maintenance was noted.

It was proposed and seconded to request that the Cabinet Member – Economy re-invests 50% of the annual Hafan surplus in order to ensure that officers have resources for maintenance, implementing the Dredging Strategy and to improve resources in order to attract more customers.

RESOLVED to ask the Cabinet Member for the Economy to re-invest 50% of the annual Hafan surplus in order to ensure that officers have the resources for maintenance, implementing the Dredging Strategy and to improve resources in order to attract more customers.

The Maritime Traders Association Representative noted the need to market that Hafan would return to an arrangement of charging a maximum boat Length Overall (LOA) fee to attract customers. In response, the Senior Economy and Community Manager noted that he hoped that returning to the LOA arrangement would attract customers. He added, that the Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association had been key in terms of the suggestion to return to this arrangement.

In response to a concern by the Maritime Traders Association Representative, that the additional Crown Estate fee would increase, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he hoped that it would remain static for the next five years.

The Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association Representative referred to the frustration of an individual who could not get the name and address of a boat owner from the Council in the context of an insurance claim, and he asked about the Council's insurance arrangements with owners. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Council could not release the name and address of an individual to others under the Data Protection Act 1998. He explained that in the past the Council had asked individuals for copies of their insurance policies, however, by now owners were requested to complete

a legal statement noting the sum that their boat was insured for, in accordance with the legal guidance received. He noted that it was the owners' insurers who would contact each other if a situation was to arise regarding a claim.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the numbers of visiting boats in Hafan during the current year had increased. The Pwllheli Sailing Club and Plas Heli Representative noted that it would be interesting to see the statistics of visitors to the other harbours in order to identify any trends. The Maritime Traders Association Representative suggested that consideration should be given to reducing the fee for visiting boats in order to try and encourage people to come to Pwllheli, as a result they may take a mooring for the following year. The Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association Representative noted that harbours did ask for the e-mail address of individuals for marketing and a country-wide system existed regarding moving from place to place.

RESOLVED to note and accept the report.

5. NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the Member Support Officer would write to the organisation/societies in May to request their constitutions / annual general meeting minutes together with confirmation of their representatives.

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 17 October, 2017.

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

CHAIRMAN