

MEETING	Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee
DATE	23 October 2017
TITLE	Update on Harbour Management Matters
AUTHOR	Maritime and Country Parks Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee's main function is to consider and advise on matters relating to the management, safety and development of the Harbour and to receive Members' observations on matters relating to Barmouth Harbour.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide a brief update for the attention of the Committee on Harbour matters for the period from March 2017 to October 2017 in order to receive feedback from the Members on Safety matters and the harbour's operational matters.
- 1.3 In 2014, the Council's Cabinet decided that the Harbour Committees of Aberdyfi, Barmouth and Pwllheli would include: -
- Up to 4 Gwynedd Council Local Members
 - The Gwynedd Council Cabinet Member who holds the Harbour Authority Portfolio
 - One Town/Community Council Member
 - Up to seven other members to represent the various interests of harbour users

During the summer, the Member Support Officer corresponded with every harbour organisation representative named above, reminding them of the need for organisations to nominate a representative for the coming year, and send a copy of the constitution and minutes of the annual meeting of the relevant groups. It will be essential for the information to be submitted to the Council where relevant.

Porthmadog Harbour Committee is the only statutory harbour committee in Gwynedd Council and the Committee has been created in accordance with Section 6 (2) (a-j) of the Porthmadog Harbour Reform Order. The Order provides that 15 Members serve on the Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee. A comprehensive list of the groups and organisations being represented on the Harbour Committee can be seen in the Harbour Order.

2. Barmouth Moorings and Boat Registration

- 2.1 In 2017/18 figures for boats on moorings in the Harbour were as follows: -
- 2.2 86 boats on annual moorings in 2017. This compares with 88 in 2015. 69% of the owners reside in Gwynedd while 31% reside outside the county. 64% are power boats and 36% are sailing boats.
- 2.3 On the whole, when comparing all Gwynedd Council harbours, a small increase was seen in the number of customers over the past year, including an increase at Hafan, Pwllheli. The only exception in terms of the consistency of boat numbers on moorings was at Victoria Dock in Caernarfon, where a reduction was seen in the number of boats on pontoon moorings due to mooring difficulties due to an increase in silt which had resulted in a lack of water depth in the Dock.
- 1.1 903 Power Boats were registered in Gwynedd in 2017, compared to 1001 registered in 2016. 66 boats were registered at Barmouth harbour, compared to 81 power boats registered in 2016.
- 1.2 725 Personal Watercrafts were registered in Gwynedd in 2017. This compares with the 729 registered in 2016. 66 personal watercraft were registered in Barmouth harbour in 2017. This compares with 69 Personal Water Craft registered in 2016.

- 1.3 During the summer season this year, three boats broke free from their moorings. Damage was caused to the boats and the Railway Bridge had to be closed for a period as a sailing boat with a mast had struck the bridge. It was released with assistance from the RNLI Crew.
- 1.4 Although the winds have been comparatively strong at times, this should not impact the moorings. Mooring owners are required to ensure that the moorings are fit for purpose. Also, it is essential for the owners of each mooring to confirm the suitability of the mooring by submitting a Mooring certificate to the Harbour Authority before the boat is anchored in the harbour.
- 1.5 The service has emphasised this on many occasions and has received support from the Harbour Committee to ensure that mooring owners and contractors comply with the Barmouth Harbour By-laws. The 5 By-laws refer to the requirement to submit a mooring suitability certificate to the Harbour Authority on an annual basis.

2. Ports Marine Safety Code

- 2.1.1 In November 2016, the Department for Transport published revisions to the Ports Safety Code. Copies of the new code have been circulated to all Members of the Consultative Committees and a copy is also available on the MCA's website. The Maritime and Country Parks Service is reviewing the Safety Code for Gwynedd municipal harbours regularly to ensure that all safety systems in our harbours comply with the requirements of the code and our customers' expectations and in order to comply with Health and Safety requirements.
- 2.1.2 The Government's Department for Transport has reviewed and published 'A Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations' which is linked to the Marine Safety Code and a copy of the document is available to Members upon request to the Maritime and Country Parks service.
- 2.1.3 Between the 19th and 21st of September 2017, a thorough inspection was carried out by the Coastguard Agency's auditors on the current safety arrangements and systems of Gwynedd municipal harbours in order to ensure compliance with the Ports Safety Code. The inspectors' initial opinion was that the Council complied with the requirements in general but that some aspects relating to recording duties and stating the Duty Holder needed to be revised. The inspectors visited the harbours of Aberdyfi, Porthmadog and Pwllheli during the audit. They did not visit Barmouth due to time restrictions.
- 2.1.4 A written report is expected from the inspectors soon, outlining the matters requiring attention from the Council. It is ensured that the Consultative Committees receive a copy of the report. When the inspector's report will be received, the Council will have a specific period to revise its arrangements and the Coastguard Agency will revisit the service within 12 months of submitting the report when recommendations submitted in the report will be expected to be actioned.
- 2.1.5 Following a discussion with the inspectors, it was agreed in principle that it would be beneficial for the date of the second visit to coincide with the date of the Harbour Consultative Committee. It was suggested to the inspectors that it could be beneficial for them to attend a meeting of Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee and invite representatives from the Consultative Committees of Aberdyfi, Barmouth and Pwllheli to the meeting. This would enable Members to receive information from the inspectors regarding the main issues of the Safety Code and the expectation on the Council to comply with the Safety Code.
- 2.1.6 It is emphasised that no improvement notice was issued relating to serious safety issues or shortcomings at the harbour. They noted that there is an opportunity to tidy-up the area around Aberdyfi harbour quay as effects and ropes have been left on the quay in a way that could pose a risk. Verbal observations were submitted regarding the width of

the channel in Pwllheli harbour. No observations were submitted on Safety matters in Porthmadog harbour.

- 2.1.7 Although the Ports Safety Code is regularly reviewed by the service, it is inevitable to remind Members of the Consultative Committee of the duty on them to submit observations on the suitability of the Safety Code and to receive observations on the work arrangements of the harbours so that the Safety Code can be reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to harbour operations, the propriety of the location of navigation aids, general safety and the day-to-day work of the harbour.
- 2.1.8 No issue or cause of concern has been submitted for the attention of the service from Members of the Harbour Committee in 2017 associated with the Harbour's statutory responsibilities and duties.

3. Navigation

- 3.1.1 A detailed inspection was conducted by Trinity House Lighthouse Authority inspectors on 2 August 2017. Compared with previous reports, the 2017 report confirmed a further improvement in the condition and locations of Barmouth Harbour's Navigation Aids. The inspector noted that maintenance work was required (painting work) on Navigation Aid Number 6 (P0334.). A chart is appended showing the current locations of the navigation aids.
- 3.1.2 The Harbour's Navigation Aids maintenance work programme has been completed in accordance with the permission and instruction of the Consultative Committee. An update of the current situation will be given to Members at the meeting.
- 3.1.3 No Mariners' Notice is currently in operation in Barmouth harbour. PANAR reports are submitted by the Service for the attention of Trinity House on a quarterly basis. The PANAR report reports on the quality of navigation aids in Gwynedd harbours.
- 3.1.4 It is proposed to maintain the Fairway Buoy in the coming weeks to ensure that it is suitable for siting in the bay before the next sailing season commences.
- 3.1.5 One report was submitted to the Marine Accident Investigation Board (MAIB) in relation to an incident in Barmouth harbour. This reported on an inexperienced individual who had lost control of the boat when navigating from the slipway. The boat had been driven at a relatively high speed and it had struck a nearby structure. Fortunately, the individual was not injured and no equipment was damaged.

3.2 Maintenance

- 3.2.1 Arrangements and a work programme for maintaining key elements of Barmouth harbour will be submitted by the Harbour Master at the meeting.
- 3.2.2 The Harbour Master will also submit a maintenance work programme which is to be undertaken at Barmouth Harbour during the October - December period, and will provide an outline of the work programme undertaken in January - March 2017. Feedback from Committee members is requested on any additional work that will need to be considered and included in the work programme.

3.3 Staffing Matters

- 3.3.1 The employment period of the Barmouth Harbour Assistant (seasonal) ended on 30 September 2017. In order to ensure support for and a continuation of the service across the county, the service is extending the employment period of the Harbour Assistants at Barmouth, Aberdyfi and Porthmadog until the end of November 2017. Any extended employment period will be subject to the harbour's work programme and will of course depend on the outcome of the harbour's financial situation 2017/18.

- 3.3.2 The three harbour assistants will be a part of the broader service team and extending the period of employment will ensure that it will be possible to respond to coastal incidents and assist with the maintenance work programme targets at Barmouth, Aberdyfi and Porthmadog harbours over the winter months. Unfortunately, due to lone working risks, the service cannot offer a seven day a week service over the autumn and winter months. Staff will be present during the Motor Cross event at the end of October.
- 3.4 **Harbour Matters**
- 3.4.1 **Safety Barrier in the Quay Area** - At the beginning of the summer season, the service identified a high risk in the quay area. The risk was affecting pedestrians as vehicles were able to drive and park unauthorised in the quay area. Although purposeful bollards had been located on the site, the bollards were not effective as they could be removed from their sockets and left by the side of a nearby building.
- 3.4.2 After carrying out an assessment of the options to reduce the risk, the service identified that installing a purposeful barrier on the site would substantially reduce the risk to the public. The barrier was installed by harbour staff.
- 3.4.3 Since the installation of the barrier, the harbour has been monitoring the site in order to identify the effectiveness of the barrier. The feedback received from the service is that the barrier has improved safety in the area. Although the barrier has caused some difficulty to commercial users, the reduction in the risk outweighs any access difficulties and we greatly hope that the commercial users will be able to appreciate the safety improvements.
- 3.4.4 It was agreed that the barrier was installed with a condition that the service sought the views of the Harbour Committee on the effectiveness of the barrier.
- 3.4.5 **Pontoon** - We refer to a meeting held on 1 February 2017 to discuss the ownership, responsibilities, maintenance procedure and management of the pontoon on the quay. Local groups and organisations, Gwynedd Council and the Town Council had representatives at the meeting.
- 3.4.6 The main conclusion of the meeting was that the representatives present would discuss and consider transferring the 'ownership' of the pontoon to a local group or organisation. The Council has received correspondence from Barmouth Community Trust expressing an interest in the pontoon and it is greatly hoped that the group will have the capacity to ensure the future of the pontoon in Barmouth. Any transfer would have to receive permission from the current owners.
- 3.4.7 It is confirmed that the pontoon is not in the Council's ownership therefore the Council is not in any position to continue to maintain the pontoon in the future.
- 3.4.8 **Penrhyn Point** - The service is collaborating with the Arthog Community Council in an attempt to improve the Management in the slipway area at Penrhyn Point. A safety gate has been installed on the site and new signs have been designed and ordered. The gate has been partially effective and further improvements will be discussed with the Community Council during the winter months. Unfortunately, a number of signs referring to an overnight parking restriction were vandalised over the summer season.
- 3.4.9 **Safety Signs** - It is confirmed that the Service is continuing to collaborate with the RNLI to improve the safety signs in the Harbour and Barmouth beach areas.
- 3.4.10 The Service has responded to the results of the inspection and has confirmed the design of the signs and their main locations with the RNLI. It had been intended to produce and install the signs in their appropriate location over the summer season; however, due to technical difficulties, it was not possible to complete the work.

3.4.11 It is emphasised that the delay was a matter that could not have been identified beforehand. We are confident that the new signs will contribute towards public safety on Gwynedd's coastline.

3.4.12 **Parking Safety** - The service has undertaken an appropriate risk assessment in order to identify and reduce any risk relating to driving and parking vehicles on lands abutting the Harbour Master's office.

Following the assessment, the service has introduced a new system which prohibits unauthorised persons and those without permission to park on the plot that runs alongside the harbour compound. Furthermore, appropriate steps have been taken to protect the few parking spaces available near the barrier that leads to the compound.

4. Financial Matters

4.1 A summary of the Harbour's budgets and current financial situation up to the end of Quarter 2 2017/18 and end of year budget report for the financial year 2016/17 are attached.

4.2 During this period, it was necessary to commit financial resources for the following: -

- Maintenance of Navigation Aids and Beacons
- Maintenance of Council moorings
- Extending staff employment term
- Parking spaces lines and bollards
- Safety Barrier
- Disposal of Flares/TEPs

4.3 **Fees and Charges 2017/18** . The prospective figures spreadsheet for Barmouth Harbour and the boat and Personal Water Craft launching fees for 2018 is attached. Inflation for harbours for 2018/19 is anticipated to be at 1.78%. In order to meet with the budget challenge and the service's income target it was suggested that Barmouth harbour fees are increased by 2% on average for the 2018/19 financial year.

4.4 It is emphasised that only a draft has been submitted before Members and the fees are subject to receiving confirmation from the Portfolio Leader early in 2018 before they are published and distributed to customers.

4.5 The inflation increase for 2018/19 is as follows: -

4.5.1	Beaches	-	3.1%
4.5.2	Hafan	-	1.73%
4.5.3	Harbours	-	1.78%
4.5.4	Victoria Dock	-	1.45%
4.5.5	Parc Padarn	-	3.25%
4.5.6	Parc Glynllifon	-	3.0%

5. Events

5.1 The following events were held at Barmouth Harbour in 2017: -

- The prestigious Three Peaks Race event
- The Motor Cross event on Barmouth beach
- 'Railway Bridge' Celebration
- Mawddach Paddlefest
- Kite Flying Festival - Barmouth Beach
- Distance Swimming Competition
- Barmouth Fireworks Celebrations