

ABERDYFI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 02/03/2021

PRESENT:

Members: Cllr Anne Lloyd Jones (Gwynedd Council), Cllr Dewi Owen (Gwynedd Council), Cllr Mike Stevens (Gwynedd Council), Cllr Bob Tyrrell (Aberdyfi Community Council), Al Crisp (Outward Bound Wales), Cllr David Williams (Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertisement Committee), Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club) and Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club)

Officers: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), Will A Stockford (Aberdyfi Harbourmaster), Oli Simmonds (Aberdyfi Harbour Assistant), Mererid Watt (Translator), Natalie Lloyd Jones (Democratic Services Officers).

1. CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Dewi Owen as Chair of this Committee for the year 2021/22.

2. VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones as Vice-chair of this Committee for the year 2021/22.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by Councillor Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member for Economy), Llŷr B Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee that took place on 5th of March 2019, as a true record.

7. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

RESOLVED to accept the reports.

An update was given on Harbour Management Matters by the Senior Harbours Officer emphasising that the pandemic had affected the figures of every harbour in Gwynedd. This was supported by the Chairman.

He proceeded to update Committee members on the following points:

- The annual moorings were reported upon and the reduction seen in 2020, namely, that there had been 47 boats on annual moorings compared to 68 in 2019. It was presumed that many vessel holders had decided not to utilise their vessels during this period.
- It was reported on the number of registered boats and personal watercraft and it was noted that there had been an increase in the number of personal watercraft.
- Reference was made to the report and it was stated that all the relevant statistics were noted within, and questions on these were welcomed.

The Port Marine Safety Code was discussed and members were asked to inform the Service if they had any observations regarding this. The situation regarding harbour staff was discussed and they were thanked for their work during the lockdown period. It was noted that they had continued to work throughout the pandemic to ensure the safety of the public and the harbour.

In relation to the situation regarding the Covid-19 regulations, it was noted that signage had been erected to assist with compliance and to ensure that staff remain safe.

The Assistant Harbourmaster was welcomed and his appointment was now a permanent contract. It was noted that his contribution had been key in supporting the Harbourmaster during this difficult period. Along with this appointment, the Senior Harbours Officer noted that it was proposed to appoint two seasonal beach officers as it was anticipated that there would be a great deal of visitors this summer.

In relation to financial matters, it was noted that the current figures were not currently available from the finance unit; however, assurance was given that these would be available to members soon. An update was given on the financial situation and it was noted there had been a major impact on the income gained as a result of the lower number of boats and it was anticipated that uncertainty regarding travel would also impact income this year. It was added and noted that Council members had supported and had reduced the income targets to take into consideration the maritime industry's challenges.

The Harbourmaster and the Harbours Assistant were thanked for the work last year during a very busy period, although it had been a short season. The importance of their posts was reiterated in relation to the safe management of the harbours and beaches.

During the discussion, the following observations were raised;

- All harbour staff were thanked for their work by the Members.
- It was added that the area had experienced a very high number of visitors and it was anticipated that this would happen again this year and harbour staff will be very busy, it was emphasised that they needed every support.
- Sympathy was shown to the department as the income had obviously reduced due to the restrictions.
- It was accepted, however, that the income needed to be raised and it was proposed that keeping the fees the same would increase the number who would pay.

In response to some of the above observations, it was noted;

- That the Council was very supportive of the harbours' financial position and that there had been several meetings to discuss ways to respond to the post-restrictions period.
- The main focus this summer would be to ensure the safety of visitors to harbours and beach areas.
- It was confirmed that the Council was very supportive and many meetings had taken place to look at how to respond to opening up and the numbers of visitors in all parts of Gwynedd.

- It was added that the support of two members of staff this summer would release a member of staff to be out on the water more regularly to keep everything in order.
- It was noted that the justification for raising fees was to support the Service and to encourage people to register for the year.
- It was added that people were encouraged to pay on-line or electronically as it was not possible to register at the harbour office.

8. HARBOURMASTER'S REPORT

RESOLVED to accept the reports.

The report was presented by the Harbourmaster and he noted the main points on the action points as follows:

- It was noted that staff had worked throughout the pandemic period and had been extremely busy. It was added that challenges had arisen in ensuring that everyone understood the dangers of the Estuary.
- A great deal of work had been undertaken to secure people's safety by ensuring social distancing and signage were erected, it was added that the department had provided appropriate materials in terms of PPE to staff.
- An offer was made to distribute a digital version of the harbour chart to see the AEC locations once there is a final version.
- An overview was given of the various maintenance work that had taken place over the period.
- It was noted that there was a joint working partnership with Outward Bound and they also ran a project.
- In relation to Canolfan Dyfi, it was noted that there were no changes, however, minor alterations had been made in the centre in order to meet with the requirements.
- It was noted that the Department was awaiting news about relaxing the restrictions as there were applications from PWC Gwynedd, Jetski Club etc. regarding staging events.

During the discussion the following observations were made:

- The Harbourmaster was thanked for all his work.
- It was asked if there was a sand removal scheme this year.
- A member added that not much sand had accumulated this year as the wind had moved it back, he continued to emphasise the importance of the quay wall as it had been damaged.
- Thanks were extended for the plans on the slipway as launching from Church Bay had been frustrating.
- It was asked what were the plans to treat the wall near the old lifeboat slipway as there was a prominent crack to be seen.
- It was asked if there were any plans to clear the promenade and the car park soon.
- The attention of the officers was drawn to the poor condition of the railings between the car park and the promenade, it was asked if this was a matter for the harbour or another department.

In response, the Harbourmaster noted the following:

- That there were currently no plans to remove sand as it was not a priority, however, the situation would be reviewed if it worsens. It was added that finance had gone to protect the quay wall and there was a lack of funding.
- He added that the river was moving and sand was moving – as had occurred in the past.

- It was noted that the YGC department managed the quay renovation work on the Council's behalf and the condition continued to be monitored. He added that this had gone out to tender once more.
- Regarding the crack in the wall, he noted that it was the YGC department who inspected this every three months and that they were responsible for maintenance.
- The clearance work on the promenade and the car park would happen fairly soon.
- It was noted that the railings would be treated when finance was available, however, in the meantime this will be monitored to ensure that the situation does not get any worse.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Condolences were extended on the recent loss of Brian Bates who had been a loyal member of the committee and had contributed significantly, and always offered his views and expertise. He had worked with the coastguard service for many years and his local contribution had been significant. He was a character who would be greatly missed as well as his maritime service to the community of Aberdyfi.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The 2nd November had been earmarked by the Democratic Services Committee. The date would be circulated to the members once the calendar had been confirmed.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 11.50am.