
ABERDYFI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 02/11/2021

PRESENT:

Members: Cllr Anne Lloyd Jones (Gwynedd Council), Cllr Dewi Owen (Gwynedd Council), Cllr Mike Stevens (Gwynedd Council), Al Crisp (Outward Bound Wales), Cllr David Williams (Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertising Committee), Guy Shaw (Aberdyfi Rowing Club) and Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club).

Officers: Barry Davies (Maritime Service Manager), Arthur Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), Oli Simmons (Aberdyfi Harbour Assistant), Natalie Lloyd Jones (Democratic Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Gareth Thomas, Llyr B. Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department), Councillor Bob Tyrrell (Aberdyfi Community Council), Will Stockford (Aberdyfi Harbourmaster).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note.

3. MINUTES

- a. The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 2 March 2021, as a true record.
- b. There were no matters arising from the minutes

4. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

DECISION

- (1) Resolved to note and accept the report.
- (2) Response to the Department of Transport's consultation paper 'Strengthening enforcement of the dangerous use of recreational and personal watercraft' that this committee preferred option 3, namely creating legislation under section 112 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 to extend the relevant provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, and relevant regulations, to include recreational and personal watercraft.

Update on Harbour Management Matters from the Senior Harbours Officer. He noted the main points as follows:

- That 76 boats were on moorings compared to 47 in 2020. He reiterated generally, that Gwynedd harbours had seen an increase in the number of boats on moorings.

- It was assumed that the increase was due to relaxing Covid-19 restrictions and the continued restrictions on travelling abroad.
- He shared that the on-line registering procedure for power boats and jet skis was a success.
- The total number of registrations was summarised at 1,308 and the total number of personal watercraft (jet ski) registrations at 1,302.
- He noted that the Committee was aware that the service complied with the Port Marine safety code, and it was added that members should inform them regarding any comments.

An update on staffing matters was presented as follows:

- It was noted that the staffing level had not changed since the last report and it was reiterated that the service was able to call on staff from Porthmadog or Barmouth if need arose.
- Two beach wardens were appointed to assist with supervising the management of Aberdyfi's main beach and it was added that according to feedback from residents this was a success.
- In relation to Committee matters, pride was noted in the support available for this Committee, and it was shared that there is currently a vacant post. He said there was a request from the RNLI to fill the post, and the members' support was requested to ensure that the post was filled by the next meeting in the Spring.

Financial matters were presented by the Maritime Manager, who explained the Harbour's financial situation by noting the budget, expenditure and actual expenditure and explained any overspend or underspend to the members.

He discussed the consultation document on strengthening enforcement of the dangerous use of recreational and personal watercraft. It was explained that the closing date of the consultation had passed, however a letter had been written to the Department of Transport in London noting the date of this committee and explaining that Gwynedd Council's comments would be shared following the Committee.

It was noted that 4 options were associated with the consultation with the preferred one being to revise the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 to extend the relevant provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, and relevant regulations, to include recreational and personal watercraft. It was explained that the Committees of other harbours had already decided to support this option. He added that there was no obligation to follow this option and the Members were asked for their opinions.

During the discussion, the following observations were made by members:

- Pride was expressed in seeing that the number of boats had increased as it was very good for the service in terms of additional finance.
- It was asked for accuracy in the figures as the English copy was different to the Welsh copy in term of registrations.
- A comment was made regarding the beach wardens hut and it was asked if it was possible to replace it with something more in-keeping with the area.
- It was noted that the staff had faced a very busy season and thanks were expressed to all staff that were available around the harbour.
- A member asked for clarity on the expenditure on Equipment and Tools compared to the previous year.
- It was suggested to differentiate between navigation items and other equipment on the budget.
- In relation to the consultation, the members noted they were happy to go with option 3 but some added that they didn't see it as being much different to the current procedure.

In response to the observations, the Senior Harbours Officer and the Maritime Manager noted that:

- Many of the cabins were to protect staff during rough weather, however there was a need to encourage staff to be out talking and engaging with the public and completing work on the beach. It was added that it was on the work programme to upgrade the cabins.
- In response to the question on the amount spent on Equipment and Tools, it was invested in navigational aids, chains, lamps as they were statutory requirements under the safety code. It was noted that it was essential to maintain this equipment.
- Differentiating on the budget was considered, however it was decided that it was not appropriate. It was agreed to consider differentiating between the navigation costs as there was a cost for replacing and relocating with navigation. Assurance was given that there would be differentiating in the next budget.

5. HARBOURMASTER'S REPORT

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

- In terms of navigation matters he noted that the channel changed often and was monitored throughout the season so as to make it possible to give warnings to mariners.
- He explained that Trinity House had been to inspect and he noted that local contractors had completed the maintenance work on the navigation aids as asked.
- In relation to action points, he noted that the end of Covid restrictions had resulted in a very busy Summer but the additional wardens were a big help.
- He added that most of the visitors were respectful, however a few disrespectful experiences were recorded. He additionally noted that there was an increase in litter being left around the harbour and the beach.
- He explained that there was an immense increase in Stand-up Paddleboards on the beach, and the wardens managed to advise the users on sea safety and to keep the channel clear.
- He explained all the maintenance work that had taken place, for instance the cabins and the patrol boat.

The Maritime Manager added the following:

- That recruiting for seasonal work was challenging and it was asked for the members to advertise any jobs within their wards or communities.
- As a result of verbal abuse, the service had invested in CCTV cameras for staff to wear.
- In order to deal with litter, mostly as a result of visitors crabbing, he noted that collaboration was needed with the local shops that sell the equipment and to locate bins for plastic waste around the harbour.
- He explained the quay wall situation and noted he understood the Committee's frustrations as this had been a discussion point for years. However, he noted that the work had been re-tendered and that applications were being assessed by the YGC department.
- He added that there would be communication with the members following the decision on the contract winners.

The information below was reported regarding the Picnic Island situation from an Outward Bound Trust representative:

- It was noted that by the next committee a bridge would be in place or on its way. Network Rail were thanked for their support whilst the work was ongoing.
- It was explained that local partners and Gwynedd Council were assessing the foundations in November and then the process of removing the old structure and replacing with a new one would commence.

- In relation to costs, the Maritime Manager noted that the costs of steel for example had increased substantially and it was hoped that a formal tender would come within the budget.

During the discussion, the following observations were made by members:

- It was questioned if there was a cost for the harbours service to deal with animal remains that get washed in by the sea.
- It was expressed that many positive things had taken place in the area over the summer but not the litter. Members reiterated that a discussion with shops needed to start and a system to borrow equipment was suggested for return after it had been used.
- It was added that the Community Council received complaints regarding litter and that additional bins had been discussed.
- The staff were thanked for their work during the very busy year, a member reiterated a special thanks to Tywyn Beach Officer for his work engaging with visitors.
- Assurance was asked for in terms of quick information being available regarding the quay wall as it was going to create big problems for the businesses on the quay. It was added that many emails had currently arrived regarding the disruption to the sailing club.
- It was noted that it was important that the work on the quay wall was completed as soon as possible despite the complaints and difficulties as it needed to be done urgently.
- It was suggested that a public relations campaign was needed to keep residents up to date with the phases and the work; once the contract was set up this needed to start.
- The possibility of holding a special meeting once the decision on contractors is made was mentioned.

In response, the Maritime Manager noted the following points:

- That the cost to deal with animal remains varied and if it was not possible to take a vehicle close to it, it would be buried there and then. He explained that the cost comes from the beaches budget and not from the harbour's as most of the remains appear on the beach.
- They did not foresee any financial loss for any organisations working on the quay and there was assurance that businesses would remain open throughout the essential work.
- It was noted that there would be contact between the site manager of the quay gate and the harbour users for any information. It was added that the maritime staff would be at hand and would facilitate the ability to receive further information.
- It was explained that it would not be possible to arrange a formal meeting of the Committee to discuss the outcome of the tender of the quay wall. However, an informal meeting for a discussion was suggested.

6. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A member questioned the cleanliness of the river and asked for an update of the pollution to the Dyfi river.

A member noted that sand on the high street was a problem and reference was made to the previous Committee where this was discussed and it was resolved to not intervene as there was no money within the budget.

A member added that this caused difficulties for the RNLI as there was sand on the slipway.

In response to the matters, the Maritime Manager noted the following points:

- That Aberdyfi reached the essential requirements in terms of water hygiene according to Welsh Government.
- It was added that if there was a risk to the quality of bathing water, that the Service received warnings from Natural Resources Wales and then advertised the warnings.
- It was noted that if there were any pollution concerns deriving from specific locations, NRW should be notified immediately so the officers could investigate any allegations.
- In relation to the sand, sympathy was shown towards the problem but he noted that the Service did not have sufficient funds to clean the slipway regularly and it was asked for the RNLI to put a programme in place to ensure the slipway was clear.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be on 22 March, 2022.

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