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# ABERDYFI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, 25 OCTOBER 2022

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## **Present:**

**Gwynedd Councillors:** Councillor Robert Dewi Owen, Councillor John Pughe.

**Co-opted Members:** Josh Cooper (RNLI Aberdyfi), David Williams (Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee), Desmond George (Member of Dyfi Yacht Club), Al Crisp (Outward Bound Trust Wales), Guy Shaw (Aberdyfi Rowing Club), Councillor Bob Tyrrell (Aberdyfi Community Council) and Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Portfolio Leader – Economy and Community and Duty Holder of the Harbour Safety Code).

## **Officers in attendance:**

Llyr Beaumont Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department), Barry Davies (Maritime Manager), Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), Oli Simmons (Aberdyfi Harbour Assistant) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** To elect Councillor Dewi Owen as Chair of the Committee for the year 2022/23.

### **2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** To elect Councillor John Pughe as Vice-chair of the Committee for the year 2022/23.

### **3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones and William Arthur Stockford (Aberdyfi Harbourmaster).

### **4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

No declarations of personal interest were received.

### **5. URGENT ITEMS**

None to note.

### **6. MINUTES**

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 29 March, 2022, as a true record.

### **7. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS**

The following reports were presented, and Members were invited to give observations on their content and to ask questions.

## **The Senior Harbour Officer's report, giving a brief update to the committee on harbour matters for the year ending March 2023.**

- Members were reminded that the terms of reference of the harbour committees had been created under Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Cabinet had confirmed the membership.
- It was explained that the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Community would be invited to attend meetings to discuss important matters with members, before reporting back to the Cabinet as required.
- It was stated that there was a reduction in the number of boats on moorings in the harbour. This caused concern as there had been a reduction of approximately 30% in these figures in the last few years. Despite this, it was confirmed that work was being undertaken to advertise the moorings to once more increase the number of users.
- It was emphasised that the harbour continued to be very busy. Evidence was seen of this as a very high number of people had registered to store their boats in the harbour. It was also noted that the general use of boats was very high. Although the figures had reduced a little, the use of the harbour was very high compared with other harbours in the county.
- It was confirmed that the performance challenge meeting had taken place on 21 October 2022.
- Gratitude was expressed to all in the Yacht Club, Outward Bound, Rowing Club and the RNLI for their effective collaboration with the harbour during the year.
- Praise was given to the company that had been busy recently undertaking building work around the harbour by renovating the quay wall. Members were very glad that purpose-built steps had been incorporated into the quay wall and these steps would be useful to assist those seeking access to their boats when visiting Aberdyfi.
  - It was noted that one corner of the harbour building was falling by 10mm and work was being done to ensure that the building's structure continued to be robust.
- An enquiry was made regarding the correct location of the stairs. Originally it was thought that the two sets of stairs would go to the wharf to assist the boats. By now one set of stairs were on the wharf near the harbour office and the other was in front of the Yacht Club.
  - It was confirmed that the stairs would be shared, to be as fair as possible, and for the best use by all users. The construction work plan would be shared with the members as part of the focus group for them to be able to see how the harbour would look following all the construction work that was currently on-going.

## **Port Marine Safety Code**

- Details were given that the harbour had participated in two recent assessments by the Coastguard. The results of those assessments indicated that the harbour was in compliance with the code.
- It was confirmed that all risk assessments had been completed and would be re-assessed regularly to ensure that they were fit for purpose.
- It was stated that there had been an incident over the summer where two boats had collided, however, no one had been injured and therefore no further investigation was required. The Harbour Authority had reported the incident to the MAIB (Marine Accident Investigation Branch) as part of the expected report.
- It was reported that very positive results had been received following the inspection by Trinity House, namely the national lighthouse authority. There was confirmation

within the inspection that the aids to navigation had remained on station following their installation.

- Concern was expressed regarding the use of personal watercraft (jet skis) in the area, as they could be dangerous to other marine users.
  - It was confirmed that Cyngor Gwynedd had contacted Natural Resources Wales and Ceredigion Council to see if they were keen to adopt a system to register watercraft similar to the one that had been successful in Gwynedd.
  - It was emphasised that officers would contact Natural Resources Wales and Ceredigion Council once again to encourage them to adopt this system. The Portfolio Leader – Economy and Community & Port Marine Safety Code Duty Holder noted that she was keen to contact these authorities in order to improve the system.
  - It was acknowledged that this issue was also relevant to paddle boarders, however, it was emphasised that work was being done to ensure that safety signage would be improved to reduce the risk of harm.

### **Staffing Matters**

- All the staff were thanked for their commitment to the work of the harbour and nearby beaches over the previous period and it was confirmed that no reduction was anticipated in the number of staff members in the near future.
- It was stated that the beach had had a very busy period over the summer and the wardens had undertaken their work very effectively. Should it be possible, consideration would be given to extending their employment term next season and to look at the facilities to ensure that no one would have to work alone.
- It was stated that beach wardens needed a better cabin than the one currently on the site, as it was not suitable.
  - It was confirmed that this problem was being dealt with under the beach improvement plans if there was sufficient budget. Other developments were also being undertaken on the beach such as improving the public conveniences.
- The continuous problem of sand accumulation that happened on the beach was discussed. It would be an idea to find a solution regarding how to prevent sand from being blown into the village and across the RNLI slipway. There was concern that the sand left the beach and covered the car park, incurring additional costs to the Council in the next few years if there is no solution.
  - It was recognised that the Conwy area had recently been successful after inserting a pump in their area to assist to prevent this problem.
  - It was emphasised that everyone knew about the seriousness of the situation and several options were being discussed to try and resolve this problem effectively and permanently.
  - It was agreed that a meeting would be held soon with harbour users to discuss this matter further and to share ideas.

### **Financial Matters**

- It was reported that there had been an overspend under some headings of the budget this year. These were in staff and transport headings. Nevertheless, there was underspend in property, equipment and income.
- It was confirmed that an underspend of £8,828.00 was anticipated in this financial year.
- It was emphasised that matters such as the quay wall and beach wardens had not been accounted for within this budget as their budget derived from other places.
- The fee rates for the next financial year were considered. These had not currently been submitted to the committee as inflation was increasing following the current financial squeeze. It was hoped to find a way to not increase fees for harbour users as this increase would have a major impact on users and increase the risk of reducing the number of future users.
- It was asked if the money from this underspend would remain in Aberdyfi, or was it likely to be used to assist another harbour should the need arise.
  - It was confirmed that the intention was to retain the money in the area, however no assurance could be given that it was possible to do this.

**The Harbourmaster's report, summarising the Navigational and Operational matters that had arisen between March and October 2022, including maintenance matters.**

- It was confirmed that an arrangement had been made with the fishing boats for them to continue to use the harbour over the winter.
- Concerns were highlighted about the wharf in Aberdyfi as vehicles had been driving on it. Initial risk assessments indicated that this was a very high risk and the possibility of installing poles to prevent vehicles from driving on it was discussed.
- The pots on the quay were considered and it was decided that some needed to be removed from the site to ensure users' safety.
- An update was provided on the new bridge to Bryn Llestair (Picnic Island), and it was noted that the work to replace the bridge was nearly complete, the road would be closed overnight soon to correctly install the bridge before users could cross.
- Several events had taken place over the period and everyone was thanked for their cooperation to ensure that they were held effectively.
- It was asked what arrangements were in place to raise the moorings over winter as a result of the work currently being undertaken in the harbour.
  - It was explained that the harbour was awaiting confirmation from the moorings contractor to see when the moorings would be raised in the winter to ensure that this was safe and suitable for all.

**RESOLVED**

**To note and accept the reports.**

**8. ELECTION OF OBSERVERS**

**RESOLVED**

**Desmond George was elected to serve as an Observer on the Pwllheli, Barmouth and Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committees, and for David Williams to attend in his place should he not be able to attend.**

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**It was confirmed that the next meeting would be on the 21 March, 2023.**

The opportunity was taken to thank the Harbour Manager for many years of hard work and his commitment and passion to the county's harbours. He was wished well on his retirement.

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 12:15pm.

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(Chair)