

MEETING	Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee
DATE	3rd October 2023
TITLE	Harbourmasters Report
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H 1 Navigational Issues

- 1.1 The navigable channel to the harbour of Porthmadog has been monitored by harbour staff over the summer period. The channel approach from seaward has moved away from the direction of Harlech and now leads more towards Criccieth, in association with the position of the Fairway buoy.
- 1.2 As in previous years, the course of the navigable channel continues to be very dynamic. Movement of sandbanks within the navigable channel during the summer period has required harbour staff to re-locate some of the aids to navigation.
- 1.3 Harbour staff will continue to monitor the course of the channel and move the navigational aids as and when necessary, to ensure the aids to navigation provide the safest route in and out of harbour.
- 1.3.1 The Service advises that all necessary navigational marks are currently on station and there are no Notice to Mariners currently in being.
- 1.4 The Service would like to remind mariners of the need to navigate the channel 1.5 hours either side of high water when navigating a vessel with a draft exceeding 1.5 metres.
- 1.5 Mariners are also reminded that contact should be made with the harbour office prior to any approach or departure from the harbour, to obtain the latest navigational and weather information. Changes to any of the navigational aids will be circulated via Local Notice to Mariners.

H 2 Operational Issues

- 2.1 Vessel movements have continued throughout the summer, with visiting vessels accommodated on the 'trot moorings' within the inner harbour and on the pontoon structures belonging to the Madog yacht Club.
- 2.2 Unseasonal windy weather with strong south-westerly winds and heavy rain on the 15th July, led to a former fishing vessel moored alongside the quay wall to take on water and partially submerge. Harbour staff responded promptly to the situation but could not prevent a small amount of diesel fuel from the vessel entering harbour waters, before deployment of an absorbent floating boom which was placed around the vessel.

- 2.2.1 With the assistance of harbour personnel, the vessel was pumped out and caused to float again, with the boom remaining in place around the vessel until the source of the water ingress could be identified.
- 2.2.2 The Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Natural Resources Wales were informed of the incident, and all necessary administration procedures were followed in accordance with requirements. The spillage was allowed to disperse naturally with no further action required.
- 2.2.3 The Service are currently working with the vessel owner and a marine surveyor to prevent a similar occurrence from occurring, and the vessel has been re-located near the harbour slipway for this purpose.
- 2.2.4 On the same day, the weather caused a sailing vessel to break free from its mooring in the harbour and the bow mooring line of another harbour vessel snapped, causing that vessel to swing loose around its stern mooring. Both vessels were subsequently secured back on their respective moorings without damage.
- 2.3 The Service wish to thank the firm of Robert Owen Marine Porthmadog, for the provision of a personal watercraft. The craft has greatly assisted maritime staff in overseeing safe operations at the vessel launch site at Morfa Bychan and in the Porthmadog Channel.

H 3 Maintenance

- 3.1 Before the start of the busy season, maintenance of the harbour moorings was undertaken by a local mooring contractor. The work undertaken by the contractor was at a net cost to the service of £2,100.00, with the cost of the replacement chain and associated shackles £3,894.00.
 - 3.1.1 Over the forthcoming winter period, an inspection of the ground chains in the harbour will be undertaken, with worn sections of chain replaced.
- 3.2 The harbour Powercat patrol vessel has now been fitted with two new engines at the start of the season at a net cost of £12,293.00 to the Service. The vessel has been operated throughout the summer, undertaking patrols of the navigable channel whenever possible.
- 3.3 During the forthcoming winter period the harbour vessel 'Dwyfor' will be sailed to Pwllheli and taken out of the water for a new propeller to be fitted. The vessel will further undergo refurbishment at that time.
- 3.4 Subject to available funding, the Service are to replace the surface of the harbour compound at the back of the harbourmasters office. The existing rough surface will be replaced with concrete, which will greatly assist in trailer movements in the compound.
- 3.5 Benches around the harbour environment continue to be refurbished with further work still to be completed. The service continues to receive requests for the placement of benches around the harbour with only limited space available.

H 4 Other Matters

- 4.1 Prior to the beginning of July, harbour staff assisted with preparations at Morfa Bychan beach, to receive a large barge named 'Terra Marique', carrying an electrical transformer cargo destined for Trawsfynydd Power Station.
- 4.1.1 Having travelled from Rotterdam with the assistance of a tug, the barge successfully beached on the sands at Morfa Bychan on the morning tide of the 5th July. After discharging its cargo, the vessel left the beach on the evening tide that day. The transformer was subsequently moved away from the beach by road to Trawsfynydd power station.
- 4.2 During the summer period, it has been necessary for harbour staff to contact Natural Resources Wales and report coloured liquid waste entering the harbour waters. Upon investigation staff noted the liquid emerging from an outfall pipe located near the road bridge at the north section of the harbour. The reports have been documented and it is understood Natural Resources Wales are looking into the matter.
- 4.3 **Borth-Y-Gest.** The sea defence gates located at Borth-Y-Gest are to be maintained with the assistance of a local metalworker. The Service would like to remind harbour users of the need for the gates to remain in the closed position during the winter period.

H5 Events

- 5.1 The following events were among those held at the harbour during the summer period;
- RNLI Lifeboat Day
 - Celtic Longboat events held by the Madog Yacht Club
 - Vintage Motorcycle event
- 5.2 The Service wish to advise organisers of proposed future events on harbour premises of the need to provide the relevant information about the event at the earliest opportunity. This will assist the Service in determining authorisation, staffing and administration processes.