

**Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee  
that took place on 12 November, 2015 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi**

**PRESENT**

Cllr. Dewi Owen, Anne Lloyd Jones, (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. David Richardson (Aberdyfi Community Council), Cllr. Brian Bates (RNLI), Mr W Bracewell (Aberdyfi Partnership), Mr Dave Williams (Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee), Mr Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club), Mr Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club), Mr Neil Storkey (Clerk/Observer on behalf of Aberdyfi Community Council).

Also in attendance:

**Officers**

Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr William Stockford	-	Aberdyfi Harbour Master
Mr Gareth James	-	Members' Support and Scrutiny Manager
Mrs Mererid Watt	-	Translator

**Apologies:** Cllr. Mike Stevens, Mr Paul Fowles (Aberdyfi Chamber of Trade), Cllr Mandy Williams-Davies (Cabinet Member - Economy), Mr Llŷr B. Jones (Senior Manager - Economy and Community),

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**Resolved:** To re-elect Councillor Dewi Owen as Chair of this Committee for 2015-16.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**Resolved:** To re-elect Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones as Vice-chair of this Committee for 2015-16.

3. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

4. **MINUTES**

**Submitted:** Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee that took place on 3 March 2015.

**Resolved:** To accept and approve the minutes as a true record.

3. **THE MARITIME OFFICER'S REPORT**

**Submitted:** The report of the Maritime Officer, Mr Barry Davies, on activities in Aberdyfi Harbour with specific reference to the following:

**(A) Mooring figures – Aberdyfi Harbour**

The figures for 2015/16 were presented and it was noted that the number was disappointing due to the inclement weather over the summer and the fragile position of the economy and the maritime sector. The following points were noted:

- That fewer numbers would have an impact on income and therefore expenditure and budgets would have to be cut. This reduction was also reflected throughout the country and further afield, attention was drawn to the fact that some marinas in Europe had a maximum of 30% moorings in use. It was trusted that the decline in the maritime sector had come to an end and it was anticipated that there would be no further reduction with the market gradually growing over the next two years.
- The format of the submitted report had been amended to be less historical and more concise, however, it was noted that full details were available for anyone who required them in electronic or hard copy format.
- Gwynedd had managed to retain the number of powerboats at a consistent level. There was a high use of personal watercraft in Gwynedd compared to that of the neighbouring counties of Ceredigion, Anglesey and Conwy. The facilities and the welcome given to boat users in Gwynedd were some of the key factors.
- Special thanks were given to the Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee for the high quality Aberdyfi Visitors' Packs.
- The wish to expand this successful practice to other areas of Gwynedd was noted.
- A request was made by the Chair for the number of visiting boats to Aberdyfi to be noted in the report. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer agreed to undertake this in the next report in March 2016.

**Resolved:**

- **To accept and note the above.**
- **That the Maritime and Country Parks Officer states the number of visitors to the harbour in his next report in March 2016.**

**(B) Marine Safety Code**

- It was noted that the Marine Safety Code had been fully adopted following discussions at the Harbour Committees and it was reviewed regularly. A copy had already been circulated to Members and was available on the Council's website.
- Adopting the Code was good practice, however, it was noted that it may be unsuitable in certain cases as the Code had the same requirements for fairly small Harbours such as Aberdyfi as those of larger commercial Ports such as Dover. It would be useful to have guidelines that were more suitable and purposeful for smaller sized harbours.
- The Maritime and Country Parks Officer would send an electronic link to Members following the Government's consultation into the proposed legislation that would vary harbour abolition powers and competent harbours.
- Members were encouraged to raise any concerns regarding Aberdyfi harbour as soon as possible following an incident and they could do this by contacting the Harbour Master or the Maritime and Country Parks Officer.
- In addition, there was an opportunity to air issues at these Harbour Committee meetings.

The following matters were discussed:

Launching Personal Watercraft on the Leri

- Personal Watercraft were not considered as a boat or vessel in the context of Commercial Vessels Legislation. This could be a barrier to control their use.
- If there is an incident with a boat (and the boat is registered) the Harbour Master can look into the matter.

- A member gave an account of a dangerous incident where Personal Watercraft was towing an inflatable donut with a young lad steering. This nearly caused a nasty accident in Aberdyfi. The Personal Watercraft number was noted and given to the Harbour Master. (However, the matter could not be investigated further as the owner had sold the craft.) The Personal Watercraft had been launched from the Leri in Ceredigion.
- The fact that these craft were launched from the Leri outside the jurisdiction of Aberdyfi Harbour was a significant barrier to control as it appeared that it was not possible to get cooperation on these issues with Ceredigion Council and Natural Resources Wales.
- It was difficult to deal with such situations as no regulation was being breached.
- The Harbour Master had been over to the Leri several times to give advice to users and had been as active as possible with these issues.

#### Other incidents noted

- Only five complaints had been received this year. This was a substantial reduction.
- One accident had occurred in the vicinity of the harbour with a fisherman losing part of his little finger, he was now recovering.
- Reference was made to a bad accident at Morfa Bychan.
- In addition, reference was made to an incident last year when a Personal Watercraft hit three canoes on the Warren beach near Abersoch.

#### Further comments

- The message that safety had to be considered at all times had to be conveyed consistently to boat users.

#### **Resolved:**

- **To request that the Gwynedd Cabinet Member for Economy conducts discussions with the corresponding Cabinet Member in Ceredigion, to see if the arrangements on the Leri can be improved.**
- **The Maritime and Country Parks Officer to investigate to see if it could be arranged for the Aberdyfi Harbour Master to have powers to act on the Leri.**
- **That a letter be sent from Gwynedd Council and Aberdyfi Community Council to Ceredigion Council to express concern about the situation on the Leri.**
- **The Maritime and Country Parks Officer to see if arrangements can be made for joint-funding with the Community Council or to make arrangements for suitable volunteers to be out on the water to supervise during school holidays.**
- **The Maritime and Country Parks Officer to send an electronic link to Members for their observations.**

#### **(C) Performance Indicators**

It was noted that one of the purposes of measuring the deficiencies and relevant data was to give a better service. The members suggested the following indicators:

- Number of boats
- Number of incidents / accidents including beach issues – e.g. tractor and trailer causing damage, injuries.

A request was made for the Member to send any further suggestions to the Officer.

#### **Resolved:**

- **The Maritime and Country Parks Officer to give consideration to the above.**
- **Members to forward any further observations to the Officer.**

#### **(CH) Navigation**

It was noted that no Notice to Mariners was in operation at Aberdyfi Harbour.

The latest information regarding the Navigational Aids was considered by the Members and the following observations were made:

- The new yellow buoy indicating the speed restriction of 4 knots was useful.
- It was noted that the members of the RNLI and boat users were very happy with the new locations and the quality of the aids.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

#### **(D) Maintenance**

A request was made for the observations of Members regarding the work in the pipeline and for any further suggestions. The following observations were made:

- It was noted that the cost of sand management in Aberdyfi and Barmouth Harbours cost £20,000 each a year. If this could be identified as flood protection work it may be possible to find up to 80% additional funding.
- The nature of the problem was that when the wind was from the East – there were hardly any sand deposits but when the wind was from the West then there was a problem.
- It was noted that a barrier had been placed to alleviate the problem and this was of some assistance.
- Although the annual work of sand management alleviated the problem there were times when the situation got worse quickly at the end of the work, causing sand to re-settle within a short period.

#### **Yacht Club**

- It was possible to partly resolve the problem in terms of the use made by boats launching and landing near the Yacht Club.
- Using a specific winch would be a means of supplying the need safely; but it would be necessary to undertake a technical assessment to choose a suitable one.
- It would be necessary to conduct a separate meeting to air this matter with Council officers, specialist consultant and a Yacht Club representative.

#### **Marine Protection**

- Concerns were noted that transfer of the responsibility for sand management to the separate issue of the wall as protection, may lose the focus on the need to continue to deal with sand management work.
- The current sand management work could have a wider impact in terms of sand encroachment in the area – the sand dunes, car park, drains and to avert the risk of flooding in the village.
- The problem had worsened following the large storms two years ago. It was necessary to give the matter prompt attention; and not spending the annual £20,000 could lead to bigger problems and costs.

#### **Harbour Work Programme**

- The Harbour Master noted that the work programme was on-going and included work on the jetty, installation of planks, railings, painting, cleaning, work on the external buoy, visitors' moorings and powerboats etc.
- A request was made for any further suggestions by the Members.

#### **Resolved:**

- The Maritime and Country Parks Officer to get more details regarding the long term plan with removing sand on Aberdyfi beach.

- The Yacht Club representative to give ideas to the Maritime Officer regarding the winch.
- The Maritime Officer to discuss with a specialist engineer / consultant.
- Maritime Officer to submit a brief report on the above matter to the next meeting of the Committee in March 2016.
- Members to note any suggestions regarding maintenance work to the Harbour Master.

**(DD) Staffing Matters**

- Only a few applications had been received for the post of part time Harbour Assistant between April and September this year.
- Consideration would be given to altering the post's period for 2016.
- A request was made for all to raise awareness of the post amongst suitable people.

Aberdyfi Harbour Master

- The thanks and appreciation of the Chair of the Yacht Club was noted for the Harbour Master's excellent work and this was supported by the Chair and Vice-chair of this Committee.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(E) The Quay Wall**

- The work of developing the plans to upgrade the quay wall was on-going, with Gwynedd Consultancy leading.
- There would be a far reaching effect having undertaken the work and this would benefit the whole village, Canolfan Dyfi, Outward Bound etc. - i.e. there was a strong foundation to the business case.

Planning application:

- The Planning Application had been submitted to the National Park in June this year.
- A site meeting would be conducted next week.
- It was anticipated that the detailed design work would be completed by 13 November 2015.
- Engineers were undertaking further detailed work to assess the cost of the plan.
- It would be necessary to prepare tender documents
- An application would be submitted for a Maritime Licence
- Further observations were expected from Natural Resources Wales on the Environmental Impact Assessment.

New Financial Fund

- Following the planning process it would be possible to submit a bid to the new Fund.
- A Declaration of Interest would be required soon for the Fund in the hope that finance could be received for implementation in 2018.

**Resolved:**

- **The Members' concern was noted due to the planning process delay and any further delay could have a significant detrimental impact on the plan.**
- **The Maritime and Country Parks Officer to send an electronic copy of the letter received from Natural Resources Wales to Members.**

**(F) Common land area**

The following points were noted about the site on the outskirts of the village.

- There was serious misuse of the land by builders storing and disposing of materials on the site.

- The Community Council and all Committee members were thanked for their support in dealing with this matter.
- Although some tidying up work had taken place, further work was required to reclaim the land.
- It was noted that the Yacht Club had a right via an agreement to store some equipment on the site.
- It was suggested that it would be wise not to overreact to the situation in order that the element of common land right was not abused by some that would make the situation worse.
- Basically, this was a storage area for certain materials to be kept in a tidy and orderly manner. There was no right at all to tip and dispose of materials on the site.

**Resolved:**

- **The Maritime and Country Parks Officer to organise a skip for the site and coordinate the time-table with a representative of the Yacht Club in order to get volunteers to assist with the work of tidying up and removal.**
- **Set an aim to achieve the work before the summer.**

**(FF) Bridges Picnic Island (Bryn Llestair) Path**

- The Council had shouldered the burden of completing the work.
- The examination of the railway bridge showed that it was currently acceptable.
- It was noted that there was concern about a large piece of rock that required attention on part of the path.

**(G) Disposal of Boats**

It was noted that there was good order with racking and the Harbour Master intended to dispose of some boats that had not registered with the Council.

**(NG) Financial Matters**

Submitted to the attention of the Members:

- Income and Expenditure Report 2014-2015 on Gwynedd Council Harbours
- Detailed accounts for Aberdyfi and Barmouth
- New fees 2016/17

The following were noted:

- There had been significant expenditure in Aberdyfi on buildings to the value of £17,000 + but due to Gwynedd Council's financial arrangements this appeared as an underspend of £16,072 in the accounts.
- It was noted that a contribution of £8,335 towards central costs indicated value for money considering the service supplied.
- The income from fees and rents were down to £33,270.
- It was anticipated that the increase in fees for 2016/17 was a small increase of 1%.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(H) Events**

- It was noted that the Aberdyfi Seafood Festival had been a great success.
- It was estimated that around 2000 people had visited the village during the day.
- There had been good cooperation with the 'Race the Train' event at Tywyn.
- The Yacht Club were thanked for all the voluntary work undertaken.
- The intention to conduct the event again next year was welcomed. It was understood that the date would be the third Saturday in August 2016.

5. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** It was noted that the next meeting of this Consultative Committee would take place on 10 March 2016.

**CHAIRMAN**