
BARMOUTH HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 19/03/24

Present:

Members:

Councillor Rob Triggs (Chair), Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams (Vice-chair), Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Cabinet Member for Economy and Community) and Ashley Field (Three Peaks Yacht Race).

Officers:

Bryn Pritchard-Jones (Maritime Service Manager), Arthur F. Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), Llŷr B.Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community), Kane Arran Triggs (Barmouth Assistant Harbourmaster) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Observer: Desmond George (Aberdyfi Harbour Committee Representative).

At the start of the meeting a tribute was given to Mr Podmore who had recently died, it was noted that he had been a loyal member of this Committee. He was a member of the Barmouth lifeboat crew and it was noted that he had been a prominent part of the community and the harbour.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Louise Hughes, Councillor Robert Williams (Barmouth Town Council), Robert Aeron Williams (Barmouth Destinations Improvement Group (BRIG)) and Councillor June Jones (Porthmadog Harbour Committee Representative).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The Chair, Councillor Rob Triggs, noted that his son who works as an Assistant Harbourmaster would present part of item 4 of the Harbourmaster's Report in the Harbourmaster's absence. As a result, it was decided that the Vice-chair, Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams, would chair this section of the item. This was not a prejudicial interest and therefore he did not withdraw from the meeting.

3. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 24 October 2023, as a true record.

4. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

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

a) The Senior Harbour Officer's report, giving a brief update to the committee on harbour matters for the period from October 2023 to March 2024.

Attention was drawn to the following matters:

Moorings and Boat Registration

It was noted that the Harbourmaster would inspect the river before Easter to check the location of the aids to navigation and determine where to locate visitor moorings in the harbour. It was

reported that customers wishing to have a mooring in the harbour, or register their powerboats were expected to complete the online process via Cyngor Gwynedd's website.

Port Marine Safety Code

It was noted that the Port Marine Safety Code was regularly reviewed by the service and they continued to comply with the Code.

Staffing Matters

It was reported that the Harbourmaster and the Assistant Harbourmaster continued to work from the Barmouth harbour office. In addition, the service had appointed Nicola Salt as a full time Beach Officer; the Beach Officer would be based in Barmouth harbour and would work along the coast between Barmouth and Aberdyfi. It was noted that Math Roberts had been appointed in the North and he would be working along the coast in the Porthmadog area.

Financial Matters

The Maritime Service Officer referred to the table in the report that summarised the financial position and had been categorised into five main headings. It was noted that the figures were based on a financial review with the accountants in November and forecasted expenditure from November until the end of March 2024.

Details were given on the headings and it was noted that the Employees category mainly included staff wages. An overspend of a little over £3,500 was anticipated in this category in the current financial year. It was explained that this was mainly due to overtime payments to staff who had had to work additional hours because of matters arising such as emergency incidents.

It was noted that the Property heading involved general maintenance costs of the building and the grounds surrounding the harbour. It was detailed that there was a little overspend here. New doors had been installed on the diesel store and a new window on the harbour building as well as other additional costs. It was noted that this was not unusual given that the buildings were getting older, and they needed maintenance.

The Transport heading was mentioned and it was confirmed that this heading did not include costs involving the maritime vehicle. This heading referred specifically to the harbour patrol boat namely the Powercat and boat fuel; it was noted that this underspend was £500.

It was noted that there was an overspend of nearly £12,000 under the heading Services and Supplies due to significant costs during the year because of the service having to buy two new aids to navigation for the harbour. In addition, the Service had to buy lighting, equipment and chains for the two aids to navigation, as well as having to pay a contractor for their installation.

An actual overspend of £8,194 was anticipated after subtracting a contribution from funds and income. It was noted that the harbour had collected almost £10,000 more than the income target and that additional income had been received as a result of work on the viaduct. It was reported that harbour staff had worked with contractors and a reimbursement of £7,500 was received after billing the company for staff work and time. It was noted that the budget was more or less balanced after considering this addition.

It was reported that historic funds exist because of raising fees and some of the funds were accessed to make improvements in the harbours. It was highlighted that the money had been paid into the fund during the year and had been used to meet costs and make investments in the harbour. Three main projects were mentioned in Barmouth harbour namely the new CCTV system, the installation of a new electric barrier at the bottom of Compound Road and modifications within the harbour building to create office space.

Comments

It was expressed that it was good to hear about all the work that was going on and that the work will be beneficial to the quality of the harbour. It was agreed that the work was vital to the management of the harbour and was a valuable asset to staff.

Fees and Charges

The Maritime Service Manager noted that the fees had been reviewed at the beginning of the year based on the inflation level established at 7.5%. It was noted that the fees had now been confirmed. It was clarified that the system was now an online system and would go live on the 1 April. Barmouth harbour fees would increase by 0.5% above inflation level therefore rising by 8%. As a result, the income target would rise in line with inflation for the coming year. They added that there was a general increase in mooring prices and that it was expected to be a busy period over Easter. The service would allocate moorings for customers.

The launch and registration fees were mentioned, noting that some fees had increased. It was reported that the registration fee alone last year was £60 and would rise to £70 this year. The annual fee would increase from £170 to £180 and the launch fee would remain as it was as it had already increased significantly over the last three years.

It was thought that the fees were competitive with those of other Counties but the numbers launching and registering in Gwynedd were much higher than neighbouring Authorities. 2509 powerboats were registered last year in Gwynedd compared to around 500 in Anglesey. It was stated that it was a significant difference and there was a great deal of work involved in the registration system, it was thought to be a very effective system.

Comments

Appreciation was expressed to all harbour staff for their work over the summer and it was considered that the budget, with only a little overspend, was acceptable and understandable.

(b) The Harbourmaster's report, summarising the Navigational and Operational matters that had arisen between October 2021 and March 2022, including maintenance matters.

Navigation Matters

The Assistant Harbourmaster referred to the navigable channel and noted that it had not moved much since last year and that they were continuing to keep an eye on the channel repositioning any aids not on their proper station.

It was noted that there were two local notices for mariners, and it was hoped that work on the viaduct would be completed by the end of the month so that the notice there could be removed. It was reported that Buoy number 1 was not on station and since this report was completed it was reported that two other buoys were not on station, namely Buoys nos. 4 and 8. It was noted that the contractors would repair these as soon as possible.

Operational Matters

It was reported that there was some painting work left to be done on the Barmouth patrol boat indicating that the work was due to be finished this week. It was noted that harbour trailers were in frequent use and that one small trailer had been decommissioned and was not currently in use. It was added that new VHF equipment was now in the office to converse with boats on the water and monitor the harbour.

Maintenance

It was explained that visitor moorings needed to be removed as the sandbanks had shifted and the tide had become deeper on the Penrhyn Point side. It was noted that the service would continue to number the moorings and to remove disused moorings from the harbour

waters. It was reported that parts of the pontoon had been removed from the harbour for essential maintenance and it was noted that this work was mainly handled by the Town Council.

Other matters

It was reported that the service has recently installed a new CCTV system to improve harbour safety and provide an overview of the harbour wall; it was noted that this system was separate to the Town Council system.

It was noted that parking bollards had been installed along Compound Road for safety and to prevent disorganised parking along the road. An electric barrier would be installed at the bottom of Compound Road to help with safety.

On Fairbourne beach, it was noted that bollards had been installed at the top of the public access ramp to the beach to prevent entry by any vehicle.

In conclusion, reference was made to the Events set out on page 14 of the Agenda and pride was expressed that many events were coming back to Barmouth this year and everything appeared to be going well with the arrangements.

Observations by Committee Members

Pride was expressed that everything seemed to be going well in terms of the harbour running arrangements and staff were thanked for their work. The Assistant Harbourmaster was thanked for his report and the Senior Harbours Officer and the Maritime Service Manager for their work, and for completing the work within a balanced budget. Committee members were thanked and it was noted that it was good to have stakeholders who contributed and consulted with them.

It was asked whether it was proposed to re-install the fingers on the pontoon. The Chair confirmed, as he was a member of the Town Council, that it was proposed to combine them to create one finger rather than two. It was reported that it was difficult to get new floats and they were waiting for the manufacturer to get back to them.

RESOLVED to note and accept the report.

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

Notice Board

The Maritime Service Manager had received a question from the Councillor for Arthog and Llangelynnin asking about the two wooden noticeboards that used to be on the footpath at Friog. It was asked why they had been removed from the path and whether there were plans to replace them and when. The Maritime Service Manager noted that the noticeboards had been removed as part of the service's maintenance work.

He explained that it was intended to paint them but both of these had deteriorated and it was considered that there was no point in repairing them. It was reported that there was an intention to create new ones and the application had been made but the manufacturer was running late. He added that it was originally planned to reinstall them by Easter but it was now hoped that they would be back up in their proper position by Whitsun.

Boat at Friog

The second question from the Councillor for Arthog and Llangelynnin was about the small boat wreck at Point Penrhyn. Concern was raised that the boat remained there despite various complaints. It was asked whether there was an intention for it to be removed.

The Maritime Service Manager reiterated that the situation has been ongoing for some time and that the service had been in communication with the boat owner. It was noted that the service had given the owner various opportunities to make arrangements to remove the vessel, but unfortunately the owner had not taken the appropriate action. It was accepted that the Local Member was receiving complaints and that the situation regarding the boat 'Lady Anne' was frustrating as it looked very unsightly on the site. Although there was no pollution to the water, it was acknowledged that many negative comments had been received about this.

It was reported that harbour staff had posted a notice on the boat since last week and the service had powers to remove the boat under the relevant act. It was explained that the owner had 30 days to make arrangements to remove the boat, otherwise the harbour authority would make arrangements with a local contractor to remove it. It was noted that there were significant costs involved but it was hoped that a reimbursement would be received from the boat owner in due course.

Harbour staff were asked to let Committee members know if there was an update and if a contractor had to be used. It was believed that the Council had the legal powers to obtain a reimbursement if necessary. The service was asked to update the Chair and that it was important to share any development.

Membership

It was noted that Co-opted Member John Johnson no longer represented the Barmouth and Cardigan Bay Sea Fisheries Association on the Committee. Additionally Co-opted Member Martin Parouty would also not continue on the Committee as he had left the Barmouth Harbour Users Group, which had since ceased to exist. It was thought that there was a need for a conversation about how to improve the Committee's numbers. It was agreed that the Chair, as the Local Member, should have a discussion with the Maritime Service Manager and the Senior Harbour Officer as some of the Committee's historic members had left. It was recognised that the Committee needed more comprehensive representation at its next meeting in the autumn. The Chair suggested asking local groups to see who was interested.

A request was made to include members' questions on the Agenda; a member of the Committee believed that this used to be the case in the past. The point was accepted by the Maritime Service Manager, he explained that sometimes the questions arrived late or after the reports have been prepared and translated. He added that if the questions were received in good time he was more than happy to include them on the Agenda for the next meeting.

6. NEXT MEETING

22 October 2024.

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm and concluded at 2.45pm.