
PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, 11 MARCH 2025

PRESENT:

Cyngor Gwynedd: Councillors Hefin Underwood and John Brynmor Hughes

Co-opted Members: Barry Simmons (Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association representative), Stephen Tudor (Pwllheli Sailing Club), Andy Vowell (Pwllheli RNLI), Wil Partington (Pwllheli Maritime Traders Association) and Councillor Mike Parry (Pwllheli Town Council).

Officers: Gerwyn Owen (Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager), Sarah Hattle (Deputy Manager and Pwllheli Harbourmaster), Llyr Beaumont Jones (Assistant Head, Economy and Community Department) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Others Present as Observers: Desmond George (Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee) and Councillor Gwilym Jones (Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Elin Hywel, Michael Sol Owen (Plas Heli), Alwyn Roberts (Pwllheli RNLI) and Councillor Richard Medwyn Hughes (Cabinet Member for the Economy and Community).

Councillor John Brynmor Hughes and Sarah Hattle (Deputy Manager and Pwllheli Harbourmaster) were welcomed to their first meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MEMBERSHIP

A reminder was given that the membership of this Committee included a mix of representation such as Cyngor Gwynedd Members, Co-opted Members and Observers from the Aberdyfi, Abermaw and Porthmadog Harbour Committees.

It was specified that this Committee complied with the constitution of the other Harbour Committees in Gwynedd, which imposed restrictions on membership. It was confirmed that up to 4 Elected Members of Cyngor Gwynedd and up to 7 Co-opted Members were allowed to be Members of this Committee.

It was explained that officers had received applications from individuals from local agencies who wished to become members of this Committee, clarifying that no other member could be accepted as the membership was currently full. However, it was highlighted that the terms of membership of some of the current Members did not meet the requirements of this Committee. It was specified that there was no record of an official nomination having been received from the Pwllheli Chamber of Commerce nor the Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association.

It was confirmed that officers had asked the Legal Department for guidance on how to strengthen the membership of this Committee.

The officers were authorised to make further enquiries into the robustness of the Committee's membership, in order to ensure the correct future membership.

5. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 8 October 2024 as a true record.

6. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

A Report was received which included updates to the Port Maritime Safety Code, the Long-term Strategy, Dredging, Financial Matters, Operational Matters and statistics on mooring numbers and customer satisfaction percentages.

Following his recent retirement, former harbourmaster, Wil Williams, was thanked for 34 years of service at Hafan Pwllheli. It was pointed out that he led on the construction of the marina, supervised extension work and always maintained the highest level of customer service. It was added that he was very passionate about harbour matters and was always prepared to share guidance and support. He was wished well on his retirement.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

Dredging

The Commercial Manager for Hafan Pwllheli and Harbour confirmed that discussions with Natural Resources Wales to receive a dredging licence emphasised the need to reclaim land as well as introduce a suitable landscape for natural species seen on the coast.

Enquiries were made about disposal arrangements in Cardigan Bay, confirming that a marine licence would be required to dispose of any silt into the Bay. It was elaborated that a request was being made to profile where the silt leaving the harbour would settle, in collaboration with Gwynedd Consultancy.

In response to an enquiry about the use of a boat to transport silt into Cardigan Bay for disposal there, the Commercial Manager for Hafan Pwllheli and Harbour confirmed that this would prove expensive for the service, as it would cost £1 million to transport the boat to Pwllheli before the process began. It was confirmed that such a scheme was not being considered because it was not feasible within the Harbour's budgets. However, it was confirmed that the intention was to ensure that the silt was pumped into the Bay.

Concerns were raised about the annual costs of the dredging process and an alternative idea was proposed to address the challenge. The idea of constructing a groyne near Carreg yr Imbill was expanded upon, to prevent sand from reaching the harbour from the direction of Abererch, thus causing less silt to settle within the harbour. In response, the Commercial Manager of Hafan Pwllheli and Harbour confirmed that the costs of transferring the sand from the Harbour to Carreg y Defaid beach had been addressed by the government. It was expanded that the Harbour was free to sell the remainder of the sand for a profit, confirming that all profits made would be added to the Harbour Dredging Fund. It was also noted that a Flood Management Plan was in place in conjunction with Gwynedd Consultancy and Natural Resources Wales, with various options such as the construction of a groyne included in it. However, it was explained that there was a delay with this Plan as it had not been discussed as part of the Pwllheli area business plan by the board of Natural Resources Wales, which was leading on the project. It was emphasised that officers were constantly striving to get an update on this matter as soon as possible.

The Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department declared that the challenge of dealing with the silt had reached a crisis. It was accepted that external agencies had environmental concerns about the Harbour's application for a licence to pump it into Cardigan Bay. It was confirmed that the Harbour was completing an environmental, financial and social assessment of the process when submitting the licence application. It was hoped that local organisations and members of this Committee would contribute to that assessment in order to obtain a long-term solution to this challenge.

It was pointed out that afon Erch had changed its course and that this, in addition to recent stormy weather, had led to an increase in the levels of silt settling within the harbour. Concern was expressed that large boats would not be able to use the basin soon without a solution to this challenge and that only personal watercraft could benefit from the harbour. It was expanded that an additional 10,000 tonnes could not be extracted as happened in October 2024 because the lagoon had been filled at a cost of around £750,000 and needed time to dry out before silt was moved again.

The closure of the 'Bae Bach' area was considered to improve the flow of the river and reduce the silt that settles within the harbour. In response to the consideration, the Commercial Manager for Hafan Pwllheli and Harbour confirmed that this was a consideration in the Harbour plan within the application for a licence to pump the silt into Cardigan Bay. It was explained that the rocks already in the Bae Bach area were intended to be used to build a wall, removing the silt beyond it to be able to reclaim land. It was hoped that this scheme, in conjunction with the pumping of silt into Cardigan Bay, would be a long-term solution to the current challenges, as ecological reports confirmed that around 90% of the silt was being drawn in from the sea into the harbour.

It was confirmed that officers would be meeting with Gwynedd Consultancy shortly to ensure that the licence application was successful, ensuring that the concerns of this committee would be highlighted in order to find solutions. A meeting with the members was considered to receive input on the way forward after the licence application had been submitted, when timely.

7. PLAS HELI

The verbal report was presented by a representative of Pwllheli Sailing Club.

It was updated that significant renovations were underway, including the demolition of stairs, a parapet and the renovation of rotten woodwork. It was added that tarmac work had been carried out to improve the parking situation and the overall appearance of the area. It was also noted that new entrance doors had been installed.

A very busy summer season was anticipated, explaining that the first event to be held at Plas Heli would be the RYA (Royal Yachting Association) conference before Easter. There was pride in the fact that several agencies had been in touch with Plas Heli to host events, and that the calendar was full until 2027.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 7 October 2025.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.10pm.

CHAIR.