
ABERDYFI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, 14 OCTOBER 2025

Present:

Gwynedd Councillors: Councillors Robert Dewi Owen and Anne Lloyd Jones.

Co-opted Members: Freddie Collier (Aberdyfi RNLI), David Williams (Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertising Committee), Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club Member), Al Crisp (Outward Bound Trust Wales), Robert Tyrrell (Aberdyfi Community Council).

Observers: Councillor Medwyn Hughes (Cabinet Member for Economy and Community), Councillor Gwilym Jones (Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee).

Officers in attendance: Bryn Pritchard-Jones (Maritime Service Manager), William Arthur Stockford (Aberdyfi Harbourmaster), Courtney Jones (Democracy and Civic Services Officer) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Robert Dewi Owen as Chair of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee for the year 2025/26.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Anne Lloyd-Jones as Vice-chair of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee for the year 2025/26.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dan Cartwright (Senior Harbours Officer) and Llyr Beaumont Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Communities).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

5. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The report was submitted by the Maritime Service Manager. Members were guided through the report, highlighting the following key points:

Referring to the performance data, it was noted that there had been an increase in the use of the harbours since COVID, which was encouraging for the county. An 8% increase was confirmed across the county's harbours, with the number of moorings rising from 250 to the current 270. It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of moorings as the harbours welcomed new customers across Gwynedd, particularly in Aberdyfi Harbour, with an increase of four customers. It was noted that the county continued to see customers move from one harbour to another within the county and beyond.

It was noted that there had been a change in the online system for registering moorings and that this had significantly reduced the administrative work. It was noted that customers were now able to make online payments for their moorings.

It was noted that there was a 10% increase in the number of powerboats and jet skis registered with the Council during the season, compared to last year, rising from 2,141, to 2,362. It was elaborated that this added to the beaches budget and not the harbour budget (it was noted that the income was paid online) and this was a significant part of the maritime budget. It was noted that fewer complaints had been received about jet skis, compared to previous years; this reflected that the system was working effectively. The staff, who are proactive in their work when dealing with customers and monitoring the waters and acting where necessary to ensure people comply with the rules, were praised for their work.

With reference to the harbours' customer satisfaction, it was confirmed that the positive feedback regarding the harbours had increased since 2023, with 63% now citing an excellent standard for the harbour, compared to 40% in 2023/24. It was noted that the feedback was monitored monthly to monitor user satisfaction. It was elaborated that the department analyses the data to identify trends and areas of action. It was explained that customers and users can provide feedback through scanning a QR code (located along the harbour) which directed them to an online questionnaire to evaluate the experiences of harbour users. It was noted that they had received more feedback about the beaches in Gwynedd compared to the harbours. It was recognised that the number of beach users had increased, and therefore the challenges of managing the beaches had increased, with an increase in litter, residents parking overnight and the use of jet skis. However, it was confirmed that the department had received a very positive response regarding harbour use which reflected the effective management. It was expressed that they had received encouraging comments about the facilities and staff when referring to the comments contained in the report. Examples of the responses were given which conveyed that the harbour staff were friendly, welcoming and very knowledgeable. The harbour staff and their willingness to go above and beyond requirements and working hours to support and help customers were praised.

Reference was made to the negative feedback received about the harbour, noting that they had received criticism for the harbour's dredging situation. It was noted that some had complained about the conduct of jet ski users and called for more controls. It was highlighted that some had complained that their mooring had been moved, but it was explained that this was due to weather issues beyond the control of the harbour staff. It was stated that some had complained about the temporary 'cabin' in the harbour stating that it was not suitable for the harbour. It was noted that some complained that it marred the view in Aberdyfi. It was explained that the department took these comments seriously and regularly monitored the situation, taking action when possible. The priority of the staff to address the needs of harbour users and their aim to satisfy customers to the best of their ability was emphasised.

Reference was made to the Marine Safety Code. It was noted that the code outlined the national standard for all aspects of port maritime safety. It was explained that the harbours are regularly inspected by an external expert to ensure compliance. The appointment of Mr Owen Morgan, Harbour Manager for Ceredigion Council, as the new 'Designated Person' for the service was confirmed. It was highlighted that he would soon carry out inspections in the harbours. The collaboration with Mr Morgan was welcomed. It was anticipated that the department would be able to report on Mr Owen Morgan's recommendations and improvements by the date of the next committee in March 2026. In response to an enquiry, it was confirmed that the Audit being undertaken would cover all the harbour management issues. It was assumed that they would discuss the challenges in the harbour, such as the sand and the harbour's access and accessibility.

Staff training was detailed as part of the Marine Safety Code. The importance of the personal development of staff was emphasised, and it was confirmed that the department invested a lot of money in training and ensuring that staff were competent. It was noted that a member of staff had recently completed a Harbourmaster's diploma, which was very encouraging. It was elaborated that the department held frequent discussions with staff to ensure they get the most out of the opportunities that are financially possible.

Information was shared about the challenges officers face due to the nature of their work, noting that the officers at times experience severe, threatening and aggressive behaviour. To ensure the safety of staff and the public, it was confirmed that officers were now required to wear cameras on their bodies to record any incidents and provide them with protection. Reference was made to the forthcoming investment in the installation of CCTV cameras in the Aberdyfi harbour area to improve harbour management and to monitor violent incidents. A member mentioned that two violent incidents had recently been reported to RNLI staff, and it was acknowledged that CCTV cameras would improve the area's security. No maritime incidents or accidents were reported this year at Aberdyfi.

Referring to an incident that took place two years ago, a member asked whether the matter was continuing through the court system. In response, it was confirmed that the department continued to co-operate with the local police on the matter and they were awaiting a decision from the CPS regarding whether the case will go to court. It was trusted that the matter would go to court in due course. Disappointment was expressed that the case had taken so long to go to court and a wish was expressed to put pressure on the authorities to develop the matter, in the hope that there will be a prosecution soon.

Reference was made to the Local Lighthouse Authority which was responsible for ensuring safe navigation for all mariners using the waterways. It was confirmed that the department was carrying out regular surveys of the harbour channel to ensure that all Local Navigational Aids are correctly stationed and are working properly. It was confirmed that the latest report conveys that 95.47% of Cyngor Gwynedd's Navigational Aids are available and are considered to be in 'Good Condition'. The staff were thanked for their work maintaining the aids to navigation.

An overview of the resources and the Budget was given. Reference was made to the expenditure of the following budgets, noting the appropriate reasoning. A total overspend of around £500 was anticipated assumed at Aberdyfi Harbour, due to the total additional income that had been received as a result of the increase in customers, etc. It was envisaged that they would be £14,000 above the income target, which was very encouraging. A wish was expressed by members to see an allocation of the harbour income at the next meeting of the Committee and it was confirmed that the officers would seek to prepare a summary by the next meeting.

- **Employees** - An overspend of £1,693 was assumed in salary budgets and functional costs.
- **Property** - An underspend of £1,246 was envisaged in this budget, which was responsible for grounds maintenance, litter collection, etc. It was explained that there was an underspend in the budget as no significant costs had arisen to date.
- **Transportation** - It was considered that there will be an overspend of £46 in this budget by the end of the current financial year. It was explained that this budget did not include the running and maintenance costs of the service vehicle, but that it was used for the patrol boat fuel and staff travel costs.
- **Services and Supplies** - It was explained that this budget was far too low which caused overspending year on year. It was explained that it was used for a host of goods such as tools, signage, lighting, navigational aids and electricity. It was

confirmed that discussions were being held to increase the budget, and it was hoped that it would be marked higher in the future causing less overspending. It was predicted that they would spend around £11,000 under this heading. Reference was made to the additional expenditure that had arisen in the wake of the recent Storm Amy, which had caused a large number of animal carcasses to be washed up on the coast, and disposal costs. It was explained that Aberdyfi had many of these cases, due to its location on the coast and the agricultural catchment area.

- **One-off spending - Funding from the Department's Funds** – It was explained that there had been no expenditure from this fund this year.

It was confirmed that draft plans for the new Harbour Office on the quay had been prepared and input had been received from the Maritime Service to ensure that all operational needs were met. It was explained that the proposed plans were currently being discussed with the planning department of Eryri National Park and that a temporary cabin was in place. It was accepted that several complaints had been raised by residents about the temporary cabin, but it was acknowledged that the staff needed a temporary office to carry out their work. It was hoped that the designs would be ready to be shared with committee members by the next committee meeting and that the work will be developed soon.

It was highlighted that a new buoy, chain, block and light had been purchased for the navigation channel at a cost of £7,000. It was noted that the finance department had secured the renewal and refurbishment of parts of the wooden structure on the wharf and that plans were being developed to ensure safety, as the project had been categorised as 'high risk' due to its location.

As part of the sand disposal campaign, it was highlighted that £2,000 had been invested for contractors to remove sand from the slipway. It was explained that the sand problem had returned due to strong winds in mid-July, and therefore it was noted that it remained an issue. Frustration was expressed regarding the issues arising due to the sand, noting that the lifeboat was also suffering problems due to the sand. It was recognised that holding discussions on how to solve the sand problem would be useful and assurance was given that the Council was open to discussion with other stakeholders to find a long-term solution.

Reference was made to the new business operating on the quay in Aberdyfi. It was reported that the situation was stable at the moment and no complaints were received in the wake of the new alcohol sales on the jetty.

It was reported that a number of 'Portuguese Man O' War' jellyfish had recently washed up along the Gwynedd coast, due to the weather and strong winds. It was noted that these were being monitored and that the Council had advised the public to keep away.

A wish was expressed to get more information about water pollution at the next Committee meeting. It was noted that Natural Resources Wales had this information and was responsible for sampling the water, and the Council's website directed queries to the Natural Resources Wales website which provided information on water pollution levels across the county.

An update was provided on the operational matters in Aberdyfi harbour by the Harbourmaster.

It was noted that it had been a busy season over the summer and the weather had been challenging recently with strong winds. Staff were committed to ensuring that the moorings were in proper condition in the harbour, despite the challenges of nature. The main points of the report were highlighted below.

- It was noted that the course of the main navigation channel to the harbour remained stable throughout the summer season.
- It was reported that two 'Local Mariners' Notices' were currently in operation at Aberdyfi Harbour.
- It was noted that the service had invested in a new Fairway Buoy which was designed to be easier to use and maintain. It was noted that this buoy would be of a different size and style, and its performance in the sea at Aberdyfi would be closely monitored. It was trusted that this model of buoy would be suitable, after consultation with other councils.
- It was confirmed that Welsh Water had by now repaired the manhole cover which was in poor condition at the bottom of the slipway in Church Bay, at no cost to the service.
- Reference was made to events happening near the Harbour in Aberdyfi. Attention was drawn to the visit of the Kite Festival in Aberdyfi for the first time and it was noted that the festival would be added to the calendar of events. It was explained that events may also be an additional income stream for the harbour. It was noted that some events, such as the Rowing Club Scully League Regatta had been cancelled due to strong winds.

The staff were thanked for their work in maintaining Aberdyfi Harbour and the team were congratulated for their high levels of customer satisfaction. The challenges faced by the employees were recognised, especially in the summer season and their dedication was appreciated. Desmond George was thanked for his work and contribution to the Committee over the years. He was wished well in the future as was his successor on the Committee, Mr Ian Baylis, who would take over at the next meeting of the Committee in March 2026.

RESOLVED

To note and accept the reports.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be on 17 March 2026.

The meeting commenced at 10:00am and concluded at 11:45am.

(Chair)