
PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 30/09/25

PRESENT:

Councillor Gwilym Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd) (Chair)
Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Cyngor Gwynedd)
Councillor Richard Medwyn Hughes (Cyngor Gwynedd) (Cabinet Member for Economy and Community)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Llyr Beaumont Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department), Bryn Pritchard-Jones (Maritime Service Manager), Daniel Arthur Cartwright (Senior Harbour Officer), Malcolm Humphreys (Porthmadog Harbourmaster) and Jasmine Jones and Gwen Roberts (Democracy Services Officers).

APOLOGIES: Councillor June Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd), Chris Fisher (Cricieth Lifeboat Institution), Desmond George, Robert Owen and Melfyn Edwards.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Gwilym Jones was elected Chair for 2025/26.

2. VICE-CHAIR

Councillor June Jones was elected Vice-chair for 2025/26.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor June Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd), Chris Fisher (Cricieth Lifeboat Institution), Desmond George, Robert Owen and Melfyn Edwards.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 04/03/25 as a true record.

It was noted that it was necessary to confirm the decision to elect the three new members noted in the 04/03/25 minutes with the Cabinet. It was expressed that this would be achieved by the 2026/27 period.

7. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The following reports were submitted, and members were invited to give feedback on safety matters and harbour operational matters.

- (1) The Senior Harbour Officer's report providing the Committee with an update on Harbour matters for the 2025/26 period.

Performance Data

It was noted that moorings agreements in Porthmadog had now increased to 109. It was further noted that the figures for mooring agreements for the 2025 season compared favourably with previous years. Although there were variations between individual harbours, the overall figures had remained constant, which was positive. It was elaborated there had been an 8% increase in the number of mooring agreements in Porthmadog over the last three years.

It was noted that the Service kindly requested all suppliers and mooring holders within the Harbour to provide details of all vessels and their customers to the Harbour office as soon as possible.

It was noted that there had been a 10% increase in the number of powerboats registered with Cyngor Gwynedd this season compared to last year, rising from 2,141 to 2,362. The committee was reminded that powerboats were now registered on-line and were therefore not included in the overall budget, and the statistics related to the customers who came to the office to pay for daily launch fees only.

Feedback received about Porthmadog Harbour

It was noted that signs with 'QR Codes' had been positioned around the harbour to receive feedback from users about their experience of the harbour. It was noted that figures received for Porthmadog Harbour demonstrated an increase in the 'positive' feedback, along with the efforts made by the department to further improve the customer and visitor experience. It was explained that this feedback had been very useful in order to improve the service in the harbour.

Port Marine Safety Code

It was noted that the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) outlined the national standard for all aspects of port marine safety. The recent appointment of Mr Owen Morgan, Harbour Manager for Ceredigion Council, as our new 'Designated Person' was confirmed. It was elaborated that Mr Morgan would carry out the next inspection during the winter months and provide guidance to ensure that the harbour met the latest requirements of the PMSC. It was noted that the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community, Medwyn Hughes, had been appointed as the new 'duty holder'

It was noted that continuous training and development opportunities were being offered to the maritime staff. It was announced that one member of staff had recently completed the 'Harbourmaster Diploma', while another member had started the latest 'UKHMA Harbour Master Certificate' course. They were wished every success with their professional development.

Due to the nature of their work, it was noted that harbour officers occasionally experienced abusive, threatening and aggressive behaviour. To ensure the safety of staff and the public, it was explained that officers now had to wear body cameras to provide them with protection and to record any incidents. It was noted that several cases of serious behaviour had arisen during 2024, but since 2025 the numbers had decreased, which showed the value of the body cameras. It was further noted that requests to receive copies of closed-circuit television recordings of the harbour had been received during the year from North Wales Police.

It was announced that no maritime incidents or accidents had been reported to 'MAIB' so far this year.

Trinity House GLA (General Lighthouse Authority)

It was reported that one key priority for the service was to ensure safe navigation for all seafarers using our waterways. It was noted that, as a registered 'LLA' (Local Lighthouse Authority), we carried out regular inspections of the harbour channel to ensure that all Local Navigational Aids were correctly positioned and working properly. It was noted that the latest report concluded that 95.47% of Cyngor Gwynedd's Navigational Aids were available, with the service considered to be in "Good Condition".

Financial Matters

The Senior Harbour Officer and Maritime Service Manager provided a brief summary of the Harbour's budgets for the period 01/04/25 – 31/03/26 (August 2025 Review), which was included as an appendix to the report. It was specifically noted:

- There was significant underspend (£12,928) under the buildings heading, which may be due to no work being required as a result of efficient maintenance.
- There was a slight overspend (£3,906) under the employees heading.
- There was a slight underspend (£154) under the transport heading.
- There was a slight overspend (£522) under the supplies heading.
- That a single one-off expenditure of £3,384 had been made to facilitate fencing works on the Harbour compound.
- Overall, an underspend of £3,050 was forecast.
- That income has been better overall this season, but nevertheless, the fact that the registration system had been moved to an online system meant that the majority of the income went to the beaches budget, not the harbour, which explained the shortfall in the income forecast for the season (£5,604).
- That the car park was a good source of income. It was hoped that income targets would be met by the end of the season.

Other Key Issues

Several other key issues were identified:

- The work of developing the harbour office and compound had been supported through departmental reserves.
- North Wales Police had asked for footage from the harbour's new CCTV system on several occasions this year to assist with investigations into incidents in the harbour area.

- Several incidents of theft of outboard motors had been reported along the coast; the most recent incident was in Borth-y-gest. The service advises that anyone with relevant information should contact NWP.
- That maritime patrol vessels (the 'Powercats') fully complied with the 'Cat 6' coding requirements after undergoing their annual inspection by the YBDSA.
- It was noted that the service had experienced reduced staffing levels at some supervised sites. However, harbour officers have provided valuable support and assistance when required.
- It was noted that discussions were ongoing with Porthmadog Rowing Club regarding a formal lease agreement for the area within the harbour compound used to store the Club's rowing boats. It was reported that the service had no objections to the proposed agreement and noted that the Rowing Club continued to maintain the area to a high standard.

Discussion

Congratulations were expressed to the team at Porthmadog Harbour for the results of the positive feedback from the questionnaires. The hard work that went into managing the harbour in order to receive such positive comments was acknowledged. It was asked how many users had responded to the questionnaire and how many responses the 2% percentage equated to. In response, it was noted that on average, approximately 30-35 responses to the questionnaire were received each month.

It was asked what kind of individuals exhibited abusive behaviour towards the harbour workforce. In response, it was noted that it varied, but it specifically related to visitors to the harbour. It was elaborated there had been anti-social behaviour in the vast majority of the incidents, and that body cameras would be effective at deterring such behaviour and reducing tensions.

Disappointment was expressed that the harbour workforce was experiencing abusive, threatening and aggressive behaviour. The right for everyone in the workforce to feel safe was emphasised. It was asked if the body cameras were enough to tackle the problem, or whether the issue needed to be escalated to health and safety/the police. In response, it was noted that all cases were escalated to health and safety and, where appropriate, to the police. It was further noted that training was available to staff on how to respond appropriately to such behaviour, but it was difficult to provide the training to seasonal workers.

It was noted that the attitudes of harbour users had changed since COVID. It was explained that one serious incident had taken place this season at Morfa Bychan beach, where the police had had to attend the scene. It was confirmed that the Council's procedures were followed in all cases of abusive behaviour. It was noted that while seasonal staff did not attend courses relating to dealing with threatening behaviour, they did receive instruction and training from chief officers on how to deal with cases of abusive, threatening and aggressive behaviour.

It was confirmed that the service had good measures in place to respond to incidents of abusive, threatening and aggressive behaviour. It was noted that the service was looking to invest further to order more body cameras, as some were now dated. Gratitude was expressed for having experienced officers within the service who were able to respond appropriately to such behaviour. A view was expressed that there

was no need to escalate the situation at this time, the service had identified the associated risks and was monitoring them constantly.

The residents of Porthmadog had expressed their gratitude for the assistance of the Harbour officers at the beach during the summer.

- (2) The Harbourmaster's report summarised the Navigational and Operational matters that had arisen between March 2025 and September 2025, including maintenance matters.

It was noted that favourable weather had led to increased activity on the water, including yachts, powerboats and more paddle-boards. It was noted that new deep-water moorings had been opened to visitors, which had proven to be popular.

It was noted that for the last two years customers who were already on the books had been asked to use the on-line berth registration system, nevertheless, only 30 out of 106 had registered on-line. It was emphasised that the service was looking to add a 'direct debit' system for the next season.

It was noted that there were two Local Notices to Mariners in operation:

- Local Notice to Mariners No. 5/25. 07-05-2025 Sand Bank Encroachment in the Channel between "Lookout Post" and the "Danger Rock". Mariners were advised to navigate with caution in this area.
- Local Notice to Mariners No. 10/25 (25-08-2025) The Starboard Mark No. 15 was currently off station.

It was noted that 'Dixie' the dragon continued to be a very popular attraction with locals and visitors, receiving positive feedback, especially from children posing next to it for photos. Another notable attraction was the new installation by Howard Bowcott, which was attracting considerable attention. It was noted that the service was investigating the possibility of installing Christmas lights around the harbour. It was noted that discussions were ongoing regarding the relocation of the old hoist to the harbour area as an additional installation.

In relation to the car park, it was noted that the service intended to install a new solar 'Pay and Display' machine in the car park over the winter. It was further noted that concerns had been raised regarding the use of the car park by large vehicles and motor homes, which disrupted the movement of other users. In response, it was noted that new signage had been installed indicating that the car park was not suitable for this type of vehicle.

Regarding Borth-y-gest, it was noted that the floodgates had sustained some damage to the latches. It was elaborated that the service had sought assistance from other departments to rectify the problem. It was further noted that a new bench had been installed near the church, 5 benches had been replaced on the harbour and Porthmadog Town Council had expressed an interest in installing and maintaining two new benches.

Regarding the harbour compound, it was noted that two new concrete pads had been installed to provide a cleaner and more useable work surface. It was noted that new

composite fencing had been installed on the west side of the compound to match the new composite gates at the entrance to the compound. It was explained that future work would include replacing the internal gate, new fencing and planters.

Regarding the harbour office, it was noted that work had commenced to create a new room inside the building to provide a new shared office for the Senior Harbour Officer and the Beaches Officer. It was noted that this had also meant that the canteen could be relocated to a new area, giving more privacy to staff using the changing facilities and toilets.

Regarding events, it was reported that one had taken place during the period under review, namely a 'Vintage Motorbike' event.

It was noted that a sad incident had occurred at the beginning of the period, as harbour officials found the occupant of a boat deceased on the vessel. All staff members were thanked for their work during this challenging time.

Discussion

It was asked whether a decision had been made as to what decorations/words to put on the buoy which has been placed near the road. In response, it was noted that no decision had been made to date, but any suggestions were welcomed. It was further noted that since it was on a main road, the options were limited in terms of what could be put on it in case it distracted drivers.

The Harbourmaster and his team were thanked for their work over the period. They also thanked the staff who had been present during the sad situation and responded with an emphasis on the importance of considering the mental well-being of staff. It was asked whether the staff had been offered counselling following the incident. In response, it was noted that all members of staff dealing with such situations were offered counselling. It was emphasised that the decision whether to take up this offer was the staff members' own personal decision.

Regarding events, it was asked whether it was worth collaborating with the events officer in the economy department to attract more events to the harbour. In response, it was noted that collaboration work was underway specifically for the harbour's 200th anniversary celebration. It was expressed that there may be room to better promote the harbour's facilities for the next year.

It was asked if a period of engagement would be held locally regarding the decision to move the hoist from Cob Crwn to the harbour. In response, it was noted that the suggestion of having a local consultation was a sensible one. It was noted that the hoist was currently not being maintained, there was risk of losing it after a period of bad weather. It was elaborated that no firm decisions had been made so far, and the department would be willing to leave the hoist at Cob Crwn if this was the best decision. It was confirmed that the next step would involve holding a discussion with the local members.

RESOLVED To note and accept the report.

a. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 03/03/26.

The meeting began at 5:30pm and ended at 6:36pm.

(Chair)