

Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee held on 15 October 2015 at the Dragon Theatre, Barmouth

PRESENT

Councillors Eryl Jones-Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Julian Kirham (Arthog Community Council), Cllr. R. Triggs (Barmouth Town Council), Cllr. Mark James (RNLI), Mr John Johnson (Barmouth and Caridgan Bay Sea Fisheries Association), Mrs Wendy Ponsford (Meirionnydd Yacht Club), Mr Martin Parouty (Barmouth Harbour Users Group), Mr Mike Ellis (Three Peaks Yacht race Committee).

Officers

Mr Llyr B. Jones	-	Senior Manager – Economy and Community
Mr Arthur Jones	-	Senior Harbours Officer
Mr Glyn Jones	-	Barmouth Harbour Master
Mrs Glynda O’Brien	-	Members and Scrutiny Support Officer
Mrs Mererid Watt	-	Translator

Apologies: Councillors Louise Hughes, Mandy Williams-Davies (Economy Cabinet Member), Cllr. Rob Williams (BRIG), Dr John Smith (Barmouth Viaduct Access Group), Mr Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer).

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Gethin Glyn Williams as Chairman of this Committee for 2015/16.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams as Vice-chairman of this Committee for 2015/16.

3. **CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(a) The following members were welcomed to the meeting:

- Cllr. R. Triggs on behalf of Barmouth Town Council, as substitute for Cllr. Lark Davies
- Cllr. Julian Kirkham on behalf of Arthog community Council
- Mr Martin Parouty on behalf of the Barmouth Harbour Users Group

(b) The Committees’ best wishes were expressed for a speedy recovery to Councillor Louise Hughes who was currently indisposed due to ill health.

4. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

A declaration of personal interest was made by the following members for the reasons noted below:

- (i) Cllr. Julian Kirkham – related to one of the Ferry operators
- (ii) Cllr. Gethin Williams – member of the Yacht Club
- (iii) Cllr. R. Triggs – member of the Yacht Club

- (iv) Mr Mike Ellis – member of the Yacht Club
- (v) Mr Martin Parouty – Member of the Yacht Club and a commercial operator in the Harbour
- (vi) Mr John Johnson – a commercial operator in the Harbour

5. **MINUTES**

Submitted: The minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee held on 19 March 2015.

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

5.1 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Item (F) (i) – Wintering Boats

- (a) The Harbour Master reported that discussions had taken place with the Parking and Road Safety Manager who had confirmed that part of the car park would be made available for wintering up to 10 vessels (10m. max. length of each boat). He had requested a bond in the sum of between £300-£500 as a deposit in respect of the area. It was stipulated that the area be kept clean and fenced off. The local contractor was of the view that it was a good idea. However, in order for the arrangement to be feasible there would be a need for at least 5 vessels to use the area considering the overall costings of the fencing at approximately £800. It was of the view that the facility would break-even in terms of investment to the Maritime Service in the first year but hopefully thereafter would make a profit.
- (b) In response to a query by a Member regarding an audit trail of the proposed facility, it was assured that the Parking and Road Safety Manager had made thorough investigations with full risk assessments and that he was satisfied that the area was redundant, he was happy with the arrangements and that e-mails were available to confirm the discussions.
- (c) The Senior Harbours Officer stressed that at the moment it is a potential facility with the need for further discussion and that it was important to understand that any vessel left on the car park is the sole responsibility of the owner.
- (d) The Senior Manager – Economy and Community noted that it would be useful if the facility would be available by February. As soon as it is known how many are interested in using the facility then preparatory work could be put in place.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

Item 5 (ii) – Wheelchair Access to the Promenade

- (a) It was noted that the above matter was raised by Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams who indicated that he was a member of the Meirionnydd Access Group and had discovered that the post of Disability Officer within Gwynedd Council had been abolished with the post now being shared by another officer. The problem with wheelchair access onto the Promenade in Barmouth is that it can only be accessed and exited at a particular location. The Member enquired as to whether the Meirionnydd Access Group could submit an individual bid to the Lottery Fund.
- (b) In response, the Senior Manager – Economy and Community stated that in order to undertake additional access on the Promenade it would involve substantial engineering work. However, if the Meirionnydd Access Group were to submit a claim for funding he (or

the Regeneration Officer) would be more than happy to discuss the way forward with the Group.

- (c) It was further suggested by the Chairman of this Committee that the Town Council may, as well, wish to discuss the possibility of establishing a Barmouth Access Group in consultation with the Meirionnydd Access Group in order to discuss the way forward with any grant claims, etc.

Resolved: (i) That Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams discusses the possibility of the Meirionnydd Access Group submitting a bid to the Lottery Fund and thereafter with Gwynedd Council officials.

(ii) That the Town Council members present at the meeting brings the matter up at the next meeting of the Town Council regarding the possibility of establishing a Barmouth Access Group.

6. MARITIME AND COUNTRY PARKS OFFICER

Submitted: To members, during the meeting, a written report by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer, on activities in Barmouth Harbour.

The Senior Harbours Officer read the report to Members and specific reference were made to the following:

- (a) Registration of Powerboats

In response to a query by a Member regarding registration of boats via alternative arrangements, it was reported that most of the registrations from caravan sites were referred to the Harbour Master's Office and the risk assessments are undertaken by the Harbour Master and are reviewed by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer and / or the Senior Harbours Officer. It was assured that everything was all in hand.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

- (b) Navigation

It was reported that works are ongoing on the navigational aids since there had been delays due to the local contractor having been away. Two new buoys are in the process of being purchased as well as new lights and it was assured that the Maritime Service was anxious to get the navigational aids up to scratch since it is a priority from a health and safety aspect. The Senior Harbours Officer stated that he hoped that the works will be completed within the next 2/3 weeks. It was further noted that the bar buoy is exposed to the weather and the Maritime Service is in discussion with Hydrosphere with regard to a suitable type.

The Barmouth Harbour Users Group representative queried as to why had the navigational aids been neglected for so long. In response, the Senior Harbours Officer stated that since he had only been in post since February that he was not aware that they had been neglected. The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Harbour Users Group at the last meeting of this Committee had congratulated the Maritime Service for the standard of the navigational aids.

The Senior Manager – Economy and Community stated that there is no easy answer as to the neglect of the navigational aids but it comes down to a number of factors. Inspection of all Harbours' navigational aids had been undertaken by Trinity House and in terms of Barmouth Harbour there were lessons to be learnt and hopefully these would be rectified in the near future.

With regard to lights on the buoys in poor condition and particularly last Saturday (10.10.15), the Harbour Master stated that the navigational aids had been brought in for repair and a notice to mariners had been issued to this effect (a copy of the notices were circulated to members during the meeting for information). In terms of the Fairway buoy, the light had been turned up to its maximum, a new light was on order for the bar buoy and it was assured that the navigational lights would be in working order as soon as possible.

It was further stated that good buoyage channel is very important especially for the purpose of encouraging more people to visit the Harbour.

The Senior Manager – Economy and Community accepted the comments made and appealed to Members of the Committee and users to contact the Harbour Master if they have any concern regarding the navigational aids.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(c) Work Programme

The Senior Harbours Officer listed the schedule for the work programme at Barmouth Harbour for the next three months which included the following:

- Removing the pontoon fingers
- Examining and maintaining the remaining section of the pontoon
- Perch ladder
- Maintaining and refurbishment of the buoys
- Cleaning the compound
- Maintaining the notice boards
- Maintaining benches
- Cleaning and repairing the breakwater perch
- Maintaining the fencing on the harbour wall
- Maintaining the promenade
- Maintaining the dinghy racks

The Harbour Master confirmed that he had undertaken work to the Ferry steps.

Members commented as follows:

- (i) The rack for dinghies will be a huge improvement
- (ii) With regard to the benches, it was noted that the Barmouth Town Council own and were responsible for some and that a cross-reference be made as to the ownership

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(d) Budgets

The Senior Harbours Officer issued a budget spreadsheet and members were guided through the information when it was noted that there was an underspend of £5,946. In response to a query about depreciation of £11,900, the Senior Manager – Economy and Community stated that this appeared as a form of summary budget which refers to assets, buildings across the Council's whole Services and that it does not affect the Barmouth Harbour budget.

In response to a query with regard to a budget of £3,000 on administration books, it was confirmed that this referred to log books, ordering books, etc. but that further enquiry be made by the Senior Harbours Officer with regard to this.

In view of the fact that there were two separate budget spreadsheets, it was requested in future that only one be submitted in order to avoid confusion for members.

Resolved: (a) To accept the budget spreadsheet subject to further enquiries being made as to reference 3250 – administration books.

(b) That the Maritime Service be requested to submit one budget spreadsheet to future meetings for ease of reference to members.

(e) Staffing

It was confirmed that Dafydd Rhun Thomas' will be based at Porthmadog until 31 December 2015 and will be working at Barmouth, Aberdyfi and Hafan, Pwllheli, as necessary.

With regard to Dafydd Rhun Thomas being on duty in Barmouth on the Harbour Master's annual leave days, the Senior Harbours Officer stated that this matter would be referred to the Maritime and Country Parks Officer's decision. It was further confirmed that a member of staff would be on duty from 1st April to October in the Harbour.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(f) Events

Reference was made to the events which had been organised during 2015 which included:

- Three Peaks Race
- Barmouth "Paddlesports" rowing events
- Barmouth "Motorcross" event
- Bamouth Yacht Club training events for dinghy sailing

It was appealed to members of the Committee that if they were aware of any events, that they please let the Senior Harbours Officer or the Harbour Master know in order that preparatory arrangements be made in terms of risk assessment, staffing, etc.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(g) Port Marine Safety Code - National Consultation

It was reported that the National Consultation document of the Port Marine Safety Code was in draft form and it was agreed to send an electronic Pdf copy to each member (members were requested to provide their e-mail addresses on a list which was circulated at the meeting).

Resolved: That the Senior Harbours Officer forwards a copy of the Port Marine Safety Code to each member of the Consultative Committee who provided their e-mail address at the meeting.

(h) Red Diesel Provision

A request was made by the Senior Harbours Officer that customers provide feed-back if they experience any difference in quality of the red diesel provision.

It was further suggested that possibly the Harbour Master could send an e-mail to all clients to seek their views.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(i) 2016 Fees

It was noted that there would be 1% increase in the fees and charges for 2016/17.

During the ensuing discussion, the following matters were raised:

- (a) In reply to the concern of loss of income to Harbours, the Senior Manager – Economy and Community stated that each individual Harbour had to be sustainable in terms of income. However, members were aware of the financial climate nowadays and the Maritime Service was endeavouring to encourage and restore activities across the coast. The only Harbour making a profit was Hafan, Pwllheli.
- (b) A member was of the view that if the Council invested in the Harbour it would mean a massive change to the town of Barmouth and there is a need to bring more visiting boats into the Harbour.
- (c) In reply to the above, the Harbour Master stated that the service did not turn anybody down in terms of moorings and he went on to explain the procedure regarding the issuing of Council owned moorings as compared to privately owned moorings. However, as an authority there are health and safety procedures which have to be adhered to and prioritised.
- (d) A suggestion was made as to whether the Senior Harbours Officer could investigate the possibility of forming a business plan for submission to the Heads of Department in terms of additional moorings.
- (e) In reply, the Senior Harbours Officer stated that the health and safety aspect was important and felt that there was a need to look at the bigger picture rather than increasing the moorings such as attracting more people to events.
- (f) It was stressed that the harbour moorings must be serviced on an yearly basis. Due to anomalies between Council owned and privately owned moorings, the Harbour Master had been requested to produce a plan of every mooring in the Harbour in order that procedures with regard to health and safety be improved. The Senior Harbours Officer went on to state that he, in consultation with the Maritime and Country Parks Officer, were in the process of looking at processes in respect of “permit to lay” whereby no person would be able to lay moorings without the necessary paper work and Harbour Master’s consent. There is also a need for an annual inspection of all the moorings so as to ensure compliance with health and safety aspects and the need to raise awareness with customers as to exactly what requirements are needed. The Chairman requested that a further report on the matter be submitted to the next meeting of the Harbour Committee in March 2016 together with a list of comparison of Council owned moorings in the other Gwynedd Harbours.
- (g) In reply to a question as to whether the Harbour Service would be allowed to remove a vessel, the Harbour Master stated that vessels could be removed if the appropriate paper work with regard to inspections, insurance, etc., were not produced.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the above.

(b) That the Senior Harbours Officer submits a progress report to the next meeting of this Committee in March 2016 as outlined in (f) above.

7. **MATTERS CONSIDERED AT THE REQUEST OF MEMBERS ON THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

(a) Vessels Launching from Penrhyn Point – Insurance status. How is this monitored?

Councillor Julian Kirkham took the opportunity, on behalf of Arthog Community Council, of thanking the Maritime and Country Parks Officer for resolving the problems at Penrhyn Point in terms of litter bins, signage, etc. but there was still concern regarding launching from Penrhyn Point and particularly so without insurance. It was requested if the Patrol Boat could undertake more routine checks.

Resolved: The Senior Harbours Officer agreed to discuss the matter further with the Harbour Master in respect of more visits to Penrhyn Point.

(b) Sand deposition, accumulation and its removal

The Senior Manager – Economy and Community was aware of the concern regarding sand accumulation particularly on the causeway. It was true to state that numerous complaints had been received over the summer months and that the Maritime Service had endeavoured to deal with the situation but that it was a natural process. A meeting had been arranged between the Chairman of this Committee, the Chief Executive of the Authority, and Gwynedd Consultancy, whereby it was acknowledged that there was a problem but that it was not easy to resolve. Arising from the meeting, Gwynedd Consultancy had agreed to investigate options available in the long term. The Barmouth Town Council had also raised concern over the matter and a site meeting had been arranged together with representatives from Natural Resources Wales who were also in favour of investigating long term options. It is hoped that further local meetings will be held in order to ascertain local views.

Resolved: To note and accept the above.

(c) The Pontoon

The Barmouth Harbour and Estuary Users Group expressed its thanks to the Council for the repair of the pontoon, a valuable asset to the harbour which enhances its desirability as a port of call for visiting yachts.

The Senior Harbours Officer stated that there are a couple of issues with the pontoon which need to be rectified in terms of maintenance and re-inforcement, etc.

(d) Barmouth Bridge closure to pedestrians

Resolved: That this matter should be referred to the ongoing Gwynedd Challenge regarding the continuation of paying the fee to Network Rail for the right for pedestrians, cyclists and motor cyclists to use the Barmouth footbridge.

8. **ANY OTHER MATTER**

50 years' Commemorative Plaque – Prince of Wales Ferry Boat

The Chairman referred to an article in the local paper regarding calls for a memorial plaque to commemorate the half-century anniversary of the victims of the “Prince of Wales” ferry which hit the toll bridge at Penmaenpool on 22 July 1966.

During the ensuing discussion some members were of the view that this matter had been referred to both Barmouth and Dolgellau Town Councils. Members of the Harbour Consultative Committee fully supported the request but in terms of protocol it was suggested that it be referred to the Chairpersons of the Barmouth and Dolgellau Town Councils for further consideration. Both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee agreed to discuss the request with both the above Town Councils.

Resolved: That the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee supports erecting a commemorative plaque in memory of the victims of the Prince of Wales Ferry Boat but, in terms of protocol, that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Harbour Consultative Committee consult with the Chairmen of both Barmouth and Dolgellau Town Councils to discuss the way forward.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved: To note that the next meeting of this Consultative Committee be held on 22 March 2016.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m. and concluded at 12.55 p.m.

CHAIRMAN.