
ABERDYFI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, 12 MARCH 2024

Present:

Gwynedd Councillors: Councillor Robert Dewi Owen (Chair).
Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones.

Co-opted Members: Freddie Collier (Aberdyfi RNLI), David Williams (Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertisement Committee), Desmond George (Member of Dyfi Yacht Club), Al Crisp (Outward Bound Trust Wales), Guy Shaw (Aberdyfi Rowing Club), Councillor Bob Tyrrell (Aberdyfi Community Council) and Nigel Willis (Member of Aberdyfi Boat? Club).

Observers: Councillor Nia Wyn Jeffreys (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) and Councillor Gwilym Jones (Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee).

Officers in attendance:

Bryn Pritchard-Jones (Maritime Service Manager), Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), William Arthur Stockford (Aberdyfi Harbourmaster) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Llŷr Beaumont Jones, (Assistant Head - Economy and Community Department).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 17 October 2023, as a true record.

5. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The reports were presented by the Maritime Services Manager and the Senior Harbours Officer. Attention was drawn to the following main points:

It was ensured that the Harbourmaster and his assistant would survey afon Dyfi prior to the busy Easter period to determine the most suitable location to lay harbour moorings.

It was confirmed that customers wishing to have a mooring in the harbour or register their boats for the upcoming season were expected to complete the online form promptly via Cyngor Gwynedd's website. It was explained that mooring holders needed to contact the Harbourmaster to confirm their mooring location in the harbour.

It was stressed that the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) continued to be rigorously followed to improve safety for all who use or work in the port marine environment.

The Assistant Harbourmaster, Mr Oliver Simmons, was thanked for his committed work in the harbour. It was noted that he had now left his post to set up a new company. Best wishes were expressed to him and the company in the future. It was clarified that candidates were currently being interviewed to fill the vacancy and it was hoped that a qualified individual would take up the role at the start of the busy summer season.

It was elaborated that a new permanent post had been advertised to assist the Harbourmaster and his assistant with their work. It was explained that the job title was Meirionnydd Beaches Officer and was based in Barmouth harbour to work along the coastal beaches between Barmouth and Aberdyfi. It was noted that it was hoped that the officer would take up the post before the Easter period. It was confirmed that this appointment was in addition to the seasonal beach staff appointed to work at Aberdyfi and Tywyn beaches for the summer period on an annual basis. Members were updated that it was hoped that seasonal staff members would start work from the end of May onwards.

It was acknowledged that there was no update to be shared on performance indicators as there had been little change over the winter months. It was confirmed that the information would be included in the next Committee meeting.

Members were guided through the harbour's financial performance for the current financial year, following the November 2023 review. Attention was drawn to several points within the following headings:

- **Employees** - It was explained that an underspend of £7,963 was anticipated in this area due to Mr Simmons' resignation.
- **Property** - It was noted that expenditure had been made in this area in accordance with the allocated budget. It was explained that it covered several duties such as grounds maintenance as well as benches. It was also clarified that it included reimbursement for some payments such as memorial benches.
- **Transportation** - It was reported that this heading gave more details regarding fuel to use the harbour boat - and maintenance costs had not been included in the figures. It was confirmed that there was an estimated underspend of £427 as the weather had not enabled officers to use the boat as often as they had hoped.
- **Services and Supplies** It was predicted that there would be an underspend of around £7,000 within this field due to day-to-day costs and contractors' costs throughout the year. It was elaborated that this included several costs such as investment in moorings, lighting and chains. It was acknowledged that prices had been rising over the year, which had caused overspending.

It was reported that an underspend- of £1,314 in total harbour expenditure was anticipated following the above considerations, compared to the budget. This was confirmed as a positive situation for the harbour. It was pointed out that the harbour would receive a higher income this year due to the increase in fees to customers, as well as charging fees for additional services such as trailer parking. It was stressed that there was an increase in the numbers registered to use the moorings.

It was confirmed that the harbour was forecast to underspend by £5,010 by the end of the financial year, compared to the budget for 2023/24. It was acknowledged that this could change before the end of the financial year, but pride was expressed that the harbour was currently underspending.

It was reported that there were changes to fees and charges for the 2024/25 year. It was confirmed that these changes had already been submitted to the Cabinet Member and had been approved. It was explained that these changes were introduced because harbour income targets across the county had increased and therefore these costs were a means to meet those targets particularly given that the weather affected the harbour's ability to attract consumers to services. Members were reminded that customers can now pay for the services on-line. The following changes were highlighted:

- It was confirmed there would be no increase in the launch fee this year. It was explained that the fee for this service had increased from £10 to £22 in 2020 and will therefore not increase again this year.
- It was explained that the registration fee would increase from £60 to £70 (an increase of 17%).
- It was noted that there was a 6% increase in the annual launching and registration package fee, raising the fee from £170 to £180. It was reported that this change was made due to more customers choosing to pay for the services in this method rather than daily fees, and it was easier to manage.
- It was explained that a launch fee for boats less than 10hp would rise from £35 to £40.
- It was reported that a fee of £40 had been noted for yachts at various locations across the county. It was recognised that this fee was not applicable for Aberdyfi harbour.

The Harbourmaster and all officers were thanked for their thorough work over the past few months. A presentation was received from the Harbourmaster in which the following main points were highlighted:

Members were reminded that two Local Notices for Mariners remained in force at the time due to a problem with the aids to navigation or that they had moved, but it was hoped that these issues would be resolved by Easter. It was clarified that details of Local Notices for Mariners were on Cyngor Gwynedd's website and the importance of contacting the harbour office for the latest information on navigational safety was emphasised.

It was reported that the harbour has invested in a 'drone' so that details and specific features could be viewed from the air, such as inspecting navigational aids without having to launch the harbour boat. It was pointed out that it would also be helpful if anyone went missing to help find them. Unfortunately, it was recognised that what can be seen via the 'drone' could not be shared on the web as it would not be possible to rely on the information as it would be outdated. It was also noted this would raise difficulties with regulations.

It was noted that the harbour 'Powercat' patrol boat had recently undergone maintenance in preparation for the busy season. It was explained that as part of the Coastguard Agency's boat coding regulations, the boat had received an inspection from an approved Marine Surveyor in February. It was confirmed that the boat had passed this inspection and the certificate was on the way. It had been reported that the boat would return to operational duties after it had been repaired by a local marine engineer.

It was confirmed that officers were continuing to cooperate with the authorities following a serious accident in the harbour last summer. Everyone was urged to continue to work with the authorities should the need arise. Sympathy was extended to everyone involved in the accident.

It was noted that the harbour office had been dealing with a several litter queries and complaints recently. Everyone was thanked for helping to clear refuse that washed ashore on the local foreshore. Despite this, it was noted that large and bulky items or items deemed suspicious, dangerous, corrosive or toxic should be reported to the harbour office immediately, to arrange for their safe disposal. It was stressed that it was important to alert the harbour office to any waste that had been collected and left to ensure that arrangements for collection are made as soon as possible. It was stressed that the Council collected waste free of charge if they were near the litter bins and officers can easily access them.

Consideration was given to provide litter pick-up kits at the harbourmaster's office, so that people could use them, but it was noted that these had not been returned when the office had trialled this in the past. It was noted that perhaps such a system would work if reintroduced, and if the equipment had to be paid for and if the user receives a refund on return.

The harbour was looking forward to a busy season and several upcoming events were highlighted such as the 2024 Welsh Rowing Coastal Championships, Aberdyfi Rowing Club Annual Regatta and WeSwimRun events.

Everyone was thanked for their work over the last few months and for working so effectively with the harbour office.

RESOLVED

To note and accept the reports.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 15 October 2024.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.45 a.m.

(Chair)