
PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 27/03/26

PRESENT:

Councillor Gwilym Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd) (Chair)
Councillor June Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd) (Vice-chair)
Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Cyngor Gwynedd)
Councillor John Brynmor Hughes (Pwllheli Harbour Consultative Committee)
Councillor Richard Medwyn Hughes (Cabinet Member for Economy and Community)

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

APOLOGIES: Chris Fisher (Cricieth Lifeboat) and Robert Owen (Representing Commercial Interests).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Chris Fisher (Cricieth Lifeboat) and Robert Owen (Representing Commercial Interests).

2 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3 URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4 MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 30/09/25 as a true record.

5 UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

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

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

Performance Data

It was noted that moorings agreements in Porthmadog had now increased to 109. It was noted that the figures provided remain consistent with those shared at the

October meeting. However, during the winter, the Harbour office had received several enquiries regarding moorings from new customers at Porthmadog Harbour.

The members were reminded that the online service for mooring applications, powerboat registration and renewal of mooring licences would reopen on 1 April. Any new customers were asked to call into the office to provide information about their vessel to the Harbourmaster before completing the on-line form.

It was noted that signs with QR codes were placed around the harbour to receive comments from users about their experience of the harbour. It was noted that the satisfaction figures had increased significantly since 2023/24. A decline in the number of feedback responses submitted through the QR code survey was predicted over the winter. Nevertheless, feedback received through email correspondence and face-to-face discussions had been very positive and was welcomed.

Reference was made to a specific comment received about the excellent service received from the service during the winter, noting that the service's experienced staff had used maritime trucks during severe weather to support the most vulnerable residents during this period. This had enabled carers from adult services to travel to residents' homes and to work. All staff were sincerely thanked for their hard work during this challenging time.

Reference was made to a further comment about the support and information provided by the Harbourmaster to assist with a hydrographic survey of Pwllheli Harbour.

Harbour Safety

It was reported at the Committee meeting in October, that members had been advised on the appointment of Mr Owen Morgan, Harbour Manager for Ceredigion Council, as our new 'Designated Person'. Mr Owen Morgan carried out inspections of the harbours under the authority of the Maritime Department, namely in the harbours of Aberdyfi, Abermaw, Porthmadog and Hafan Pwllheli, in February. It was confirmed that the Service could now submit its Declaration of Compliance before the end of March, and to publish its PMSC documentation on Cyngor Gwynedd's website.

It was noted that adjustments had been made to the PMSC during 2025. These changes were designed to ensure that any overlapping marine safety management plans and systems fit together effectively. As a result, a national compliance exercise was issued to all harbours to confirm that they adhere to individual codes, and to ensure that appropriate measures were in place to deal with any necessary adjustments.

Winter Storms

It was reported that, during the winter of 2025/26, the area once again experienced an increase in the number of storms, mainly from the South-Southeast direction. It was noted that such storms are becoming more common, with less of a gap between them. It was noted that only one incident was recorded during this period, involving a small boat that sank alongside the harbour wall due to heavy rain and strong winds. It was elaborated that no environmental concerns were identified, and that the boat was put back in place at the earliest possible opportunity.

Harbour users were asked to check with the harbour for any changes in the channel, check any Aids to Navigation, and check for any notices to mariners on the website.

Financial Matters

A summary of the 2026/27 fees and Harbour budgets for the period 1/4/25 to 31/3/26 was presented, which was included as an appendix to the report. It was specifically noted:

- That fees had risen as usual in line with inflation.
- That the visitor boat fee had been increased to £16 per night for Cyngor Gwynedd customers and to £22 for all other visiting boats.
- That the annual registration fee had increased to £80.
- That the annual launch licence fee had increased to £196.50.
- That the daily launch fee had increased to £24.
- That there had been a slight overspend under the 'employees' heading of £3,834. It was noted that this overspend was due to overtime and sickness costs.
- That the heading 'buildings/premises' did not include costs relating to the work on the harbour offices, and therefore there was an underspend of £7,724 appearing.
- That there was an underspend under the 'transport' heading of £468.
- That there was a significant underspend under the heading 'services and delivery' of £8,722.
- That £31,914 has been spent from the reserve to upgrade the harbour offices to ensure the well-being of staff and to upgrade the compound.
- Overall, the whole service had overspent £18,835 above the target set for the period. Nevertheless, the income of the harbour was substantial, and therefore this resulted in an overall underspend of £9,404 for operating the Harbour in its entirety.

It was emphasised that there was a great deal of expertise among the Harbour staff, such as welding and the use of specialist machinery, and therefore there was no need to employ contractors in every case. It was noted that this had resulted in significant savings.

Other Key Matters

During the presentation, drone video of the channel, specifically the 'Danger Rock' sandbank, was shared. It was noted that more powerful currents come from afon Dwryd, which creates an 'eddie' and then a whirlpool near the rocks. It was noted that this created navigation issues at times. Large boats were asked to come into the Harbour over the sandbank during periods of high water to ensure their safety.

Staff were thanked for their response to an environmental incident in the Cricieth area during the winter. It was elaborated that staff trained on how to respond to oil spills had used booms, absorbent mats and other materials to prevent the spill and reduce the environmental impact.

It was confirmed that the next shunt reactor would be delivered on the 'Terra Marique' during the 2026 period. The plan was for this to be implemented on Morfa Bychan beach, where the vessel would be placed before transporting the reactor along the road to Trawsfynydd. It was noted that a definite date had not yet been confirmed for

this, but that the date was likely to be in the middle of the year, when sea conditions would have improved.

It was confirmed that a formal agreement between the Rowing Club and the Maritime Service had now been approved following an application to use the land in the compound area. It was noted that the Rowing Club had used the area for storage for several years, and the service was pleased that an official agreement was now in place between both parties.

Discussion

The members expressed their thanks for the report.

Gratitude had been expressed by the residents of Porthmadog for the help of the Harbour officers during the winter. The view was expressed that the customer satisfaction figures showed that the service was willing to go the extra mile and work as one Council, one team. In response, it was confirmed that the service had supported the Adult Service for several years, ensuring that the road was safe for travel during severe weather, particularly in the Dolgellau and Blaenau Ffestiniog areas. It was confirmed that there had been no damage or harm to staff or vehicles during winter this year.

Reference was made to the fact that customer satisfaction figures had increased significantly from 40% 'Excellent' in 2023/24 to 68% in 2025/26 during a financially challenging period, and this demonstrated the strength of the service. Pride was expressed that the service had completed upgrading the offices, providing a tidy and comfortable place for staff to work. The formal agreement with the Rowing Club was commended. More information was asked about the 'Terra Marique' vessel. In response, it was confirmed that the vessel was due to visit Morfa Bychan again in July, and that the service had no concerns regarding the vessel's visit. It was noted that the main entrance would have to be closed for a couple of days, but that an alternative entrance exists. It was elaborated that the boat's visit was a source of income for the Harbour, and that the service receives a refund for any associated costs.

It was suggested that the drone video be shared on the Council's social media. In response, it was noted that there were plans to create drone videos of the approach into the channel at each harbour and put them on the Council's social media for navigational purposes. It was further questioned how often this sandbank shifted, suggesting that it would be beneficial for mariners if there was an update to the drone video every quarter. In response, it was confirmed that the sandbank moved frequently, depending on several factors, and that channel revisions were common. It was noted that sharing this information with mariners was the intention of the service following the remodelling of the Council's website this year. Members were reminded that a notice to mariners would be issued if there were any concerns about safety, and these would be shared on the Council's website.

Questions were asked about the oil spill in the Cricieth area, asking where the oil had come from. It was further asked whether the service would be competent and willing to deal with any oil spill in rivers. In response, it was reported that oil from a local business had leaked into a stream and then onto the beach. It was confirmed that Natural Resources Wales was leading on this work, particularly off the beach. It was noted that there were costs involved in the work, but that the service had a duty, as

part of the Marine Safety Code, to retain anti-pollution equipment. The hope was that a refund could be received to meet these costs.

(2) The Harbourmaster's report summarising the Navigation and Operational issues undertaken and experienced in the period from September 2025 to March 2026, including maintenance issues. It was specifically noted:

- That buoy number 1 had come ashore since the report was produced.
- That work was underway to mark the channel with yellow buoys, and it was hoped that the weather would be favourable next week to station the large buoys there.
- That it was hoped that maritime notices would soon be available on the Council's website for sending to harbour users, as there was currently a problem due to the notices file being too large to send.
- That there was hope that new buoys would be purchased, as many of them were now deteriorating due to their age.
- That the opening to afon Dwyrdd had moved and therefore had created a problem with sandbanks at 'Danger Rock'.
- That harbour staff appreciated the fact that the offices had been upgraded.
- That a new pay and display card machine has been purchased and had to be installed in the car park before Easter.
- That composite decking had been laid around the harbour, and the 'Griselinia' trees had started to grow well.
- That it was hoped that a new CCTV camera would be installed next month on the side of the harbour building.

Discussion

Members thanked the officers and the Harbourmaster for their work over this period.

More information was requested about the challenge associated with abandoned boats, with the responsibility for them then falling on the Harbour and the Council, specifically within Porthmadog Harbour and generally across Wales. In response, it was confirmed that this was a problem, with many small boats being left on beaches. It was noted that the responsibility fell on the Maritime Service to dispose of them and to bear the cost of doing so.

It was asked where the CCTV recordings went. In response, it was confirmed that the CCTV recordings were available at the harbour offices, but that they are not constantly watched until a specific case occurs, or until a data release request comes from the police following a crime. The view was expressed that CCTV has been extremely valuable since it was installed, as several incidents had taken place in Porthmadog and Abermaw. It was noted that the dashcam and body cameras had also been beneficial assets, and that all data protection assessments were in place for the service to use these devices.

Harbour staff were thanked for their work in maintaining several defibrillators in the harbour during the winter.

It was noted that the service had withdrawn the majority of 999 phones across the coast, as statistics indicated they were not being used. It was hoped that this would save unnecessary costs.

RESOLVED To note and accept the report.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 30/10/26.

The meeting commenced at 1:00 p.m. and ended at 1:57 p.m.

(Chair)