

Minutes of a Meeting of the ABERAERON Harbour Users Consultative Committee held by video conference on Thursday, 20 October 2022

Ceredigion County Councillors: Keith Henson (Chairman), Elizabeth Evans and Gethin Davies

Officers: Gerwyn Jones, Owen Morgan, Katy Spain, Nia Jones and Dana Jones

Harbour Users / Stakeholders: Adrian Davies, Tim Davies, Patricia Lewis and Rhys Evans

(5.30pm – 6.25pm)

1. **Apologies**

Mr David Nicholson and Mr Stephen Webb apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 March 2020**

It was agreed to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on the 12 March 2020.

Matters Arising

Item 4- Mr Owen Morgan, Harbour Manager advised that there were no imminent proposals to change the arrangements for the management of Aberaeron Harbour. Should this situation change stakeholders would be advised accordingly. when

3. **Harbour Services Update**

The Harbour Manager provided members with a service update as provided in the recent issue of Calm Waters 3 and the following was highlighted in relation to Aberaeron Harbour:-

- Ceredigion Harbour Management Policy – it was agreed that a copy of the policy would be circulated to all Members with the minutes
- Port Waste Management Plans (PWMPs)
- Aberaeron Coastal Defence Scheme
- Bendigedig – Global Sailing Challenge
- Dredging
- Slipways
- Health and Safety – Everyone’s Responsibility
- Disembarkation
- Feedback

It was noted that the review of the Harbour Management Policy would be undertaken and that there would be a consultation process with stakeholders forming part of that before the Policy was subject to political scrutiny/approval.

Members thanked the Harbour Manager for the update.

4 Issues Raised by Harbour Users

The following were questions raised by Mr David Nicholson and Mr Stephen Webb:-

Question	Answer
<p>Mr Stephen Webb</p> <p>Collection of Aberaeron Harbour mooring fees:</p> <p>Although my own application and payment of mooring fees went through without any hitches there have been many cases this year where fees have still not been collected even though we are at the end of the season and preparing for lift-out.</p> <p>The main reason appears to be that not all boat owners have received the relevant invoice and there are cases where final demands have been received by these boat owners with the threat of possible court action if payment is not received by a specific date.</p>	<p>Mr Owen Morgan, Harbour Manager</p> <p>An internal audit of the Harbour Account 2021/22 had been compiled with positive feedback provided in terms of the protocols and systems in place.</p> <p>Provided the mooring application forms are returned fully completed and in a timely manner then no issues should arise. It is in all stakeholders' interest that this process is dealt with as efficiently and seamlessly as possible and in accordance with Council's corporate protocols.</p>
<p>Aberaeron Harbour launching fees:</p> <p>It appears that there no system in place for the collection of launching fees.</p> <p>Obviously the mismanagement and inefficiency shown in collecting the above fees greatly reduces the harbour revenue and what is worrying is that this may lead to an increase in mooring fees to make up for these failures.</p>	<p>Harbour Team members were present six days a week in the harbour for the majority of the summer. This being consistent with the historic level of presence from the Harbours Team at Aberaeron.</p> <p>The service has to balance the cost of providing an officer on site to the fees that possibly could be collected considering that the launch fee is only £18.50. Historically the number of day launches has been modest at best.</p>
<p>Insurance:</p> <p>There is no check on whether or not boat owners have adequate insurance cover and this could put other boat owners at</p>	<p>It's the responsibility of the boat owner to have sufficient and appropriate insurance cover at all times. There isn't practical meaningful way of checking adherence with this and it wouldn't be feasible to</p>

<p>risk. An application for a mooring only requires a boat owner to understand that they need the relevant cover and there is no system in place to check that this has been completed satisfactorily by each boat owner.</p> <p>Why is the Harbour Master no longer responsible for ensuring all boat owners using the harbour have sufficient insurance, surely a request for a copy of the insurance cover would be a simple way of ensuring compliance?</p>	<p>check everyone's insurance prior to each occasion they used their vessels..</p>
<p>Aberaeron Harbour maintenance:</p> <p>There are certain areas where health and safety is an issue due to the lack of regular checks on the facilities around the harbour, dangerously slippery slipway due to green algae, corrosion of harbour wall ladders and the port side marker is still missing from the slipway.</p> <p>The slipway has now been cleared following complaints after a boat owner was injured slipping on the treacherous surface, however the other safety issues mentioned have not been dealt with.</p> <p>Why is there no system in place to routinely ensure that the harbour facilities conform to all health and safety requirements and regulations?</p>	<p>Already provided in the harbour updated as stated in the Calm Water 3. The service takes health and safety issues seriously and considers them accordingly.</p> <p>Algae on the slipway can be an issue when it accumulates at certain times of the year. We are unable to use the substance previously used for algae removal due its environment impact but will continue to make reasonable efforts to mitigate the matter.</p> <p>As set out health and safety is everyone's responsibility. Harbours have inherent risks and people need to take due care and attention when visiting/using them. In such environments it is not possible to remove or mitigate all risks..</p>
<p>Crane license:</p> <p>The issuing of a license for the use of a crane for the lifting of boats in and out of the harbour is frustratingly restrictive with no apparent flexibility to take into account cancellation due to unpredictable weather conditions. The current situation is that if the crane cannot be operated</p>	<p>This will be addressed when boats are lifted into the harbour next year and a risk assessment completed accordingly.</p> <p>Provided documents are adequately completed and submitted sufficiently in advance this should not be a problem Applications can be submitted some time in advance with dates amended, if</p>

<p>due to the weather conditions on the day specified then the license then has to be renewed which then takes some time to be granted.</p> <p>Is it not possible to have a more flexible licensing arrangement where the unpredictability of the weather can be taken into consideration?</p>	<p>required and subject to approval, to reflect weather conditions or other influencing factors.</p>
<p>David Nicholson</p> <p>I would like to tender my apologies for not taking part in the above meeting on 20/10/22. I would like the following statement to be read to the meeting please.</p> <p>"I have attended Harbour Users Consultative Meetings for many years. I regularly pre notify agenda items and help with the minutes published after the meetings. All Covid restrictions have ended. If CCC wish to impose an online meeting, why have there been no meetings arranged this way during the Covid years? An online meeting is available only to Harbour Users who have the right technology and the ability to use it. This is undemocratic. What we request is a meeting in the normal pre-Covid way with considerably longer than 45 minutes allocated to it given the time since our last meeting and the number of current issues."</p>	<p>The Harbour Users Consultative Meetings are only one of a number of ways that harbour users can engage with the Council. Most matters, including day to day matters, can and are most appropriately raised with staff based at the respective harbour offices as and when they arise. Harbour Users can also engage via Clic, the Council's customer interface by phone or in writing. Meetings held in this way are more efficient in terms of the travelling time and costs avoided.</p>
<p>The system and administration for the collection of mooring fees continues to be completely unfit for purpose. This year has been worse than ever.</p>	<p>An internal audit of the Harbour Account 2021/22 had been compiled with positive feedback provided in terms of the protocols and systems in place. .</p> <p>Provided the mooring application forms are returned fully completed and in a timely manner then no issues should arise. It is in all stakeholders' interest that</p>

	<p>this process is dealt with as efficiently and seamlessly as possible and in accordance with Council's corporate protocols.</p>
<p>No launch fee is collected for the vast majority of trailer launches. There is no suitable system in place and no signage to indicate what to do in the absence of the Harbour Assistant. This situation also means that uninsured vessels can be freely launched and should there be an unfortunate incident the boats of mooring fee payers are at risk. CCC are also depriving themselves of significant income.</p>	<p>Harbour Team members were present six days a week in the harbour for the majority of the summer. This being consistent with the historic level of presence from the Harbours Team at Aberaeron.</p> <p>The service has to balance the cost of providing an officer on site to the fees that possibly could be collected considering that the launch fee is only £18.50. Historically the number of day launches has been modest at best.</p>
<p>The resource supplied by CCC for day to day Harbour Management is inadequate. This statement is not intended to be detrimental to the Harbour Assistant who clearly can't be everywhere at once.</p>	<p>The level of staffing resource in the harbours has been broadly consistent over a number of years. It has not been subject to the rationalisation experienced in other service areas.</p>
<p>We understand that CCC have received expressions of interest with respect to Private Sector Management of Aberaeron Harbour. What is the current status?</p>	<p>Reply already provided under matters arising</p>

The following was also requested by the Local Member and Harbour users:-

- Layout template of the harbour – the Harbour Manager reported that the current plan was accurate and up to date, a copy would be provided in the Harbourmaster office. The Harbour Manager would welcome any feedback or input regarding possible changes / improvement from harbour users which could be considered / implemented if they were deemed to provide an overall benefit/improvement on those currently in place.

The Harbour Manager will be setting up a structure of surgery type meetings at each Harbour which provide a further ongoing opportunity for stakeholders to engage with the Service on such matters.

5. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next Harbour Users meetings was scheduled for Thursday 16 of March 2023. The meetings will take place virtually via Zoom/Teams at 5:30pm.