

Minutes of a Meeting of the ABERAERON Harbour Users Consultative Committee held remotely via video-conference on Thursday, 24 October 2024

Representing Ceredigion County Council: Councillor Keith Henson (Chairman)
Councillors Elizabeth Evans, Matthew Vaux

Officers in Attendance: Rhodri Llwyd, Owen Morgan, Katy Spain and Dana Jones

Harbour Users: Julian Driver, Jonathan Price Jones, David Nicholson, Carl Rich, Chris Seal, Martin Seal, Owen Stephen Webb, NJ Robertson, Kevin Sandover, Martin Wood

(5.40pm – 6.30pm)

1. **Apologies**

None.

2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 October 2023**

It was AGREED not to confirm that the minutes of the meeting of the 19 October 2023 were correct as Jonathan Price Jones stated that his question had not been included in the minutes.

Matters Arising

Minute 3 – A query was raised if the groyne starboard would not be lit, in response the Harbour Manager stated that this was correct. Concerns were also raised on the lighting on the north groyne by local boat owners who were returning to the harbour in the middle of the night. The Harbour Manager in response reported that he had been in discussions with Trinity House and they were content with the arrangements proposed. It is accepted that there were challenges in marking the area due to the topography of the area and its exposure to prevailing conditions.

It was reported by a harbour user that at the start of the season there was total confusion as two boats had landed on the rocks due to the lack of markings, and that the posts should have been positioned correctly at the beginning. The Harbour Manager noted the comments, however, it was affirmed that a Local Notice to Mariners was issued to advise on the area at the time of the incident.

The Service Manager- Transport Services stated that Trinity House had been consulted on these locations and BAM as the contractor was responsible for the works area during construction. . It was confirmed that there would be further discussions with Trinity House to confirm the marking that would be in place when the works on the sea defence had been completed and permanent markings were required.

3. **Harbour Services Update**

The Harbour Manager provided an update on the Harbour Service as reported within the Calm Waters newsletter. The following issues were raised:-

- Councillor Elizabeth Evans in addition to several harbour users reiterated their concerns regarding boats being launched daily into the harbour without paying or having appropriate insurance. It was reported as the Clic service was not available during the weekend, therefore boatowners would soon be able to pay for their day launches or visitor moorings via an online payment system on Ceredigion CC website which had recently been developed. Users would have access to this on their mobiles via the website or at the Harbour office, at which assistance could be provided from a member of the Harbour Services Team if necessary on the office computer. It was also noted that there had unfortunately been prolonged periods of sickness absence with staff over the summer period. The Harbour Manager advised that the rota was changed to ensure staff were available at Aberaeron during the weekends following a harbour surgery meeting during the summer season.. Councillor Elizabeth Evans stated that she would raise this issue again during the budget setting for 2025/26. The CLO, Highways and Environment stated that it was well documented that the aspiration of the Council was that the harbour was run on a cost neutral basis and all income sources were considered to achieve this.

Other harbour users enquired if cash could be used as payment, or a card machine used. In response, it was reported by officers that cash was not accepted due to security etc. In relation to the card reader the finance service had informed officers that due to the likely relatively limited use which would be restricted to the summer season, it was not cost effective to use a card reader for payment. It was noted that the payment system would be reviewed after next summer.

Discussion arose regarding day launchers not being checked for insurance. It was reported that in accordance with Harbour Management Policy all harbour users signed a declaration and all launchers and visitors are required to provide evidence and copies of insurance. If a claim arose between two parties, it was a private third party issue between the parties involved and their insurance providers. The CLO indicated that a user could cancel their insurance the day after presenting their insurance documents to the Harbour Authority, he stated that officers act in a reasonable manner; and that they could not make assurance that all boat owners had insurance for 365 days of the year, and that boat owners needed to take some responsibility in that regard.

Harbour users also suggested that a lock bar gate with a code could be used to address this issue, and payment could be done online with an email code been sent to the users to access the slipway, however, there could be an issue that users could share the code and the access to emergency services. It was also suggested that the Seasonal Harbour Assistant could be in the office during times of high tides which could possibly reduce harbour users' fees in general by employing less staff.

Others were of an opinion that a QR code was a sufficient way to pay, however, it was noted that there had been issues with fraudulent stickers being placed over the original and payment being sent to an unknown company/person. These suggestions would be considered by the Harbour Manager/Service.

4. Mooring Waiting List

It was agreed to note the mooring waiting list as presented and that the moorings on the list were historic. It was noted, that there were variances in the numbers on the waiting lists for each of the harbours, and that factors influencing mooring uptake were different for each harbour including ongoing works at Aberaeron and the affect of the river Aeron on some available moorings..

5. General Maintenance and Cleanliness

- The Harbour Manager reported that the harbour had been clean and tidy over the season and the Seasonal Harbour Assistant was also now litter picking as part of their duties. Several ladders and mooring rings were nearing the end of their life; therefore, the work was currently out to tender via the procurement service.

- **The following was issue was raised regarding New Quay:-**

It was reported by a harbour user that the waste management facility was under used in New Quay as harbour users were not aware of the service; and stated that it should be advertised, a poster on the way down to the facility was suggested. The Harbour Manager stated that although this matter was specific to New Quay Harbour the Plan was in its infancy and was already advertised well in the Calm Waters newsletter, on the doors of each respective facility, the County Council website and discussed at this and previous meetings. However, it was noted that if the facility was used more, users should be mindful that it was cost more to the Council and subsequently users to remove the waste by contractors.

6. Issues raised by Harbour Users

A request for all cost neutral services by the County Council was requested. The CLO reported that he would request this information from the finance service and circulate to users once received.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans stated that she had requested signage for access only on the slip/not a through road on the access from the main car park to slipway. This had been requested following an incident of a wing mirror hitting a pram handle.