



# YMDDIRIEDOLAETH HARBWR CAERNARFON HARBOUR TRUST.



## MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES.

Meeting held 10am, Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2024.  
Board Room, Cei Llechi & via Zoom.

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### IN ATTENDANCE –

Ian Park – Chairman (CM)

Chris Seddon (CS) Ty Calch.

Noel Bristow (NB) Portdinerwic Sailing Club.

Rowland Sharp (RS) Natural Resources Wales.

Trevor Jones (TJ) The Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association.

Dewi Pritchard Jones (DPJ) Caernarfon Harbour Trust Chairman.

APOLOGIES – No apologies.

### OFFICERS –

David O’Neill – Caernarfon Harbour Trust Harbour Master (HM)

Jennifer Jones – Caernarfon Harbour Trust Administrator (JJ)

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### Welcome and Apologies.

No apologies.

### Refreshing MAC Membership.

CM – There has been less representation of the Marine Advisory Committee since Covid with only a small uptake of new members. We are getting very little input from users of the Menai Straits. We previously had a member from the Victoria Dock Berth Holders Association. I have asked Eddie who said he would attend today. Portdinerwic Marina are now in the process of forming a Berth Holders Association, so we will wait to hear from them. We would like to pass this onto CHT to request new members to attend. The Conwy Centre are not represented.

Current stakeholders who should be represented are –

MSFOMA

Ty Calch



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Menai Bridge Harbour Master

Portdinorwic Sailing Club

Portdinorwic Marina

Plas Menai

NRW

Anglesey Council

RYA Cymru

I am very surprised and disappointed that the request for representation from RYA Cymru is not being replied to. NB – I was speaking with the new Anglesey Council representative who couldn't come today, but is keen to be included.

CM – Dinas Boat Yard have been asked to attend as they have direct access to the water. Above the Brine have been asked since their property is in Victoria Dock. HM – the broader the selection the better but you don't want too many with a vested or personal interest. CM – this list would go back to CHT meetings to agree the membership list. Royal Welsh Yacht Club Commodore will also attend.

CM – whilst it is fairly straight forward to get feedback from local users, via people around this table, it would be an idea to get feedback from visitors as well. This could be in the form of a very simple, short questionnaire. Covering buoyage, anchoring, etc. Did they find the passage easy? We currently speak with locals who know the waters but having spoken to other visitors elsewhere they won't come over to Caernarfon because they have heard that Caernarfon Bar and the Swellies are too difficult to navigate. HM – would a survey on our website help and we could link to it from invoices sent and at the bottom of our email signatures. CM – yes that would help as we are missing information and feedback from visitors. HM – the link could be sent out to everyone we contact, not just visitors. RS – it would be worth sending the link to Angling Cymru as well.

CM – someone I have left off the list to invite is Plas Coch as they have a slipway (Anglesey). HM – Plas Coch would be a good stakeholder for the new Anglesey Maritime Officer to contact. It used to be accessed via a key but there's no lock on it now.



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### Buoyage and survey updates for 2024 season.

CM – has heard that CHT are contemplating something for the mussel bank. HM – yes, we are still trying to put a perch on mussel bank. We have difficulty holding a buoy on position there, even with two train wheels. There is enough substrate at mussel bank to take a perch, it's a matter of getting one designed and installed. CM – has been asked how often do surveys take place of the Straits? HM – I usually survey the Straits at the beginning of the season. We do not undertake formal hydrographical surveys due to the dynamic nature of the banks. We could pay for a survey one week and the positions could change the following. CM – I have seen a Survey boat moored in Portdinorwic and wondered who it belonged to. HM – not aware of any Hydrographic Survey boats in the area. HM – I am currently using the drone for conducting the surveys. Whilst I don't know the depths, I do know the buoys are in the right positions. The Trust have requested that the MAC look into the Aids to Navigation to ascertain if you think they are suitable, if the lights are correct, etc. and for your findings to be reported back to the Trust. CM – I think this is where the visitor survey would come in handy with buoyage and passage making. TJ – when would you be publishing the new channel marks? HM – they are already updated on our website along with all recent Notices to Mariners (HM brings up the map with buoys on screen). HM – we have moved C4 closer to C6 which closes the gap to mussel bank. There was an issue with the physical size of the mussel bank buoy, which we replaced with a bigger buoy. We still intend putting a permanent perch on mussel bank. We do not attach any depth information to the channel due to the cost. The channel has datum, so what ever datum says is the depth you have. At 3hrs you are going to have 2.5m minimum.

HM - We are currently at 9 Notices to Mariners to date. The channel is in good condition and clearly defined. It will be easier coming in this year as it's a lot straighter and the buoys are more uniformly spaced. An improvement from last year. In the May meeting of the Trust, I will be reporting on the Aids to Navigation during the 'open to the public' section, so the information will be available then as well.

CM – another issue with buoys which has been brought to my attention is that visitors buoys are not clear, so far as which they are allowed to pick up. We want to encourage visitors which requires a method of paying whilst they are on the mooring. Another matter for consideration was floating pontoons. HM – for the river, we are definitely looking to put in pontoons but we are currently in negotiations with the Crown Estate regarding our riverbed lease. CM – thinking more of a floating pontoon in Aber Menai. Also, Portdinorwic Marina could benefit from a waiting pontoon outside their dock for boats wanting to come in. Perhaps Portdinorwic will contact HM about this. Where would there be the opportunity for floating pontoons rather than buoys for people to moor up against. Portdinorwic did have a pontoon against the wall once but it failed. HM – any pontoons would need to be on piles and until we get the sea bed lease in place, we would not be in a position to continue.



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RS – regarding payment for visitor moorings, whilst at a recent meeting in the south visitors could pay on their phones. HM – QR code on the buoys would be an option. I'm sure our Harbour Management system would allow this but in truth we don't have many visitors requesting moorings. We have two courtesy moorings outside the river which are hardly used. We occasionally get requests for Portdinorwic but income from visitors' moorings is negligible. If the demand was there, we would invest more in ways of capturing the income. A lot of visitors come through the Straits but not many stay, unless they need a window for the Swellies or Bar, but then they go into the Dock. We could change the colour of the courtesy buoys by the river, which were put there if you missed your window for the Dock. NB – are the courtesy buoys listed on Reeds? HM – no, I don't think they are. NB – you get lots of visitors in the Dock though? HM – yes, it's always busy there, about 600 visiting nights. NB – I would like to get some feedback on the website, as I also maintain it for the Trust. HM – as far as I'm concerned, our website is our front page as it contains all our information and everything we publish is on there. CS – I'm always surprised at the reaction I get when I tell people the information for the buoyage is free via the website and that it contains so much information on passage making. CHT are probably not recognized for the work that goes into it. HM – as Noel well knows the amount of work needed to maintain the site, it does have a lot of information on there from event application forms, events calendar which could be better utilized by the stakeholders, facilities provided at the Dock, gate times, visitor and annual berth application forms, etc. We are trying to be as open and welcoming as possible. NB – I think CHT comes up in some yachting magazine at least once a year and there is a link to the website from it, which is good.

### Speed Limit, Launching and Regulation.

CM – This will always be an agenda item. It cropped up during the Menai Strait Partnership Forum as well, as being one of the key issues. There was also the report in the Daily Post from 3 weeks ago. The second appeal against the coroner, by the husband of the lady who was killed, was not successful. The Home Office Coroner concluded her death was caused by the impact of the collision. The Home Office Coroner was going to ask Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) to re visit Anglesey Council to see what measures have been put in place since the fatality. I cannot imagine that MAIB would just stick to Anglesey, and would possibly look at the Straits as a whole. It's a heads up for CHT should they have any questions.

HM – I think the MAIB will struggle as there is no Statutory Harbour Authority where the fatality happened. It happened just outside our Harbour limits as ours end at the Menai Bridge. Menai Bridge is a Statutory Harbour Authority but it is curtailed to the Pier.



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The fatality happened in waters that no one had no maritime responsibility for. I don't think MAIB will come to us but we did do a lot after the accident, Noel Bistow was Chairman of the MAC at the time and he ran a public consultation on speed limits and regulations. We extended the area of our speed limits. We probably went above and beyond considering it was not within our Harbour limits.

Since the incident we have further improved our practices, such as registration of power boats and PWCs, which all the local authorities have adopted to use the same system. HM met with the maritime officers two weeks ago so we now have a full reciprocal agreement to accept each other's registration. CHT have only a small number of registered boats in comparison to Gwynedd (2,000 vessels), Conwy (100), Anglesey in the hundreds. As Gwynedd have the most registrations we will follow their recommendations. RS - If PWCs (or power boats) were continuously racing around, breaking speed limits and making a general nuisance of themselves, how confident would you be then if there was an incident? HM does not think this is the case. The vast majority of the cases now are due to a minority. The majority of PWC and PB users are doing so safely. RS – how is that small handful dealt with if they are allowed to carry on and there was an incident. HM – they are not allowed to carry on with their behavior. RS – would you remove them? What would be your policy if someone reported a PWC or PB with CHT registration number behaving irresponsibly on the water? Would you ban them? Are you able to legally do this? Hm – we would refuse to register them so they would then not be able to gain access to the water. The police also have powers now but I'm not sure if they are up to speed on this. CM – Do we have contact with a police division? HM – yes, but they don't currently deal with enforcement. CM – last year PWCs were launching from the slips on Beach Road, Felinheli and racing in-between the swinging moorings. It was obvious they weren't local and it was possibly a one off but how would you deal with it? I think we need a link to the local police to call when there is an issue so they can come down to have a word. HM – there was a PWC just outside our river a couple of weeks racing round the buoys but what do we do proportionately? Muster everyone for one person breaking the by-laws? I think the registration system has made a big difference. NB – there was an incident in Criccieth with PWCs racing round sea kayakers. HM – I don't think they were banned but the police did get them for something else. There are flaws in the registration system. If your stickers are removed, there's nothing stopping someone else registering on your behalf.

CS – I'm finding that PWCs are starting to police themselves and each other. 10 years ago the owners were completely reckless with no idea of what they were doing. These days, with local clubs, especially Scott Beeland of Gwynedd PWC, they keep each other in check. It's better but it'll never be perfect. RS – not until they can stop people from going to sea who don't know what they're doing. HM – I'm conflicted as it's my job to regulate the Harbour but the sea is one of the only free spaces we have. RS – personally I don't think you should be allowed out at sea unless you have training or relevant experience. CS – agrees. He has had incidents



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when people have come off the water shaken by something that happened at sea and they have recognized their failings and intend to rectify the problem. Most people quickly learn from near misses and mistakes, but some don't.

HM – on the registration side there was a discussion about amalgamating fees so that each council charges the same. We are trying to go with the biggest player but it does look like our fees will increase to match Gwynedd next year (to be set). CS – the increase in fees may be difficult for some to comprehend but I explain the structure to them from the side of safety and navigation. CHT maintain the buoys for safe passage. Because of the lower fees set by CHT this year, there may be more choosing to register with you. HM – any fees gained from registration is re invested into maintenance of the buoy system. CS – it's nice to be able to justify fee increases.

CM – in terms of regulation in the PWC report, Gwynedd came out well in good practice. The report from Poole Harbour found that the most effective method of policing was on a jet ski, a loud haler and a blue light. HM – Gwynedd Council used to have a Jet Ski with a blue light and it did work. In fairness to Gwynedd they have lead on this system for the whole of the UK. RS – Ceredigion Council have received a grant to purchase patrol vessels due to the designation for Marine mammals in the area. CM – I think a Jet Ski would be useful, linked in with Gwynedd PWC Club for volunteers to patrol the area. Accredited PWC training from Plas Menai would be required. RS – the Jet ski would need to be a fast one, otherwise it just becomes a game. CS – at some point they have to come back to this slip way which is where they get caught.

TJ – Gwynedd and CHT seem to be doing a very good job as far as monitoring speeding and trying to get boat users to be responsible. Anglesey seem to be letting the side down. The MAIB was unequivocal in their condemnation of Anglesey's administration. We definitely need to make sure there is a more unified, joined up approach to registration and management of the waters and boat users. Some have no idea of ColRegs and we need to try to get water users to be more professional. You can not hire a boat abroad without having the relevant paper work from your own country (ICC). The fatality on the Straits was unforgivable and could have been avoided. It's a real shame that we do not have a representative from Anglesey Council here today. HM – feels the new officers would be keen to attend. TJ – that is very good to hear. HM – CHT have the option if we want to extend out limits via a Harbour Revision Order. However, the new Anglesey Council representatives seemed very keen to be involved with us to make improvements. RS – I've had some dealings with the new reps and they do seem to be very proactive and changes are being made. NB – Someone should take over the water beyond the Straits but the Trust don't gain anything from doing so. HM – if it were to happen, we would get Harbour dues from the vessels which moor there, it is just an unknown whether that would cover the cost of regulating it. Fees may need to be increase but at least there would be someone responsible for the waters.





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CM comments that in the past 14 years there has been a definite change in water craft from sail to power and the Straits is a much busier place. There is also different types of water sports such as foiling, paddle boarding and open water swimming. It has been suggested that the Straits have zones for different water sports. This may work in larger Harbour Authorities but we do not have the open surface area to achieve this. TJ – does this not mean we would need to designate zones properly if we can. CM – Water skiing has reduced but we do still see inflatable toys being towed behind speed boats. Both user groups need flat waters and the space to turn safely. RS – when zoning was looked into with Anglesey, every user group wanted the same area. HM – if the MAC want CHT to look into the viability of introducing zones within our Harbour limits then we will do this. RS – if this goes out to consultation it won't just be water users that will have an input, you will hear from residents of the shore line up and down the Menai Straits. HM – I do not think we would need to consult. We would implement on safety grounds. Which area is safest to do which sport. CS – Ultimately the issue is speed and the only craft capable of excess speeds are Jet Skis. I feel if there was a blanket speed limit, unless stated otherwise, it would be easier for everyone to get on board with it. Everyone would know what is expected (as you do on the roads). Prime location is the Swellies. All water users need to be responsible, whether its sticking to speed limits or using correct PPE (personal buoys for swimmers). PWC users are automatically victimized due to the bad behavior of a few. RS – there will always be conflict between user groups as they all want to use the same space for very different purposes. The different user groups need to be educated on each other's sports.

### Liveboard Craft.

CM – Has there has been an increase in liveboards since Covid? HM – there has and we are working to reduce the numbers. They weren't officially liveboards to begin with but are now living on board. We've not had to deal with it in terms of policy as the numbers have been very low. CM – are they paying council tax? HM – I think Gwynedd Council would chase for payment if they were a bona fide liveboard. Some Harbour authorities provide liveboard spaces and they capitalize on the demand but I don't feel this applies to us. Ultimately, the application of council tax on liveboards would be a matter for the council. We would not get involved. RS – We've had a number of people phoning to ask if we know of any derelict or abandoned boats that may be available as they are looking for liveboard projects. The demand is obviously there. HM – people have been living on boats for decades (eg Themes) so it's not a new concept. CS – with the cost of living going up it's not a choice for some people it's a necessity. RS – maintenance is the issue with liveboards, predominantly leaking fuel and / or oil and water discharge. CS – with narrow boats they need proof to be fit for habitation



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as part of their mooring contracts. TJ – do we see liveaboards becoming a problem? HM – not here as we will not let berths to people who want to liveaboard full time. We do have a few at the moment (mainly winter berth who have not moved on), but we are not encouraging them to remain. The issues are they use the facilities all the time (water and electricity), most have dogs which cause an additional problem. CS – It's very popular in the Med, even to the point of boats be advertised on Air BnB, to offset marina costs.

### A.O.B

HM – we have covered a great deal, is there anything that needs to be referred to the Trust? For the next MAC meeting it would be worth having an action point section, to follow through on. CM – requesting the attendance of statutory members. This needs to come from the Trust. Also contacting Plas Coch, Conway Centre, Dinas Boat Yard, RYA Cymru, RNLI. The Anglesey Council rep is the most important at this stage.

The following Organisations must be represented (no current representation in bold).

- **One from Welsh Yachting Association,**
- One from each sailing club within the Harbour limits,
- One from Countryside Council for Wales (now NRW),
- One from Menai Straits Users Association,
- One from Environment Agency Wales (now merged with CCW to form NRW)
- **One from Welsh Government Fisheries Unit,**
- **One from Plas Menai Water Sport Centre,**
- **One from Portdinorwic Marina.**

RS – is it worth asking Gwynedd Council Maritime Officer? HM – possibly. Whilst they would be able to give you a wide view of what's going on, I feel it might detract from the local purpose of the MAC. CS – would it be worth inviting Rib Ride? RS – I think they would join but they would have too much of a commercial interest, plus they operate out with the Harbour limits. HM – the only commercial entity we have is Queen of the Sea. The others, Rib Ride and Seawake only pass through with the exception of Seawake, who pick up from Portdinorwic also. I have faith that the new Anglesey representative will be present in the next meeting to discuss membership from various user groups. We will speak with our trustee Neville Evans to speak with the Anglesey representative.





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CM – the questionnaire needs to be put on the website. CS – can we also put something in the website re the justification of PB / PWC fees? - NB – this should be added to the registration fees section. HM – we will update the page fully next season once we have agreed fees with the other local authorities. This season we have a flat rate of £37.80 for both new registrations and renewals. NB – is there a hp limit for power boats? HM – Gwynedd Council currently have different fee for 10hp and above.

CM – I would like it noted for the records that we are discussing the issue of speeding on the Menai Straits again, it is an ongoing discussion which is under regular review.

HM – The Trust would like to invite CM to the next CHT meeting (03/04/24). CM – accepts the invitation.

### Date of next meeting.

TUESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2024.

10am, Old Harbour Office Boardroom or via Zoom invitation.