

# **Minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Caernarfon Victoria Dock Berth Holders Association.**

November 14. 2015 at 1600 hrs.

On arrival at the meeting, Berth Holders (who had all previously indicated they wished to be members of the Victoria Dock Berth Holders Association) paid in a fee of £15, were enrolled and given a voting card.

The meeting opened with Dr John O'Sullivan outlining the events leading up to, and the aims of the proposed berth holders association, and the progress to date on his talks with the Council.

He also informed the group that Mr Llyr Jones, a Senior Manager of The Economy and Community Department of the Council, was to attend. The fact that Mr Jones was leaving a family get together to attend in his own time, was seen as a firm commitment to our cause.

Mr Llyr Jones arrived and presented the Councils position:-

He stated that the formation of The Victoria Dock Berth Holders Association (VDBHA) was welcomed by The Council as they recognised the importance of constructive dialogue and that they looked forward to working with the association to improve the facilities and services to be provided at The Dock.

He said that experience at Pwllheli had demonstrated the value of collaboration and constructive dialogue, and that the Council recognised that there were challenges at Victoria Dock and that a strong case had been put forward to develop a plan. He said that he had been looking at some short, medium and long term plans and measures, and he felt that a berth holders association would have an important role in helping to develop the plan and that it had been shown that the association in Pwllheli had helped in sharing information, and in dispelling mis-information also. Their help in identifying key issues and future priorities had been invaluable, as customers and dock users were in the best position at coming forward with ideas about the Dock on the basis of need.

Llyr underlined the it was a challenging time for Local Authorities and Public Sector Bodies and that he had no magic wand, did not want to raise expectations too high but that there were opportunities, and that the Council was keen to look at these with the new organisation.

On the subject of the survey recent carried out by the Victoria Dock berth holders, he thought that the results were very useful and that the information would be a valuable tool for forming the development of a plan and a number of key themes were of interest to the Council.

The way problems were tackled in Pwllheli was by drafting a plan that was agreed and endorsed by the majority of berth holders, and this was the way he envisaged it would work with the new VDBHA in conjunction with The Harbour Trust.

Llyr acknowledged that the siltation levels in the Dock were far from acceptable and that the priority at the moment would be the dredging. This was the number one concern from the survey and that the Council was trying to come up with a solution, but trying to meet statutory and environmental requirements was of great concern.

He mentioned that the results of a survey and technical work carried out by the Council a number of years ago would not be wasted as the data was still relevant, and that the Council was looking at what might be acceptable on the possible impact on the straits. One option suggested was taking the spoil to Holyhead Deep which wasn't really practical, especially the financial implications. There is no area where spoil could be dried out for removal and that they were looking at removing with water injection or cutter suction. The solutions used at Conwy and Deganwy were thought to be not easily applicable to Caernarfon. Discussions were ongoing with Natural Resources Wales, and with DEFRA, because the Council accept that the current situation is not acceptable and that they really need to address the siltation problem as soon as possible.

Llyr summed up by telling the meeting that he was very grateful for being able to have the opportunity to meet everyone and that he was very supportive of the setting up of the VDBHA

He then invited questions from the floor: -

J O'Sullivan

Q. Is it realistic to expect a plan at the next VDBHA meeting in March? Would it be reasonable to present an aspirational written plan, possibly the top 5 priorities, even if it is to tell us that some of the objectives are not possible immediately either through statute or financially, but a plan to also encompass work that can be done?

A. Yes but before March we would like to work with VDBHA with reference to the survey and with the Harbour Trust to come up with a draft proposal. The survey gives us a good indication where the concerns and priorities are to work on.

J O'Sullivan

I am happy to work with you between now and March to help the process along and feedback with the committee to keep them informed and was extremely impressed with the letter of support from Sioned Williams, head of the responsible Council department

A. We can look at the subject of security but the dredging is going to be the main focus of our attention in the next few months. We are already looking at the fuelling provision and to go ahead with that, so we are things already being considering and discussed. We now need to pool these together in a coherent plan on a draft basis and discuss these with our customers and tweak the improvements following consultation.

J O'Sullivan

That's good, and a significant improvement on the way the redevelopment of the toilets was conducted. Someone has asked, if a fuelling berth were to be provided, would the capital cost be reflected in higher berthing fees and would berthing fees be at least frozen until the silting problem was addressed.

A. Mr David O'Neill, Harbour Master, assured John that the cost of the fuelling berth would be self-financing and Llyr Jones in reply to the berthing costs, said that it was a reasonable request.

A comment from the floor highlighted that the problems on the north side of the dock were different from the south in that the north had problems with parking and drop off and that the survey was slightly skewed because this difference was not taken into account. John O'Sullivan replied that most of the respondents on the north side had put parking / drop off as a priority but 18 berth holders on the north side had not taken part in the survey and these need to be chased up to take part. The loss of free parking within and behind Morrisons has exacerbated the problem. Now we have nowhere unrestricted to park on the north side, also no drop off point. This is a problem if berth holders are transferring fuel, risking a parking fine. Considering the Council is taking £200K plus from the dock, this is unacceptable.

Q. Another question from the floor asked if parking permits could be considered for the Galeri as when the weather is bad transferring goods to the boats is difficult. Or could permits be offered for Council car parks?

A. Llyr replied that they did not own the Galeri but could have a dialogue with them as to the possibility. J O'Sullivan replied to Llyr that as people were paying £2400 to £2600 per annum berthing charges, the concept of a parking permit would not appear to be too much to ask.

Q. Brian Oulton asked Llyr that if the silting gets that bad that visitors stop coming to the Dock, had the Council done a forecast as to how much that would cost them and the local economy.

A. The harbour Master replied that they had about 600 visiting boats per annum but no forecast had been made. Llyr said that they were acutely aware of the implications of the possible loss of income and that the cost of repairing the gate was a result of the silting.

Various discussions followed concerning safety of crew due to sudden deceleration of a vessel hitting the bottom, causing crew to be thrown off balance. The implications being that in the event of injury the person could not be quickly attended to by the emergency services as the boat would be immobilised and in the event of someone going overboard the boat would not be in a position to manoeuvre to assist.

Llyr Jones commented that we should be aware that the problem of dredging was not of cost, as the funds were available, but of obtaining the requisite environmental permits and contractors won't even attempt emergency work unless permits are in place. So the solution is not resource based but restricted by environmental consents.

Q. From the floor - I assume the Dock makes a profit and if so is this ring-fenced for the Dock or is it spent elsewhere?

A. Llyr, a good question, but no, any income after expenses is absorbed into the council budget with annual income targets being set for the Dock. Whilst resources are likely to be relevant for any discussion, the main issue or obstacle regarding the dredging works is securing the statutory consents. If the long term solution is to pump out into the straits we

would have to set up a designated disposal site but it would be a very difficult process, especially as it is a nature reserve and the resulting smothering effect of dumping tons of silt. Using land based plant was not feasible and emptying the Dock was deemed not feasible so cutter suction or water injection seem to be the only probable solution.

Comments were made about piping the Cadnant out through the Dock wall as a long term solution as it was considered when the Dock was first commissioned, but cost was the issue. Llyr replied that some silting came from the straits and some from the Cadnant and that the long term solution was to not let the silting get to such a level as now.

Llyr, advised that there would be another meeting before March for a presentation and proposals for forward action.

Mr Llyr Jones was then thanked for coming to the meeting.

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### **Adoption of the draft constitution**

John O'Sullivan advised that adopting the RYA draft constitution would cost £100 per annum affiliation fee but has a number of advantages, not least that we get access to their legal services which helps us if we have problems, that it is already written, it also gets us over the problem of data protection as once a member has joined, part of the agreement is that data can now be shared amongst other enrolled berth holders. He also thanked Dave O'Neill for emailing berth holders to start the ball rolling. John said that he could now let the Treasurer and Secretary have the email addresses and phone numbers of the paid up members but he could not do this for the others until they pay. To get the umbrella of the RYA we need to join up now and then have the Committee and any other members who have ideas to hone the Draft Constitution to better fit our needs.

The proposal to adopt the Draft Constitution as presented to all by email was passed. Mark Walker offered a proposal to amend the Draft Constitution presented, to change the clause about a quorum for an AGM to 15 members, which was passed with a show of hands.

John stated that if he was to be elected as Chairman, he wanted as a condition that he and only he continued the negotiations with the Council and the Harbour Master for 6 months, as he felt he had established a rapport with them but would of course keep the Committee fully informed. He also stated that he was only going to be involved as chairman for 12 months to get the show on the road.

Positions on the Committee were then voted in as follows:-

Chairman	John O'Sullivan	proposed by John Lomas, seconded by Susi Oulton
Vice Chairman	Brian Oulton	Proposed by Dave Calvert, seconded by John O'Sullivan
Treasurer	Keith Elford	Proposed by John O'Sullivan, seconded by Susi Oulton
Secretary	Dave Calvert	Proposed by John O'Sullivan, seconded by Mark Walker

Committee Members

John Whittaker Proposed by John Lomas, seconded by Mark Walker  
Pamela Wrench Proposed by Kathy Jones, seconded by Fiona Kelly  
Rob Elliot Proposed by Susi Oulton, seconded by John Hey  
Colin Turner Proposed by John O'Sullivan, seconded by Steve Blakely

Katherine Jones (off catamaran "Tardis") has kindly offered to facilitate and maintain a website for the association. And thanks were made for the work involved in the survey by John Creasy.

Keith Elford has kindly set up a Client Account for the Association.

Other berth holders had stated a willingness to help form a committee on the survey returns, but as only paid up members can participate; those that could not attend could not be voted for this time.

John O'Sullivan proposed that Tim Bailey of Menai Marine and Mark Shackleton Harbour Master, be made Honorary Members because of their involvement with the dock. This was passed with a show of hands.

In summing up John assured the meeting he would continue the work already started with the Council and Harbour Trust, to push the top 5 priorities from the survey and to continue to update all concerned. It is also important to chase the berth holders not yet signed up and any help with this would be appreciated.

Date of next meeting: - 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

Dave Calvert Secretary.