

CARDIFF BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 22nd January, 2025.

Present: Councillor M.R. Wilson (Chair); Councillor N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chair); S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.), C. Michael (RSPB), C. Pooley (Natural Resources Wales), P. Stone (Paddle Cymru) and M. Thomas (Clerk – Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer, Vale of Glamorgan Council).

Also present: A.M. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association), M. Bailey (Cardiff Harbour Authority) and A. Vye-Parminter (Cardiff Harbour Authority).

(a) Apologies for Absence –

These were received from F. Hourahine (Natural Resources Wales) and C. Kingston (Waterfront Partners),

(b) Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October, 2024 –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 16th October, 2024 be approved as a correct record.

(c) Navigational Safety and General Progress Report –

The Committee were informed by A. Vye-Parminter, representing the Cardiff Harbour Authority (CHA), of the following on navigational safety and general progress:

- The ongoing clearance of debris continued to go well and at pace: since the start of January, up to 60 tonnes had been removed (over three weeks), which was significant when it was considered that about 300 tonnes of debris had been cleared annually last year.
- The CHA's Environment Team had had several schools in recently undertaking activities such as litter picking following the Environment Team's attendance at the schools in question. This was part of an increasingly popular initiative to educate children in the area about the importance of looking after local rivers and seas. This was followed up with a chance for the children to actively clean up their local area through a litter pick.
- The hosting of the international Annual Meeting of North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) later this year. Part of this would include a trip to Cardiff Bay, where delegates would be hosted by the CHA and given a tour of the Bay. More information would be provided on this at a future meeting of the Committee.
- In terms of the Barrage Fish Pass, this was currently within the maintenance campaign period. During this campaign the CHA would be looking at the first stage of the new stop beam installation (a new design to provide an effective seal when maintenance was being undertaken) and assessing the lifting

beams required for the project. Sluice 2 hydraulic cylinders which were leaking had been repaired and would be re-installed shortly.

- In terms of the Barrage and the Locks maintenance campaign, it was explained that maintenance on the Locks was done on a rotational basis every year, and it was Lock 2's turn this year. That was going to commence shortly after the lock was cleared of silt and then the plan was to look at replacing the pivot bearing on the bridge of Lock 2. With regard to the 1,200mm valve and its actuators that failed or needed repairing, the new ones had been delivered and the 900mm valves were due to arrive during the middle of February, so once those were on site, the plan was to install them as soon as possible.

The Chair and Vice-Chair wished to add their and the Committee's thanks to the CHA for the amount of work and resources they had utilised in clearing the debris from the location, particularly those resulting from the recent storms. It was explained that this was very labour intensive and weather dependent, but CHA persevered with ensuring as much debris as possible were removed.

Following consideration by the Committee on this item, it was subsequently

AGREED – T H A T that this item be noted.

(d) Natural Resources Wales Update –

The update was presented to the Committee by C. Pooley, representative from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), who highlighted the following areas of interest:

- Overall DO levels within the Bay had remained above the 5 mg/L threshold.
- The issue with the saline sump drain on the Bay side of the Barrage locks would hopefully be resolved early in the new year.
- There had been no further incidents at Ferry Road Landfill site regarding leachate and there were no further updates since the last meeting.
- Regarding other pollution incidents, there was a report of oil on the surface of the lower Ely which was received after 4 p.m. on 5th December. As daylight was failing it was not possible to attend until the following day. By the following morning the oil had dissipated and there were no reports of any wildlife being adversely impacted. No further incidents had been reported since.
- The Barrage fish pass was currently closed for the annual winter maintenance period. There would be discussions with the CHA about the possibility of adding some more Eel pass bristle boards down on the fishway gate in the fish pass in order to help get as many Eels coming into the Bay as possible.
- In addition, an estimated 22 Salmonids over 55 cm in length had been recorded through the pass during 2024. Further information would be provided in the coming months.
- On Channel View Footbridge, NRW had been involved in consultations regarding the proposal to construct a pedestrian and cycle footbridge between Hamadryad Park and The Marl, providing advice to help minimise and

mitigate any negative impacts that the construction phase and the structure itself may have on the environment and in particular on fisheries.

- Regarding the Blackweir docks feeder canal and Abstraction Licence requirements, NRW had met with Associated British Ports (ABP) recently to talk about the screening requirements at the intake at Blackweir and their feasibility report on this. This had gone well, with ABP to come up with a design for the screening to then go into place hopefully later on this year or into next year.
- Following the high flows in the Taff during storm Bert, damage had been discovered to the fish pass at Blackweir, removing three large metal grids from the top of the lower end of the pass. Each grid was 1 x 5 metres and prevented access to the potentially dangerous flows within the pass, so for public safety reasons it was extremely important to replace them as quickly as possible. A contractor was appointed and promptly assessed the damage and fitted the grids in a relatively short and quick timeframe.

Following the update, the Chair asked about the fish pass and whether Salmonids (or other fish) under 55 cm were counted. C. Pooley (NRW) explained that no exact figures could be given during the meeting but the numbers of fish under 55 cm were numbered in the thousands. NRW did have this data and could provide this information at a later date if required. The 'counter' used captured the silhouette of fish and categorised those into sizes and from previous studies most Salmonids were over 55 centimetres so that was the way NRW could tease those silhouettes of Salmonids out, with most of the others being Bass and Mullet that came into the Bay.

The Chair followed this up with a query on how far the Salmonids went up the River Taff to spawn. It was explained that there was evidence and records of them getting past all the man-made barriers and getting up into the tributaries of the Taff. The fish passes helped migrating fish in terms of opening up the rivers concerned. The Chair emphasised the fine balance between flood management and supporting migrating fish, including Salmonids and the complicated and challenging work that NRW had to do around this.

On the Chair's query about maintaining water levels in the Bay and the Blackweir docks feeder discussions, it was explained that water levels could fluctuate quite dramatically and there was a lot of work and discussions with ABP on requirements on the abstraction rates, and on the abstraction licence. The abstraction licence was already in effect and was helping to maintain the balance. One of the conditions of the licence was for ABP to be able to accurately monitor, record and maintain the abstraction rates. Work was currently underway to install equipment to do so.

There being no further comments or questions on this item, it was subsequently

AGREED – T H A T this item be noted.

(e) Any other Business –

The Committee welcomed M. Bailey (Cardiff Harbour Authority) to talk about the 25th anniversary of the CHA. The official date of the anniversary was 1st April, 2025,

when the CHA was established. It was planned to have a number of activities and events celebrating the anniversary, including a photographic exhibition on 'behind the Bay', giving a glimpse of the behind the scenes work that CHA staff undertook. Also planned was a competition involving local school pupils around designing a banner to celebrate the CHA and the Bay area in order to display around the Bay and on social media, as well as the CHA website. Other activities or events involved working with the Lighthouse Theatre, a possible sailing regatta or some water-based activities for young people and an anniversary bedding flower display, as well as a drone photo shoot and a commemorative book. CHA social media would be focusing on the anniversary, with work and collaboration with Cardiff Waterfront Partners and Cardiff Council, as well as engaging with the public.

A.M. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association) welcomed the efforts around the anniversary celebrations and asked whether local historians were also being involved in this, including details on the Penarth side of the development. It was confirmed that this was being looked at, and the book to be produced would also include the background to the construction of the Barrage, how the CHA came about and engagement with local historians would certainly benefit this.

P. Stone stated that Canoe Wales had been rebranded as 'Paddle Cymru' and that he would be happy to talk with CHA about water-based activities for the celebration and Paddle Cymru's involvement in it.

The Vice-Chair encouraged the CHA to liaise with nearby schools and local historians in Penarth as well concerning the anniversary and to touch upon the historical links between Penarth and the wider Bay and docks areas. In addition, the Chair asked that Members and attendees of the Committee be also involved in the celebrations. This would be taken up by CHA.

S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.) and C. Michael (RSPB) also offered to share their knowledge and experiences around the background to, and the development of, the Bay and nearby wetlands respectively as part of the anniversary.

M. Bailey (Cardiff Harbour Authority) would reach out to Members and other partners, stakeholders, about the event.

(f) Date of Next Meeting –

The Clerk to the Committee would reach out to the Chair and Members / attendees with a suggested date / dates for the next meeting, which would probably be sometime in April.