

**Minutes of a Meeting of the ABERAERON Harbour Users Consultative Committee held remotely via video-conference on Thursday, 28 May 2026**

**Representing Ceredigion County Council:** Councillor Shelly Childs (Chairman)  
Councillors Elizabeth Evans

**Officers in Attendance:** Ellie Waters, Robyn Beresford, Dana Jones

**Harbour Users:** Martin Wood, Steve Webb, Kevin Sandover

(5.30pm – 6:15pm)

1. **Apologies**

Mr Owen Morgan, Harbour Manager apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 October 2025**

It was AGREED to confirm the minutes of the meeting of the 31 October 2025 as a true record.

**Matters Arising**

The Committee agreed the need for a “reset” to improve governance, stakeholder representation and clarity of the Committee’s Terms of Reference; and it was agreed that the Terms of Reference should be circulated to all relevant stakeholders to ensure clarity regarding membership and attendance expectations. The Committee noted that representation at meetings had been limited and did not fully reflect all harbour user groups. It was agreed that efforts would be made to ensure broader participation, including representation from commercial operators, leisure users, yacht clubs and dinghy/day-sail users.

It was noted that there had been an unacceptable delay of approximately seven months in the publication of previous meeting minutes. The Committee expressed concern regarding both the timeliness and accuracy of published minutes and agreed that this issue should be addressed and rectified. The Committee expressed a preference for face-to-face meetings, noting that these facilitated more effective discussion. It was suggested that meetings be held twice yearly, with consideration given to scheduling that accommodated both commercial and leisure users.

3. **Harbour Services Update**

The Committee were informed on the return of a seasonal staff member and that recruitment for a replacement assistant was in progress, with an anticipated start date in early June subject to checks. It was recognised that the harbour workforce remained limited.

The Committee noted that the Port Marine Safety Code audit had found the service to be substantially compliant, with one outstanding non-conformity relating to oil pollution response. It was reported that a policy was being prepared and that training would be arranged to address this issue within the required timeframe.

Harbour Users stated that launching fees were not being consistently collected. Ellie Waters stated that improvements were required, and that the introduction of digital payment methods such as pay-by-phone or QR code systems, supported by appropriate signage was being considered. Due to the staffing structure of the service, officers were unable to be present at the harbour at all times.

#### **4. Mooring Waiting List**

There were currently no waiting lists for berths at Aberaeron, in contrast to other harbours, reflecting local conditions and reduced demand.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans raised concerns regarding significant increases in mooring fees, of approximate 26% over the last few years, and the potential impact on the harbour viability. It was reported that Aberaeron faced challenges, including a narrow sailing window, a technical harbour to sail into which could make it less attractive, declining number of boat users and limited facilities. Councillor Evans was of the view that the harbour should be put into special measures as it wasn't generating any income for the Council. She stated that when she was first elected there were 100 boats in the harbour and that it was heartbreaking to see the decline with boat owners selling their boats. Also, it was pointed out that there were inconsistent costs bases between the 3 harbours due to the Crown Estate rent differences and that the high mooring fees for Aberaeron should be reduced to accommodate this.

A harbour user expressed concerns that Ceredigion County Council was not giving sufficient attention to Aberaeron Harbour. He stated a perception that the Council was more focused on generating income from New Quay Harbour to the detriment of Aberaeron, which he felt had been neglected. He also commented that the low attendance at the meeting reflected a lack of confidence among harbour users in engaging with the Council. In his view, there was a perception that raising concerns would not lead to meaningful consideration, and that the Council's intention was to reduce boat presence in the harbour.

The Chair suggested that there was a need for a long-term harbour strategy, including a potential five-year plan covering fees, maintenance and operational improvements to prevent annual uncertainty. It was also suggested that local conditions be considered when setting fees. A meeting with the Chair, Councillor Elizabeth Evans and officers would be arranged accordingly to discuss these proposals further.

#### **5. General Maintenance and Cleanliness**

The Committee were informed on the ongoing regular monitoring of dredging, silt and shingle movement on the harbour entrance, with interim works having reduced silt accumulation. Harbour users raised concerns regarding the ongoing cost of this dredging and reiterated that this was due to the breakwater facing the incorrect way.

It was reported that procurement for a three-year jet washing contract was being finalised and that general maintenance activity was ongoing.

**6. Issues raised by Harbour Users**

Previously raised during discussions of items above.

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