

CARDIFF BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 30th April, 2025.

Present: Councillor M.R. Wilson (Chair); Councillor N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chair); C. Kingston (Waterfront Partners), C. Michael (RSPB), C. Pooley (Natural Resources Wales), and M. Thomas (Clerk – Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer, Vale of Glamorgan Council).

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

(a) Apologies for Absence –

These were received from F. Hourahine (Natural Resources Wales), S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.) and P. Stone (Paddle Cymru).

(b) Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January, 2025 –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

(c) Navigational Safety and General Progress Report –

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

- 415 tonnes of rubbish were removed from the Bay in 2024/25. This excluded all recyclable materials and wood which was dealt with separately.
- The CHA also had 14 separate volunteer litter picking sessions, with 528 volunteers and 765 volunteer hours. Figures included the World Record litter pick at the Barrage and Dr Who beach.
- The supervised PhD students' study into future water quality management had reached the stage of Bay-wide experiments. The aeration system was being turned off for periods of time and detailed analysis of the water quality carried out. Should this analysis show a drop in dissolved oxygen requiring intervention, then the aeration system would be re-started straight away. The outcome of these analyses would help shape the future operation of the aeration system.
- As part of the 25th anniversary of the CHA, the CHA was running a 'design a bay banner' competition for local primary schools. 25 designs would be selected, turned into banners and displayed around the Bay over the summer. Details could be found at the following website: cardiffharbour.com/design-a-bay-banner.

- Regarding the Barrage, the Saltwater Shaft 1200mm valve and actuators had been delivered and installed. The CHA was currently looking at options to isolate sections of pipework in order to put the valve back into service.
- The Barrage Locks were used to load plant and equipment for Flat Holm Island onto a landing craft. Mobile cranes up to 250 ton were deployed on site and a large area around the Control Building was fenced off. All vehicle movements on site were well marshalled and there were no issues, further loading was being planned for mid-May.
- The Fish Pass maintenance campaign was complete, and the Pass was back in operation. During the campaign an additional eel pass was installed on the fishway gate alongside the first pass which was installed last year.
- Finally, the two Sluice hydraulic cylinders which had been removed required further work. It was hoped to install these during May, with the Sluice maintenance campaign being planned in around this.

The Committee raised the following questions, etc. concerning the verbal update:

- On the Chair's query on the amount of wood, sludge and static water gathered around the bridge between Cardiff Bay and Penarth, on the Ely River (Pont y Werin), it was explained that the CHA would be working its way to the location, but the focus would be the removal of any man-made waste such as plastics rather than natural waste, such as wood and timber. The Ely River did not see much in the way of water flow hence the 'static' nature of stretches of its waters.
- The Vice-Chair referred to the recent lack of rainfall and whether there was a knock on impact on the Bay, such as lower water levels and lack of oxygenation of the water therein. It was explained that there had been little or no changes to the water levels in the Bay. Also, the saline flushing valve used to manage saline intrusion from the locks into the Bay was presently undergoing repair. To mitigate salinity levels within the Bay, the lower sluice gates were used intermittently to manage this in the interim. This was achieved by allowing water levels to increase and then dropping them to flush out the salt water.
- The Vice-Chair also asked about the aqua park operation at Cardiff Bay, the issues there concerning water quality, the possible relocation to Cosmeston, and whether further background information could be provided on this. It was explained that the aqua park activities would not be happening at Cardiff Bay in 2025, but that was the only information that could be shared with the Committee at this time.
- A. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association), and the Chair, asked for the active / live hyperlink to be shared with the Committee concerning the 'design a bay banner' competition for local primary schools, in order to send these to the Headteachers for local primary schools in the Penarth area and parts of the Vale adjacent to the Bay, such as Cogan. The live link was shared with Members online and following the meeting. Local, nearby, schools on the Cardiff side of the Bay had also been notified. It was added that various other aspects of the anniversary for the CHA were being worked on by Natalie Taylor at the CHA, who would either attend the next meeting of the Committee or provide a briefing should the anniversary events occur before the next meeting.

- The Vice-Chair asked about the Lottery funded work being undertaken at Flat Holm Island and if further information could be shared with the Committee. It was explained that there had been work on the old water collector and the old Cholera hospital there. Further details would be sought and shared with the Committee in due course.

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:

- Dissolved oxygen (DO) levels: overall DO levels within the Bay had remained above the 5 mg/L threshold.
- Work to repair the saltwater flushing shaft pipe was ongoing.
- Ferry Road Landfill site: there had been no further incidents regarding leachate and there were no further updates since the last meeting.
- Pollution incidents: these had been relatively quiet / limited of late in the Bay and since the last meeting. However, there had recently been an oil slick identified within the Bay area at a location which has seen such pollution incidents previously. Unfortunately, neither CHA nor NRW could identify a source for this.
- The Barrage fish pass: whilst the pass was closed for the winter maintenance period, the Harbour Authority made further improvements for glass eel and elver access into the Bay with another strip of bristle board being added to the pass. A quantity of eel rope would also be fitted to the pass at the next opportunity as an additional route. The pass was re-opened on 8th April.
- Blackweir Docks Feeder canal / Abstraction Licence requirements: Associated British Ports were currently working on a design for a new screen across the Feeder canal intake. This should be presented to NRW by the end of June this year.
- Update following winter storms: the replacement grids at the Blackweir fish pass were installed on 20th January, so the pass now met all Public Safety requirements.

Following the update, the Chair asked about the current levels of fish / eels within the Bay. It was explained that the numbers of eels within the rivers Taff and Ely catchment area were generally good. Such numbers were likely to also be reflected within the locks and Cardiff Bay area itself. However, it should be noted that it was primarily salmonids that were being monitored by NRW.

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 –

C. Kingston (Waterfront Partners) was willing to share any details of activities being organised by the Waterfront Partners with the Committee, including any minutes, etc. connected with these. The Chair felt this would be extremely useful for the Committee to have.

The signage around certain parts of the Bay was referred to, with C. Kingston stating that she did not know who did this signage, as the Waterfront Partners produced the A1 maps on the display boards in the area only. On the QR codes on the maps and leaflets produced by the Partners, these would be shared with the Committee in due course.

A. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association) asked whether there was any information on the numbers, etc. of people crossing the Barrage between Cardiff and Penarth and vice-versa. He explained that the Vale of Glamorgan was trying to attract visitors via the Wales Coast Path which cut across the Barrage. It would be useful to have this information, as part of the push for more tourism in the Vale and the Bay. D. Hall (CHA) explained that via the use of the technology in place at the Barrage, the numbers of people travelling back and forth there was collected monthly. Approximately 102,000 people had crossed the Barrage during March 2025. A. Ernest suggested that such information be shared with the Committee going forward.

The Vice-Chair referred to the Penarth Head Link and the potential for this to assist with tourism and trade. A. Ernest stated that visitors and tourists went beyond Penarth and Sully from the Bay and into the Vale, and input was needed from the Vale of Glamorgan Council to help monitor this, etc. The Vale of Glamorgan Cruises were also referred to, and the need to support them, such as reducing congestion and helping them to access Cardiff and elsewhere, as well as the potential of utilising a commuter service using the waterways. A. Vye-Parminter (CHA) explained that the CHA helped to license the commercial operators for the waterways, which was primarily used for tourism. Due to cost and reliability, it was not currently economically viable to provide a commuter service. The local tourism cruises and tours, although busy, had not fully recovered the footfall and numbers they had previously, following the Pandemic. Other factors holding back developing their use further included operator costs, the current economic climate and high-water flows.

(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 July. This would be the Annual Meeting of the Cardiff Bay Advisory Committee.