

**Cemaes Boat Club**  
**Minutes of Meeting held Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2022**

**Present:**

Richard Downs  
Marilyn Downs  
Sian Jones  
Graham Booth  
Simon Drakley  
Mike Thompson  
Steve Bray  
Alan Thomas  
Keith Muscott  
Gerallt Jones  
Deborah Finn

Arrived after Item 3:

Louise Burman  
Gill Thomas (13)

Derek Owen (Llanbadrig CC)  
Keith Fitton (Llanbadrig CC)  
Elfed Jones (Llanbadrig CC)  
David Williams (Harbourmaster)  
Walter Thompson (Asst. Harbourmaster)  
Brian Potter (Llanbadrig CC )  
Mike White (Llanbadrig CC)

1. Richard welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.
2. Apologies for absence were received from:  
Carys Davies (Llanbadrig CC), Norman Mason, Richard Walton, Ken Bramhall, Mike Whitlam
3. Special Agenda Item (with members of Llanbadrig CC)

Following criticism of Cemaes Boat Club that had been raised publicly at the last Llanbadrig Community Council meeting, Cemaes Boat Club had invited councillors to attend in order to ensure that these issues could be addressed.

- *It had been alleged that the boat is not insured.* This is incorrect and Charles Henry Ashley has been insured annually. Copies of the insurance documents (MS Amlin Insurance SE / Haven Knox-Johnson) are kept on-line and it was agreed, following a suggestion by Derek Owen, that a copy of the insurance document will be sent to the Cemaes Harbour Committee, along with an application for mooring.

- *It had been reported that the CHA did not pay harbour fees.* Derek Owen confirmed that Llanbadrig CC has agreed that CHA does not pay harbour fees as the boat is an important asset to the village.

- *A challenge had been made that the boat was not well maintained and was not seaworthy.*

Over the years, volunteer members of the Boat Club with a variety of engineering experience and skills have ensured that the boat has been maintained to a high standard, replacing many areas of rotting wood from the original restoration. Mike Fox, (Fox Associates, Marine Surveyors and Consultants) undertook an inspection of recent repairs carried out and provided the Boat Club with a letter dated 26/3/22 that was read out, concluding 'The work appears to have been very well executed and the paint finish has been fully restored'.

- *The qualifications and proficiency of the crew had been queried.*

Many of the core crew have many years of experience handling craft of various sizes and types. Many also have a variety of recognised qualifications in sailing and sea skills (e.g. Day Skipper, Competent Crew, RNLI member, Radio Operator), but due to the historic nature of the CHA, specific competency has had to be developed over years of handling this unique vessel. Newer members are offered opportunities to train and develop sailing and rowing skills and membership has grown significantly this year. The aim to train younger members in a safe environment is constantly being explored and promoted. A record of competency/experience specific to the CHA is currently under development.

- In response to criticism regarding safety, it was emphasised that safety measures on the Charles Henry Ashley are very important and detailed risk assessments have been undertaken for all activities.

e.g. No crew member is allowed to transfer to the boat unless wearing a lifejacket. Lifejackets are worn at all times and if a change of clothing is required during a trip, only one crew at a time is allowed to remove their lifejacket. A safety briefing is conducted prior to sailings. A log of all excursions is maintained by Mike Thompson.

- Mr David Williams identified himself as the person who had made the criticisms at the meeting of Llanbadrig Community Council. He had also prepared a statement which he was allowed to read to the meeting and which reiterated the criticisms about safety, competency and qualifications.
- Addressing some additional points made in this statement, it was explained to Mr Williams that the Charles Henry Ashley does not need to be 'coded' because only members of the Boat Club are allowed to be crew. There are no passengers. The maximum crew on board is 15.
- There are occasions when the weather and tides mean that sailings have had to be cancelled by the coxswain of the day and training and familiarisation sessions have taken place in the harbour.
- Over the 13 years that CHA has been in operation, there have been minimal occasions when assistance has been needed.

In 2017 a tow was given to CHA when the tide was too strong to make effective progress.

On a recent sailing, assistance was offered by Stingray, a local angling charter boat, due to an unexpected drop in wind when the CHA was in the tideway. That offer of assistance was accepted. A tow was provided lasting approximately 20 - 30 minutes. At the Coxswain's insistence/request, the tow was dropped within the main bay out of the tideway where good progress under oars could then be made, a tow back in to harbour not being necessary. However, the skipper of the assisting vessel, whose generosity in offering a tow is fully acknowledged, subsequently claimed this to have been a major incident with the boat in grave danger. This was not the case.

- At this point in the meeting, Derek Owen gave the position of Llanbadrig CC. He emphasised that it was not the role of the council

to be involved in these arguments as the Council's remit is confined to the location of the harbour and its management.

- After all points had been discussed, it was emphasised that all vessels at sea offer assistance to each other and that there are many occasions when difficulties can be encountered, especially when there are new crew being trained. However, repeating criticism and misinformation would bring the Cemaes Boat Club into disrepute and damage the reputation of members. The safety of the Charles Henry Ashley and its crew are significant responsibilities that Cemaes Boat Club takes very seriously. Everyone present knew of someone who had encountered difficulties at sea, or had even suffered the loss of a boat.
- There were points raised during the discussion that Cemaes Boat Club will review and consider as part of its aim to continually improve.
- All minutes are available on the Boat Club's website [www.cemaesclassiclifeboat.org.uk](http://www.cemaesclassiclifeboat.org.uk) and the Boat Club is open and transparent in its organisation, with plans to continually improve its operational systems and training.

It was agreed that minutes could also be sent to the Clerk for the Community Council .

At this point, Llanbadrig CC members left the meeting.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting (7.6.22):

All who had attended agreed that the minutes were accurate. They are available to read on the website.

Proposed: Steve Bray

Seconded: Sian Jones

5. Matters arising:

- Richard asked if any CHA stock was sold at Mona Showground. Mike Thompson reported that £15 would be transferred to the bank account.
- Cronfa Padrig Grant Application. Steve Bray reported that a cheque for £8646.30 was received today.

Marilyn will send an official thank you and when The Firs is fully kitted out, the Boat Club will reiterate the invitation already made by Steve Bray that the committee should come and see it.

Marilyn has written a Thank You card for Paul Sumners (for the generator) and will ask Wally to deliver it.

- Marilyn has not yet made the purchases of lifejackets, first aid kit and flares due to lack of time and supply of stock.
- The hand held radios following the past years of storage have still not been located. Richard thanked Elfed for the generous donation of his radios.
- Richard thanked Simon and Mike T for their participation in the Excellence in Maritime Conservation Award interview with the National Historic Ships UK. Cemaes Boat Club has been offered the chance to meet a representative who would come over to offer support and advice. It has been suggested that we try to keep a maintenance log to show the decision making system about repairs and materials used.

6. Treasurer's Report:

Bank account is :£4,111.06.

With the Cronfa Padrig cheque, the account will increase to: £12,757.36

Grants and payments have also been received through our membership with LocalGiving.org.

7. Boatswain's Report:

Simon reported that there were some small fixtures and fittings to be repaired/replaced. He would liaise with Gerallt about these.

8. Secretary's Report:

Marilyn suggested some website improvements to the booking system which would enable additional bookings to be made by one person and simplify the process. This would have an additional cost of approximately £62. This was agreed and Marilyn would contact Janet Cross.

9. Membership Secretary's Report:

Sian had reported that membership numbers were:

Full members 44

Friends 12

1 day sail 12

Total 68

This is a significant and welcome increase in numbers since the start of the season.

10. Future events:

- Amlwch Filming 'Green Space Dark Skies' – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August

Simon explained that this would be an opportunity to sail to Amlwch Port to take part in their weekend event.

On Saturday a crew would be required to sail to Amlwch and the CHA would stay overnight. Transport back would be arranged.

On Sunday a small crew (e.g. 8 rowers) would be required to row in the Amlwch harbour for filming. CHA will stay overnight on Sunday and then be towed back to Cemaes on Monday, with an appropriate crew. Marilyn would add the additional sailing date on the website and Simon will update the Facebook page.

- Lifeboat Day – August 14<sup>th</sup>

Steve Bray reported that the RNLI have asked that if we have a CHA stall, we either pay their charge or give them a contribution. Steve and Gerallt offered to assist with a stall. Mike will liaise with the vicar about blessing the boat. The Boat Club will give a donation to the RNLI. Simon suggested that CHA could possibly sail out and then lay up alongside the RNLI vessel. Marilyn and Richard will arrange for the information boards to be available for collection.

- Summer Event – Beach Party on Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> August. 11.00 – 15.00

It was suggested that CHA could be beached on the far side so that the public could look at her. High water is at 18.08 on that day and CHA could be rowed/sailed before being taken back in the afternoon. We will need to sign up a crew for both activities.

Marilyn has got a Temporary Event Notice (£21) and will organise a Beach Bar.

Marilyn has sent out a request for good Tombola prizes – especially bottles. She is trying to source someone for Face Painting.

Lucky Dip prizes have been ordered.

There will be no bouncy castle this year and therefore the grass does not need to be strimmed.

Activities will include - Coconut Shy, Football score a goal, Treasure Pool, Heaving Line, Welly throw, Hoop-la (plastic bottles), Guess the number of Sweets, Cricket - Stumped, Tin Can alley, Lucky Dip, etc.

The number of activities will depend on the number of volunteers who will help on the day and Marilyn has sent out an email to start to sign people up and has prepared an action plan.

She will send out an email with the action plan for the day and further requests for help.

The theme is **Pirates and Sea Creatures** – with prizes for the best Fancy Dress.

Food would be available from Chris at the Beach Café and Marilyn has already asked him if his van could be available. She will liaise with him and request a donation.

**Posters and Social Media notices will go out this weekend.** (Carys Davies has offered to assist with this).

- Cemaes Carnival – 28<sup>th</sup> August.  
We have been asked if we can take part in the Carnival and a stall will cost us £5. It was agreed that we should take part and possibly look for some volunteers for the parade as well. Marilyn has already asked for helpers in her last email and had a few responses.

11. A.O.B.

- Action plan – Proposal for Improvements  
Graham and Steve distributed some ideas that could help with improvements and would welcome further comments and suggestions about how the Boat Club could continue to develop. This is to be discussed at our next meeting, which it was suggested should take place at The Firs.
- Simon reported that we have been offered oars from Holyhead Sea Cadets. These oars are a bit lighter and shorter and may be very useful for training activities. Simon and Graham will go and look at them to assess suitability.
- Marilyn suggested that this may be an opportunity to explore getting a grant for a RIB, which could become a support vessel for CHA. She will look into this.
- Gerallt requested that links with the Harbour Pub should continue to be explored.
- Elfed reported that recently there had been significant vandalism at the Douglas Inn. Security cameras are on the list for equipment at The Firs.

12. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August – **7.00pm at The Firs.**

## APPENDIX A

### STATEMENT FROM DAVID WILLIAMS

I have prepared a statement and I speak in my capacity as Harbourmaster at Cemaes, an Auxiliary Coastguard and an experienced charter skipper with extensive knowledge of the challenging waters off Cemaes. I currently hold my Boatmasters Licence and have done since approx 1985 when coding became compulsory for vessels carrying passengers. As some of you may already know I have been an Auxiliary Coastguard since 1974 and participated in the saving of over 400 lives at sea. For many generations, from the days of sail to the present day, the North coast of Anglesey has been known as one of the most dangerous coasts around the UK because of its rocky nature and its fierce and powerful tides. Since the setting up of a lifeboat in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the loss of 147 lives when the Alert was wrecked **the tides have NOT changed and it is crucial that risks to those sailing these dangerous waters are minimised** I do believe that we have a common goal – the **safety** of the Charles Henry Ashley , the **safety** of those crewing the Charles Henry Ashley and the **safety** of the passengers on the Charles Henry Ashley.

Everyone here wants the Charles Henry Ashleigh to be part of our heritage for many years to come. However, unfortunately it appears that there are some issues around the current operation of the boat – in terms of  
when and if it should be launched on a particular date,  
whether those who willingly give their time to operate the boat have evidence of suitability for this onerous task and  
whether those who come onto the boat to assist, for example by rowing, have suitable training

I have had serious concerns for a while - which yesterday's events have only made worse

Certain questions need to be asked -

Questions – **who decides if the boat should be launched?**

**On what criteria is this decision based?** eg not just tide time and weather but the HEIGHT AND SPEED OF THE TIDE,

**Do all helmsman have the appropriate sailing qualification?** I understand RYA Day Skipper is the standard qualification

Finally - It appears the vessel is not coded

I hope we can address these genuine concerns.

Sadly, matters came to a head yesterday, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022, when the CHA nearly went ashore amongst the rocks on Traeth Bach. No commercial craft had been launched from Cemaes harbour on that day. My own vessel was not launched due to the weather conditions.