

Cemaes Boat Club
Minutes of Meeting held Tuesday, 23rd April, 2024

Present:

Richard Downs
Marilyn Downs
Mike Thompson
Simon Drakley
Richard Walton
Sian Jones
Graham Booth
Brian Brooks
John Morgan

1. Richard welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.
2. Apologies for absence were received from: Alun Pari Huws, Elfed Jones Steve Bray, Mark Lloyd Davies
3. Minutes of the previous meetings (5.3.24 and 2.4.24):
The minutes of the previous meetings were accepted as an accurate record.
Proposed: Richard Walton Seconded: Mike Thompson
4. Matters arising:
 - Historic Lifeboat Enthusiasts Society visit:
All thought the visit went really well and the team had received many compliments. Richard thanked everyone for their hard work including the excellent catering! The Society will be sending a £50 donation to Simon as a 'thank you'. This is in addition to £109 cash which was received in individual donations on the day. Everyone from HLES was gifted with a small print of CHA and a keyring/fridge magnet.
 - Carnival Committee marquee storage request. After some discussion it was agreed that we can't do this because of the contract lease. Horizon is changing to GBN shortly and although they have indicated that we can use The Firs until 2025, the entire space will be still used as a workshop. Marilyn will write to Julie and explain.
 - Trifolds update – Graham confirmed that he had cancelled this order until the decision is made about what we do in the future.
5. Treasurer's Report:
Simon reported that there is currently £ 4,641.62 in the bank account. He has paid the insurance bill of £391.82 to Horizon.

The marine insurance policy has been cancelled as CHA is not going in the water. However, Simon will make enquiries about starting a suitable new policy that meets Public Liability requirements instead.

The HLES will be giving a donation of £50, and guests also made cash donations totalling £109.

The Club's 'Local Giving' membership will need to be renewed soon and it was agreed that Marilyn would organise this.

6. Boatswain's Report:

Graham proposed that from now, maintenance could take place at The Firs on the first Saturday of each month commencing Saturday, 4th May. He will be there all day and volunteers can choose to come at a time to suit them.

Proposed: Graham Seconded: Simon

7. Secretary's Report:

Marilyn had nothing separate to report, but would contribute any relevant points to appropriate agenda items.

8. Membership Secretary's Report:

Sian reported that membership now stood at 34 Full and 19 Friends. She presented a membership list showing expiry dates.

9. Future plans/actions for CHA and Cemaes Boat Club

Richard read an email that was received from Alun Pari Huws to the meeting which summed up the different options which were open to the Boat Club.

'For the CHA going forward:

My heart says try and keep going. My head says time to preserve and look at non sea going options. I won't be popular for this view but on balance that's where I come to.

Restoration:

Is this possible? Yes BUT to establish the scope of repair required, further assessments by shipwrights will be required. To accurately estimate cost of repairs I suspect that any shipwright will need to have the belting removed and sheathing stripped to make a full assessment of the softness in the planking and the extent of work.

If re-planking down to the keel is required this will a more significant job than replacing sections above and below the cork belting because of the skill required to bend planking. The double diagonal nature of the planking obviously complicates the process.

If a restoration project is investigated and later abandoned due to lack of funding then the process of preservation will be more expensive and harder simply because of the work required to put what has been stripped back together.

A further restoration project (a restoration refit) would clearly require funding just for the serious investigation stage. Total cost clearly hard to establish at this stage but would surely at least equal the first bill if serious re-planking is required. If the hollowness is partly because the sheathing has detached from the planking then it might not be too bad but the spike testing did not suggest that this was the case.

In my view, a project such as this could easily be 2-4 years and require a lot of funding which is probably going to be hard to come by and require a project lead.

Preservation:

This would require a different approach. The boat is not completely original of course - a number of aspects reflect the modern refit e.g. the frames are laminated replacements not original sections, the tanks no longer exist, the relieving valves have been reduced and replaced but externally she looks very similar to the original. As such she is a good example of a non self-righting lifeboat of her era and dozens of these were built. They were the immediate forerunners of the earlier motor boats produced in serious numbers before and after the Great War.

Preservation would still require serious hard work. A full (and ideally professional) repaint of the outside would be needed. Two or three sections of deck would need to be replaced. The starboard side rubbing strake would need to be removed completely and replaced with easier to manage softwood. The inside would still need to be vented sympathetically. This would all probably take at least one more winter of work, possibly two and still need some funding.

A preservation option with occasional launch for rowing would be possible but a logistical nightmare even with a boathouse at the end of the car park.

Preservation would mean that at the end of the project to prepare her for display, a venue is needed and this would clearly involve significant cost in itself. It would have to be a collaborative project between various parties including the County Council who are unlikely to have funds although there is also the Shell Fund to consider. Again it would need a project lead - or several leads more likely! Capel Penrhyn, for example would be a £250k odd project if available and adaptable but it's on the edge of the village.

Sentimentally, Cemaes would be the ideal home. However, Cemaes is not Tenby or Llandudno. It does not have foot traffic of significance even in the summer although it could well be an attraction and good educational venue for Anglesey schools.

Apart from the issue of a location/building, which is significant in itself, there would be a need for volunteers to

- a. keep up with maintenance, relatively minimal though this would be and
- b. to steward.

There would also be a fairly significant cost to employ a Professional. I doubt the RNLI (Heritage section) would see benefit in getting involved given the low foot traffic situation.

Ideally, a building with height at the centre to allow full erection of masts and yards would show the boat off to full effect. However, this may be unrealistic. At least there is a full suite of photographs

and plans to show this as well as possible and the boat's gear can be laid out. After all, when the boat was in its house, all the gear including the masts was in the house and erected at sea or on the slip.

If a suitable home in Cemaes is not feasible, the question is 'what then'? The boat club can't simply disown or abandon the boat. The ideal would be somewhere with an existing infrastructure that could, even with an extended building, welcome and accommodate the boat as an addition to an existing attraction. The three options that come immediately to mind are Holyhead Maritime Museum area, Moelfre Sea Watch Centre (or even the original boathouse done up) and Oriel Mon in Llangefni. The latter is not near the coast but central.

Summary:

The general trend amongst the younger generation is for interest in other avenues. We are all getting older and reducing numbers/energy although the passion and interest is still there. Whatever route is taken (and there would be nothing wrong with continuing to investigate both options for the next 12 months), we are looking at a 2-3 year project and by then we'll all be another two or three years older. '

Simon reported that John Jones had visited The Firs and, as he was involved with the original refurbishment, he was asked for his professional advice. John Jones indicated that the future repairs would be beyond his staffing capabilities and he estimated the work would require 8 men working in teams of 2 at a cost of £200,000 plus. He had had to do the original refurbishment on a smaller budget but these repairs would be very costly and difficult.

There was considerable discussion by the meeting and it was pointed out by Graham that the future of CHA had been on the Agenda for some time and all were aware that she had a limited life span as an operating sailing/rowing boat. It was suggested that a proposal would be made to the membership that we should preserve CHA for future historic and educational purposes. Marilyn will send out an email. Once replies have been collected, Marilyn will then inform the Community Council of our intentions. The Harbour Committee will be notified that CHA will not be going into the harbour this year and will not require a mooring.

Proposed: Graham Booth Seconded: Richard Downs

In the meantime, we would need to investigate a location for a boathouse and various possibilities in Cemaes were discussed. Marilyn has written to some of these sites and will keep everyone updated.

10. **Publicity / Social Media:**

As reported at the previous meetings, we need new posters in the noticeboard and these will now reflect the agreed way forward. Marilyn will also write a News Item for the website and this will cross over to Facebook. Graham will talk to Janet about possible modifications to the website

11. Future events:

- Summer Lunch Event - Saturday, 13th July, 1.30pm at Lastra Farm
Laura Downs is organising this and it has been publicised with the menu in the last email. (Two courses for £29.50, Three courses for £33.50.)
Members have been asked to contact Laura and send £10 deposit with full amount payable by Friday, 5th July.
- Beach Party – It was agreed to skip this event this year.
- Tombola – this important fund-raiser will be held outside the Vigour on Saturday July 6th from noon.
- Marilyn will inform the Cemaes RNLi (via Suzy Hodges) that CHA will not be going into the water for Sea Safety Day, but will remain at The Firs.

12. A.O.B.

- Brian asked if there was a possibility of taking CHA on the trailer to Moelfre Lifeboat Day. All agreed that this could not take place as the trailer is unsuitable and a low-loader would be too expensive. However, we could take the little CHA wheelbarrow! This could be used to represent Charles Henry Ashley at other events.

Meeting closed at 8.17pm.

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday, 11th June, 7.00pm, The Vigour

MD 24/4/24