

CARDIFF BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Remote Annual Meeting held on 23rd July, 2025.

Present: A. Coles (Western Marinas – representing British Marine Federation and Royal Yachting Association), F. Hourahine (Natural Resources Wales), S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.), C. Kingston (Waterfront Partners), C. Michael (RSPB), P. Stone, (Paddle Cymru), M. Thomas (Clerk – Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer, Vale of Glamorgan Council), Councillor N.C. Thomas (Penarth Town Council) and Councillor M. Wilson (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) Appointment of Chair –

Councillor M.R. Wilson was appointed Chair for the current Municipal year.

(b) Appointment of Vice-Chair –

Councillor N.C. Thomas was appointed Vice-Chair for the current Municipal year.

(c) Apologies for Absence –

These were received from Commadore H. Bumford (Cardiff Bay Yacht Club), Councillor J. Burke-Davies (Cardiff Council), A. Michael (Penarth Headland Link Charity) and C. Pooley (Natural Resources Wales).

(d) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 30th April, 2025 –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 30th April, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

(e) Timetable of Meetings –

The report was presented to the Committee by the Clerk, the purpose of which was to suggest dates for future meetings of the Committee in line with the decision of the Advisory Committee on 18th November, 2015 to hold four meetings per year. It had also been custom and practice that meetings took place in most instances on a Wednesday.

In January 2020 it was agreed that the meetings would be held at 5.00 p.m. The Committee had also looked at holding meetings both remotely and in person, on an alternate basis, following the COVID-19 Pandemic (discussed at the meetings held

on 4th January, 2023 and 22nd March, 2023). Therefore, consideration was also requested on the format of the meetings going forward.

In summary, Members were requested to consider the timetable below and to make any amendments as required; and to consider whether meetings should continue to be a mix of remote and in person.

TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS
Wednesday, 23 rd July, 2025 at 5.00 p.m. (Annual Meeting)
Wednesday, 22 nd October, 2025 at 5.00 p.m.
Wednesday, 28 th January, 2026 at 5.00 p.m.
Wednesday, 29 th April, 2026 at 5.00 p.m.

The Chair felt that the format for meetings should be primarily holding these remotely and having one in person meeting annually, based at Cardiff Bay.

A.M. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association) supported the Chair's view, adding that a mix of formats for meetings was useful, and to have at least one in person meeting, in order for members and participants to see what was going on at the Bay and Barrage.

F. Hourahine (Natural Resources Wales) offered the caveat that her and her colleagues' attendance at future meetings, particularly when they were in person, was subject to incidents or events of environmental risk occurring, which would have to be prioritised instead. Natural Resources Wales regularly had staff at Cardiff Bay and therefore had a clear of view of what was going on there and what Natural Resources Wales was doing there.

Following the discussion on the report, Committee

AGREED –

- (1) T H A T the timetable of meetings be agreed.
- (2) T H A T meetings should be a mix of remote and at least one in person meeting annually.

(f) Navigational Safety and General Progress Report – To receive an Update Report from the Cardiff Harbour Authority –

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:

1. Navigation

The next Outer Harbour and Approach Channel dredge campaign was due to start within the first 2 weeks of August.

2. General Update

Barrage

Due to the current dry spell of weather, river flows continued to be low with little rain over the past few months. The CHA had managed the bay level effectively and salinity ingress was being kept under control.

The Saltwater Shaft 1200mm valve was back in service with further system improvement works being arranged. That helped manage the Bay levels and reduced and kept salinity levels down.

Sluice 3 hydraulic cylinder had been repaired and put back into service and the annual maintenance on this Sluice has been completed. Sluice 2 cylinders would be returned and fitted shortly. The Sluice maintenance campaign was continuing around these repairs.

Environment

Cardiff Bay hosted a visit from North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) in June, in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales. This brought delegates from across the North Atlantic area to look at the Fish Pass, learn about environmental management and the Severn Estuary. This was a very successful day, and the delegates took a lot away from the trip.

The CHA was working with ASERA (Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities) to pilot an early warning scheme for invasive species. Settlement panels would be placed around the Bay, with the intention of rolling this out across the Estuary.

The CHA had been successful in retaining their ISO14001 accreditation. An auditor from the British Standards Institution (BSI) carried out a day long assessment of the CHA's environmental management and was satisfied it continue to protect the natural environment.

General

Cardiff Barrage, Cardiff Bay Wetlands Reserve and Flat Holm all retained their Green Flags this year.

The education visits to Cardiff Bay had now finished for the academic year. In just the 2nd quarter of this year, the CHA's Environment Officer worked with nearly 500 primary school children from across South Wales. This provided learning opportunities on the history, environments and the importance of rivers and oceans. In addition, a delegation of students from Ohio University

had spent a day in the Bay learning about the history of Cardiff and its association with the coal industry. They were comparing it to studies they had done on the legacy of coal mining in Appalachia. There was potential to expand this opportunity, including further delegations and online lectures to their students.

The Committee were updated on events linked to the CHA 25th anniversary, including:

- The Lighthouse Theatre conducted 4 public tours, and 2 schools tours called Tide Travellers as part of the events for the anniversary. These took place on boat and foot (as an interactive walking and sailing theatre performance) on the first 2 weekends in July and were very well received. They were advertised by the theatre groups and on the Cardiff Harbour and Visit Cardiff social media channels.
- The CHA had run a schools' banner competition for schools in Cardiff and Penarth, having received 48 entries from 5 different schools. 25 winners would have their designs displayed on banners along the Barrage / Bay walkway for the summer holidays, due to be installed at the end of July / early August.
- The photo exhibition 'Behind the Bay' was due to be installed near the Water Tower at the top end of RDP on 1st August. There would be 6 exhibition towers with 4 panels on each covering the work of the CHA. It would be on display until end of September then moved to the Castle Grounds and subsequently move to Norwegian Church for the last month of the anniversary. This would help to inform people of the work undertaken by CHA around Cardiff Bay.
- Regarding the CHA anniversary book, the book text had been drafted and needed to be finalised which would hopefully be finished for 1st September.

The Vice-Chair raised the matter concerning the work with ASERA and the early warning scheme for invasive species. He referred to the impact of climate change on this issue, with the migration and travelling of greater numbers of new species from the south (including the Mediterranean) to Welsh and other shores of Britain, and whether the public and wider bodies should be concerned about this development or not. D. Hall (CHA) stated that it was important that people and the relevant bodies remained concerned and vigilant on the impact of climate change, including invasive species, but there had also been close collaboration and work between the CHA and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and others, including work under the UK Specialist Technical Advisory Group on Biosecurity. This ensured there was timely communication with the relevant areas and therefore advanced warning given of invasive species alerts, etc. There was a huge amount of effort put into invasive species monitoring in the UK and CHA were part of that.

P. Stone (Paddle Cymru) referred to the inflatable adventure park that was at Cardiff Bay which had not returned this year. His understanding was that the park had been moved because of water quality issues. He asked if this was a precautionary measure or was there actual concerns about the quality of the water in the area.

D. Hall (CHA) explained that the overall water quality at Cardiff Bay was regularly and intensively monitored, with the CHA having a clear understanding of the water quality and the issues that were faced in Cardiff Bay area which were no different to any other urban water body. Also, the Aqua Park's decision to relocate was due to several reasons.

The Chair asked several questions, including:

- On the threat of invasive species coming into Cardiff Bay, did boats, when entering the harbour area need to undergo some kind of quality control or cleaning process. In response, D. Hall (CHA) explained that regarding quality control for boats, there were quality control / cleanliness measures in place, such as 'check, clean, dry'. All access points into Cardiff Bay were equipped with power washers. People were encouraged to check their boats and other watercraft before putting them into the Bay. A key risk was when boats came in through the locks, where the biggest transfer of invasive species was through ballast water. However, that was not an issue CHA had to deal with because of the size of the boats coming into the Bay. Also, there was signage at the locks informing boat users about Zebra Mussels. Another factor mitigating against the entry of invasive species into the Bay was that boats were coming in from saltwater to freshwater. Also, good biosecurity considerations were impressed upon contractors working at the Bay and others who wanted to hold events or access the Bay. Other bodies in the Bay, such as Paddle Cymru, also made their members aware of the 'check, clean, dry' approach.
- On the start date of the 25th anniversary of the CHA, would the Authority be launching a first day cover or similar. It was explained that the update given by the CHA on the anniversary to the Committee was the only information currently available on the anniversary events and activities, with further details to be provided in due course.

P. Stone, (Paddle Cymru), asked whether there would be any water-based activities or events held in relation to the anniversary, as well as the land-based ones. It was explained by the CHA representatives that although currently most of the events, etc., were land based, this was to be a year-long celebration and consideration was being given to more water-based events in due course, but there were no specific plans yet to share with the Committee.

The Chair asked if the CHA could let the Committee know about any upcoming anniversary events which they could participate in and share ideas about.

A.M. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association) suggested that the 25th anniversary book be promoted as much as possible and it deserved a wide audience. The Chair suggested that a book launch may help to achieve this, including Senedd Members and others, such as A. Michael (Penarth Headland Link Charity) and those involved in the early Days of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation.

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

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

(g) To receive an Update Report from Natural Resources Wales –

The following update from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) was given by F. Hourahine, the NRW representative, to the Committee:

1. Dissolved oxygen (DO) levels

Overall DO levels within the Bay had remained above the 5 mg/L threshold. Levels had at times temporarily dropped below the threshold in some of the deeper areas of the Bay during periods of warm, calm weather but no signs of distress to wildlife had been observed.

The saltwater flushing shaft pipe had been fixed and was put back into operation on 5th June. This resulted in a rapid reduction in salinity levels throughout the Bay and helped to maintain high levels of dissolved oxygen. A PhD project at Cardiff University was looking at the effectiveness of the current aeration system in the Bay used for maintaining oxygen levels above the 5 mg/L threshold. The project required that there were periods of time when the aeration was turned off and DO levels monitored and recorded. During such times NRW were informed and the Bay was closely monitored for signs of adverse impacts to the wildlife.

2. Pollution incidents and investigations

Ferry Road Landfill Site

In March a review of the amendment to the Hydrogeological Risk Assessment was reviewed by NRW specialists, and a compliance assessment report was issued on 12th March. This was on the public register.

The general comments from the review were that:

“The Addendum is a welcome and useful summary of recent efforts to monitor and control contamination from the landfill. NRW generally agree with the approach and recommendations within the document.

The report concludes that the landfill is likely to have contributed to regional contamination, however data available indicates that there is a general poor quality of the regional groundwater and that the wider area is affected by contamination sources other than the landfill. The monitoring shows the presence of off-site contamination in the upgradient boreholes.

Hydraulic containment at the landfill is not fully active, as leachate is above the approximate elevation of the River Ely and Cardiff Bay, however improvements in the leachate level of the site had provided some degree of hydraulic containment.”

A further 6 months of monthly monitoring was expected (approximately September / October 2025), which NRW would review prior to any agreement in the reduction in monitoring frequency.

NRW had suggested that with the improvements already made on leachate management, it would be pertinent for the operator to consider actions to decrease leachate generation.

Pollution Incidents

An accumulation of oil on the surface of the water was reported in the Mermaid Quay area on 3rd July. NRW contacted the Harbour Authority who confirmed that they had also received a report and had taken the necessary measures to disperse the oil. The source was suspected to be boat bilge discharge, but it was unknown which boat was responsible. There were no reports of wildlife being affected.

3. The Barrage Fish Pass

The auxiliary fish pass was made operational on 16th June. This meant that migratory fish had continuous access into the Bay, even during periods of tidal lock.

So far this year a raw count of 39 salmonids have been recorded through the fish pass this year. Last year only 5 had been recorded so this year was looking much better. The numbers would be extrapolated at a later date in order to provide an estimate of the total number entering the Bay. This would be shared with the Committee once it became available.

4. Blackweir Docks Feeder Canal

Abstraction Licence requirements

Associated British Ports (ABP) had been working on a design for a new screen across the Feeder canal intake. This should have been presented to NRW by the end of June so an update from ABP had been requested.

Following the presentation of the report, the Vice-Chair queried the following:

- The report referred to the Ferry Road Landfill site and the NRW suggestion that with the improvements already made on leachate management, it would be pertinent for the operator to consider actions to decrease leachate generation. He asked for more detail on this. It was explained that further details were available on this via the public register but essentially NRW were asking the operator concerned about reviewing and finding solutions regarding leachate generation. This was being dealt with through the NRW's regulatory team. NRW would continue to progress and update on that issue to the Committee.
- Regarding any further updates on the Abstraction Licence requirements, there were no further updates at this time from ABP. Although there was a

slight delay, NRW were still comfortable in terms of timescales, and conversations were being had between NRW and ABP.

- On the cyclical patterns and numbers of salmonids returning to the Bay via the Fish Pass each year (this year had seen a particularly high number), it was explained that the data collected around this was still 'raw' and required NRW staff to analyse this information to look at the underlying trends, as well on the bigger picture of how do salmonids breed and what the patterns were for them coming back to the Bay. There was a natural system or cycle in place, how that corresponded to what was seen recently versus previous periods would need to be fully analysed.

The Chair raised his concerns on local landfill sites and on the off-site contamination, what was it and were there any plans to try and reduce it. It was explained that this was exactly the rationale for the projects relating to this area undertaken by NRW and other stakeholders, identifying and addressing off site contamination originating from landfill and the management, monitoring, regulation and enforcement of waste management with operators, as well as the need to do this over the long term and addressing the legacy waste management impacts / practices and decisions from the sixties, seventies and eighties. On his follow up question concerning the Chinese practice of uncovering landfill sites to reuse and recycle plastics, etc., although this sounded good on paper, it could face several challenges, i.e. leachate, ground water management, etc.

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

AGREED – T H A T this item be noted.

(h) Any Other Business –

(i) Update from Waterfront Partners (WFP)

This was presented by C. Kingston (Waterfront Partners). The Partners had a monthly meeting to receive updates on events, work together on marketing the Bay and planning for specific projects such as the WFP Christmas Trails. Guest speakers at the monthly meetings, representing businesses / charities / initiatives were welcomed and provided opportunities for Partners to engage with and support.

Partners updated their events to <https://www.visitcardiffbay.info/>

The Chair of WFP was Charlotte Kingston (Makers Guild Wales) and the Vice-Chair was Becky Jones (Mermaid Quay)

The July update from Partners included:

- Jurassic Bay – the Red Dragon Centre, Mermaid Quay and Craft in the Bay held a weekend of dinosaur related free activities for

families. Very good footfall and social media interaction. 'It's On Cardiff' preview article interaction:

- Website – 20, 510 views
- Facebook - 564,460 views
- Instagram 63,000 Views
- Hotels in the Bay had been busy / full during the concerts in Cardiff.
- Some of the Partners had free activities for families over the summer, including the Senedd, Red Dragon Centre, Craft in the Bay, Mermaid Quay.
- Sayers Amusements was currently installing the City Beach / funfair in RDP. This was due to open 19th July and closed on 25th August.
- Cardiff Harbour Authority were celebrating their 25th Anniversary – there would be an outdoor exhibition in the Bay, a book was being published and there was a schools' banner competition exhibition coming up.
- The Visit Cardiff Bay printed map and listings had been edited and re-printed. The A1 maps around the Bay were due to be installed shortly with the latest updates included.
- Partners were in discussion about plans for Christmas in the Bay and whether to organise another family trail in the Bay.
- A list of the member organisations of Waterfront Partners was also shared with the Committee.

If Members of the Committee would like to come to any of the WFP meetings, they were more than welcome. If they wanted to come and speak to the partners about something that was happening in the Bay that they thought would be of interest to them and their businesses and organisations they could just let C. Kingston know because WFP often had guest speakers coming along.

On trails, the Chair referred to examples in other towns and cities, such as Worcester, which used a Penguin based trail for children to participate in, which had been a success and something that WFP could also adopt for the Bay. C. Kingston stated that this suggestion would be investigated. Similar trails had been set up in the Bay area in the past, but consideration needed to be given to the cost of these, which could be considerable, and the ongoing and significant support from partner bodies and local businesses to help achieve this. The Chair also referred to the Captain Scott Society, based in the Penarth, which the WFP could tie in for the wider Bay area, due to the links between the area and the expedition undertaken by Captain Scott. He also stated that he would like to come along to a meeting of the partners as an observer, and hoped other Members of the Committee would attend future meetings of the WFP. It was explained that the WFP met usually every third Wednesday each month and it was requested that an invite be sent to the Chair going forward.

S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.), wanted to update his customers and members on events going on in the Bay, but found it a challenge finding such information in a timely manner. He asked whether WFP had a website with such information, or whether there was a Cardiff wide equivalent that advertised events in the Bay, which he could attach a link for on his newsletter. It was explained that such details were on the WFP and other Cardiff 'what's on' type websites, but it was unclear whether there were mailing lists for this information to go out to businesses, etc. The relevant web link(s) would be shared with Members of the Committee via the CHA Marketing Officer. A.M. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association), stressed the importance of accessible information on events, going on in the Bay, which would help by boosting footfall for local community and tourist businesses.

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

AGREED – T H A T this item be noted.

(i) Date of Next Meeting –

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 22nd October, 2025 at 5.00 p.m.