

Battery Harbour Management Company

C/o 60B Ardboe Rd, Cookstown, Co Tyrone. BT800HT

Mr Kieran Gordon

Communities and Place Department

Mid Ulster District Council

25th July 2022

Dear Kieran

Thanks for attending the meeting at the Battery Harbour on Thursday last.

Before I outline our concerns, I would like to point out a few relevant facts.

Firstly, the Battery Harbour Management Committee (BHMC) was set up to manage the Battery Harbour site at the request of the former Cookstown District Council.

Secondly, BHMC contracts Patrick Quinn, the owner of the Battery Bar, to maintain the site on its behalf. This has several advantages including the fact that he is on site and able to deal with things as they arise.

Thirdly, the Management Agreement was revised on 29th April 2020, effective from 1st April 2020. It was for one year only and therefore should have been revised by Council in April 2021 and again in April 2022. The fact that this has not happened has adversely affected BHMC.

The main areas of concern are as follows.

1. **Toilets.** This entails daily cleaning, and the purchase of toilet rolls and disinfectant. Labour and material costs have increased greatly.
2. **Mowing and strimming grass.** This is very time consuming and, as well as the labour costs, there are also substantial costs with fuel, maintenance of equipment and depreciation.
3. **Litter Control at Council's Playpark.** Again, this is a daily task.

4. **Litter Control at remainder of site.** This is quite an onerous task as the litter that visitors leave behind must be collected and put in bins. This is exasperated by the fact that MUDC has failed to provide adequate bins, although this was promised in 2021. Patrick Quinn has had to use his own bins and pay the commercial rate for them. This is totally unsatisfactory.
5. **Checking equipment and reporting to Council.** This is a weekly task.
6. **Power washing Jetties.** As well as the labour, this entails hiring a power washer.
7. **Electric Power Points.** These were switched off 3 years ago as they were deemed to be unsafe. Despite a promise to have them replaced, MUDC has done nothing whatsoever about them.
8. **Site security.** The site is used by jet skiers as the jetty cannot be blocked because it is used by Lough Neagh Rescue. However, the jet skiers can cause problems for other users but the fact that Patrick Quinn is on site means he can ensure that there is no disruption. This also applies to individuals who might be tempted to use the site for unsocial activities. This element should not be downplayed as it ensures that Council does not have to use manpower to control it.
9. **Insurance, Electricity, and Rates.** All of these have increased year on year. Insurance for the year October 2021 to October 2022 is £1373.36.

We have serious concerns about the way that MUDC deals with BHMC. Examples of this are

- The Management Agreement has not been reviewed for 2 years.
- Waste bids have not been provided even though they were promised.
- Electric Power Points have been cut off for 3 years and have not been replaced.

Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of appreciation for the fact that, since Covid, visitor numbers, including day visitors, motorhomes and campers, to the Battery Harbour site have increased dramatically. Visitors to the site have welcomed the natural beauty of the site, in comparison to some of the artificial loughshore sites.

BHMC has reached the stage that something significant needs to be done. The remuneration as per the Management Agreement is totally inadequate and does not take account of

- the fact that the Agreement has not been revised.
- Inflation
- Increased visitor numbers and consequent additional work.

We would ask that this be given urgent consideration as we do don't want to get to a situation where we have to withdraw from the Agreement. This would undoubtably lead to a very significant increase in cost for MUDC. The current annual payment to BHMC is £9925 which works out at £27.19 per day, including expenses.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely



Charlie Monaghan

BHMC

CC to Councillors in Torrent DEA

Councillor Niall McAleer

Councillor Malachy Quinn

Councillor Joe O'Neill

Councillor Niamh Doris

Councillor Robert Colvin

Councillor Dan Kerr.