

RIVER STOUR TRUST COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2008 at 7.15pm at The Granary, Sudbury

PRESENT: Mr R. Abbott (RA), Mr R. J. Brown (RB), Ms. D. Bryce (DB), Mr B. W. Cornell (BC), Mr M. A. Finch (MF), Mrs N. L. A. Ford-Platt (LF), Mr P. J. Hesketh (PH) - Chairman, Mr J. Morris (JM), Mr R. A. Platt (RAP), Mr J. W. Tritton (JT), Mr G. W. Whybrow (GW)
IWA Representative - Mr F. Wallder (FW)
Minutes Secretary - Miss C. F. Burrows (CB)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Dr. R. H. W. Brook (HB), Mr D. M. Burroughs (DMB), Mr A. Davison (AD), Mr A. Richardson (AR), Vice President - Mr F. J. Batten (FB)

It was **AGREED** to discuss item 8.3 as the first item of business because Jeff Burroughs (JB) needed to leave as soon as possible.

8.3 Boatmasters Licence

Representatives of Sudbury and Flatford Boat Operations had discussed this matter on 19/12/07. The NCBA route was favoured leading to a Certificate in Community Boat Management (CCBM), with RA being the main contact and costs and details were yet to be finalised although £50-£100 per skipper was estimated for in-house training (payable to NCBA). It was **NOTED** that notional costs for 'free' use of the VEC and RST boats should be considered. Our potential in-house assessors (RA, Tim Smith- TS, Roger Nisbet- RN) will need to be assessed by the accredited training assessors at Harlow.

JB informed Council to expect a charge of £10 per hour if professional skippers were used. It was **NOTED** that newly recruited crew members needed a licence before operating the boats. However, currently 6 RST skippers (RA, TS, RN, Mick Rogers, JB, Tracy Alen) hold an acceptable qualification so the boats are able to operate until the end of the 2008 season.

2. STARRING OF ITEMS & IDENTIFICATION OF CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

It was **AGREED** to discuss items 6.1, 6.2, 6.6, 6.7; and Granary Compound Boat Storage under item 12.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (13/12/07 & 03/01/08)

PROPOSED JM/SECONDED JT that 'the minutes of 13/12/07 are accepted as a true record'

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

PROPOSED MF/SECONDED JM that 'the minutes of 03/01/08 are accepted as a true record'

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

Council **AGREED** that paperwork will only be sent by e-mail where possible and unless requested otherwise i.e. paper copies to LF, DB & RB. Those absent would need to confirm preferred option. **ACTION: HB, DMB, AD & AR**

4. MATTERS ARISING

2. GW request for information from VMC (13/12/07 Council Meeting)

RA explained that meetings would not take place until VMC terms of reference were reviewed and JT offered to do this. CB to check office files to send to JT and RA.

ACTION: CB & JT. DB said that her requests for information had now been answered.

5.3 Purchase of lift for VEC (13/12/07 Council Meeting)

MF explained that the gap (between the floor and lift base) on the lower level had been bridged whilst the infill of a gap in the upper banister would soon to be completed.

8.3 Friends of The Granary

LF had not produced FOG financial records by the deadline and explained that copies of receipts, etc were being made. LF confirmed that the report would be ready by the next Council meeting. **ACTION: LF**

8.4 Bates Wells & Braithwaite (BWB)

MF awaited further responses (2 declined, 3 too expensive, 1 possible) in order to prepare a shortlist and arrange visits. **ACTION: MF**

DB asked what documents BWB held on our behalf and RAP said that he could produce a non-comprehensive list. It was suggested that this be sent to all Council. **ACTION: RAP**

8.9 Centralisation of Documentation

LF said that documentation held at her home needed to be organised because RST and personal paperwork currently intermingled. **ACTION: LF**

RAP considered paperwork held at his home to be of a non-urgent nature.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

5.1 Treasurer's report

PH suggested that it was beneficial to associate core costs (telephone, heating, etc) to named buildings i.e. Granary or VEC in order to identify costs that had arisen following the move of the administrative office.

Following a query from 13/12/07 Council meeting (item 5.1, page 2, paragraph 3), LF said S2C tea room takings were recorded on the spreadsheet prepared for AD.

There was brief discussion regarding outstanding VEC safety issues (including disabled evacuation procedure from upstairs) and the need to address these as a matter of urgency.

The £8000 tender figure for The Granary Balcony Repairs would be lower as the works had been revised. LF said a £1000 grant was guaranteed and sponsorship might still be possible.

JT suggested making some arrangement with the bank as although the Main Account was overdrawn we held other accounts that were not. **ACTION: PH to discuss with AD**

5.1.2 Fundraising Ideas

PH had prepared a paper with some ideas (saved on file with a signed copy of these minutes). BC said that Emrhys Barrell had suggested asking every member for £10 towards a specific project e.g. Stratford St. Mary Lock Restoration. PH suggested arranging an open forum for the membership to discuss fundraising ideas and encourage volunteers to come forward. PH said a reserves plan was an absolute necessity.

5.2 Expenses claim

LF had submitted a claim for postage costs of £72.00 for the 28/09/07 letter sent out to the membership and there was disagreement regarding the nature of this letter as being RST or personal. It was assumed that pre-purchased stamps were also used as the postage costs in question were insufficient to reach the whole membership. However, it was **AGREED** to only put to a vote whether the repayment of £72.00 should go ahead.

NOT CARRIED (2 in favour, 7 against, 1 abstention- PH)

5.3 VEC lift loan

The Main Account was overdrawn due to RAP's loan withdrawal although RAP informed Council that the loan was suspended. He blamed incorrect paperwork (although this had been quickly rectified), the current state of affairs, little mainstream activity and the unclear financial position. It was felt that concerns should have been addressed before making the loan publicly available. PH said RAP had made a contract and now broken it but RAP denied that this was the case. RAP would re-consider a loan of up to £8000 but did not want to commit to a specific figure as it would depend on a suitable financial plan and reconciliation. It was **AGREED** that financial probity was a necessity and a similar situation cannot be allowed to happen again.

5.4 Offer to buy the power barrow

MF offered to buy back the power barrow at a fair price in order to relieve RST of £3000 debt, and then loan the barrow to the Trust. RB said there was little benefit in doing this at present. The offer would be considered at a later date.

6. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

6.1 Flatford Boat Operations Committee (FBOC)

JT stressed that tree and weed clearing, Flatford lock gates, Dedham tilting gates and Flatford jetty were all urgent matters. JT refused to operate the boats until the jetty was repaired. A quote of £920 had already been accepted at a previous Council meeting but no further action had been taken. GW and RB offered to look at the jetty and arrange a working party to carry out the work. It was suggested that the Lock & Navigation Account should fund this work. **ACTION: GW & RB**

JM asked that the minutes record his apologies for mistakenly failing to invite JT to the RST/EA Meeting where the Flatford lock gates issue had been raised. EA agreed that a management plan was required but it was doubtful to happen in this financial year. FW suggested that EA money cuts were probably the reason that Dedham tilting gates were not yet finished.

6.1 Sudbury Boat Operations Committee (SBOC)

A charge of £310 was to be expected of which £200 was to service FJ and the propeller whilst £110 was for the 4-year certification. Council were informed that further costs of up to £600 were possible due to necessary sandblasting of the aluminium pontoon floats (as they had been reacting with previous antifouling) and repairs following last summer's damage. Cheaper alternatives were to be researched. **ACTION: BC & RB**
Council **AGREED** expenditure for 2 new cleats for FJ and new bow fenders as well as a pump for Rosette.

BC was pleased to report that 60 people were attending the Laying-Up Supper and the further Social Evenings were planned for February and March.

6.2 Venues Management Committee

Day to day management was being handled by CB. Timescales and details for VEC risk improvements would need to be discussed with AR. **ACTION: PH to speak to AR**

6.6 Health and Safety Monitoring Group

Discussed under items 5.1 and 6.2.

6.7 RST/EA Consultative Group

As briefly discussed under item 6.1 (FBOC).

7. MEMBERSHIP

PROPOSED JM/ SECONDED MF that 'Council accepts new members Mr J. Nichol and Mr H. Baker; and the membership report' **AGREED**

LF said that she had dropped off letters from members Mr & Mrs Peeters-Slykhuis and Mr & Mrs Durston who had resigned. CB to contact these members to verify their status.

ACTION: CB

RB said members had mentioned a membership card with expiry date and he asked that this be considered in the near future.

8. SPECIAL ITEMS

8.1 Deferred Items from last meeting:-

8.1.1 Review of the roles of Publicity Officer & Fund Raiser

It was suggested good practise for publicity, such as press releases, to be circulated amongst Council for approval and general awareness. This led to a discussion about internet and e-mail capability becoming an increasingly important part of the Publicity Officer's role. It was suggested that the RST laptop in LF's care could be set up for internet access or LF could fax information to the office for CB to electronically distribute. However, LF remained reluctant to re-establish e-mail capabilities or use the above alternatives.

PROPOSED LF/ SECONDED BC that 'Council express a vote of confidence in LF being the Press Officer'

CARRIED (6 in favour, 4 abstentions)

LF resigned as Press Officer as there was not a unanimous vote in favour. PH suggested that the role could be temporarily handled by himself and CB.

PROPOSED RAP/ SECONDED RA that 'Council expresses thanks to LF for her excellent work promoting the Trust over the years'

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.

There was some confusion about ownership of publicity information (addresses, press releases, etc) that LF said belonged to her as 'King Media'. It was **AGREED** that any material relevant to and previously used for RST should be passed on.

8.2 Appointment of President

Withdrawn from the agenda.

8.3 Boatmasters Licence

Discussed as first item of business.

9. RECENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Cancelled Festive Evening - 14 December 2007

It was felt that invitations could have been more widely circulated and there was disagreement regarding the nature of the event as CB thought the membership was invited.

9.1 EGM 12th Jan

It was **AGREED** that a draft summary of the meeting should be discussed by Council before being made widely available.

9.2 EGM 2nd Feb

PH explained that he had e-mailed RAP, LF, RA and DMB to ask whether they would now withdraw their support for the removal of directors in order to progress the reconciliation of Council. RAP (by earlier e-mail) and RA (in this meeting) were of the opinion that there was no need to withdraw support from a motion that was not going ahead. LF told Council that she was supporting a membership decision whilst DMB had yet to respond.

At a meeting held on 03/01/08 Council had discussed and consequently declined to hold this second EGM as 2 of the motions were seen to be contrary to our constitution and the other unnecessary. However, RA confirmed that he was the principal organiser for the EGM

on 02/02/08. PH referred to our constitution that stated “the Chairman (if any) of the Council shall preside as Chairman at every General Meeting... if he is willing” and PH stated his availability as he had not been approached. JM and MF were willing to join PH as representatives of the Council. Further discussion took place regarding the need to clarify how the meeting would be conducted, the need to adhere to Companies Act and our M&As, duties of the members who had called the meeting and the complexities of proxy voting.

The completed proxy voting forms were being sent to DMB’s business address but it was **NOTED** that it was unknown when, where and who was looking at the completed forms; also that they needed to be deposited at The Granary a minimum of 48 hours before the meeting to be checked against office records.

ACTION: PH to nominate Council member who will ensure that those attending the EGM are current members and whether or not they also completed a proxy form.

It was **AGREED** that MF’s notes on our constitution (circulated to Council) be made available on our website.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

10.1 Babergh District Council (BDC) Polling Station Enquiry

It was **AGREED** that The Granary is put forward as a potential venue. RAP suggested £200 per day was a typical rental figure. BC suggested that the boats be available for trips and this would have to be approved with BDC.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 21 February 2008 at Manningtree. NOTE this is not possible and is changed to The Granary, Sudbury.

11.1 DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Meeting are due to be held on the third Thursday of every month.

Thursday 20 March 2008

Thursday 17 April 2008

Thursday 15 May 2008

Thursday 19 June 2008

Thursday 17 July 2008

Thursday 21 August 2008

Thursday 18 September 2008

Thursday 16 November 2008

Thursday 20 December 2008

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 RAP’s 07/10/07 letter to Membership

DB sought clarification (earlier in this meeting under item 5) regarding RAP’s 07/10/07 letter to the membership that stated he had been “receiving a string of aggressive e-mails from DB and AR...contain misinformation and have been distributed widely to others.” PH asked that RAP provide him with evidence of his claims of ‘...misinformation and on the foregoing (sic)...’ to resolve this matter. **ACTION: RAP**

12.2 Rosette on Market Hill - Saturday 22 March 2008

This would need to be agreed with Sudbury Town Council. **ACTION: CB**

12.3 Granary Compound Storage

GW suggested raising the charge for boat storage from £10 per year to £1.50 per week but it was felt that an increase of £68 was excessive.

PROPOSED PH/ SECONDED MF that 'a charge of 50 pence per week, payable quarterly in advance, comes into effect as of 1 April 2008 with written notification to those currently using this facility'

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

12.4 BDC Visit to check VEC Lift Installation

DB had arranged the visit to take place the following Thursday or Friday and further details would be circulated to Council should they wish to attend.

The meeting closed at 22.32