

RIVER STOUR TRUST COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2008 at 7.15pm at The Granary, Sudbury

PRESENT: Mr R. Abbott (RA), Mr R. J. Brown (RB), Mrs S. Brown (SB), D. Bryce (DB), Mr J. Burroughs (JB) - Treasurer, Mr B. W. Cornell (BC), Mrs N. L. A. Ford-Platt (LF), Mr P. J. Hesketh (PH) - Chairman, Mr J. Morris (JM), Mr R. A. Platt (RAP), Mr A. Richardson (AR) - Secretary, Mr A. Sheldon (AS), Mr J. W. Tritton (JT), Mr G. W. Whybrow (GW)
Minutes Secretary - Miss C. F. Burrows (CB)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Not applicable.

2. STARRING OF ITEMS & IDENTIFICATION OF CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

It was **AGREED** to discuss items 6.1 and 6.5, the AGM as 8.3 and Boat Training under 6.1.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (21/02/08)

- Item 10.3 (page 5, lines 2-3): EA intend to remove only the Lady's Island jetty should no-one take responsibility of this structure. PH informed Council that BDC expected £500 towards legal fees but he has argued that the £2000 dowry (accompanying the Friar's Meadow fishing jetty) is reserved solely for maintenance. BDC approached EA who have verified that they will endeavour to meet the legal costs.
- Item 6.2 (page 2, paragraph 1): amend sentence to read as "...current management of the VEC. It was **NOTED** that VMC Terms of Reference must be reviewed as soon as possible, having been awaited since October 2007 for the review to be completed." PH stated that JT had completed the review but further consultation was required.
- After Item 5.1.2 it should be noted that SB replaced CB as minute taker.
- Item 6.2 (page 2, paragraph 3, line 5): LF said there are 8 parking spaces. However, the minutes stood as written.
- Item 6.4 (page 3, paragraph 1): Paragraph to end with 'Responsibility for this was taken by PH.'

It was **AGREED** that 'subject to these amendments, the minutes of 21/02/08 are accepted as a true record'

4. MATTERS ARISING (from 21/02/08 Council meeting)

4.1 New Solicitors (21/02/08, page 1, item 4.2)

This would be finalised by PH and Mike Finch (MF) after Easter. **ACTION: MF & PH**

4.2 Centralisation of Documentation (21/02/08, page 1, item 4.3)

LF had 4 boxes of documentation ready for collection. LF had asked PH for written confirmation that staffing documentation will be stored in a lockable cabinet that is inaccessible to staff and volunteers. It was **NOTED** that PH assured Council that these documents would be stored appropriately so written confirmation was unnecessary.

ACTION: AR to collect documentation including staffing paperwork.

4.3 Stour Valley Meander (SVM) & PF Partnership (21/02/08, page 2, item 5.1, paragraph 3, lines 7-9)

RAP explained that SVM was a publication rather than a magazine and he recalled his and LF's involvement being declared when it was initially set up. PH pointed out that it has been remiss from the Annual Accounts over the years and this needs to be rectified. JB planned to forward questions or meet with RAP and LF for clarification on this matter. It was **NOTED**

that SVM were instigating Debt Recovery Action as £250 remained unpaid. **ACTION: JB, LF & RAP**

4.4 Mrs I. P. Bailey (21/02/08, page 2, item 5.1.2)

LF had received opposing advice regarding the inclusion of her family connection with Mrs Bailey within the Annual Accounts. It was understood that the year this information was relevant to must be verified as either relating to when the payment was received or repaid.

ACTION: JB

LF said that DB's free 2 hour use of VEC and GW's purchase of wood needed to be recorded within the Accounts. It was pointed out that the boat crew included Council members so their free boat trip entitlement should be noted in the Accounts.

4.5 Breach of Data Protection Act (21/02/08, page 5, item 10.2)

It was **NOTED** that JT did not want any of his personal details released without his consent and it was suggested that this option should be available to new and existing members. It was understood that the names and addresses of the membership can be seen upon request. **ACTION: AR to research this issue and circulate a brief paper to Council.**

4.6 Friends of The Granary (21/02/08, page 1, item 4.1)

LF commented on the new paint colour in the tea room because the original colour of blue had been thought to deter pests.

4.7 Granary balcony (21/02/08, page 3, item 6.2.2, lines 5-6)

LF explained that it was actually the Sudbury Freeman's Trust (not Rose Builders) who had offered a £1000 grant subject to seeing invoices when the work is completed.

4.8 Request for evidence (21/02/08, page 1, item 3, point 3)

DB reiterated her request and it was **AGREED** that this matter is discussed outside of Council. **ACTION: Meeting between DB and RAP with a mediator to be arranged.**

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

5.1 Treasurer's report

AD had circulated his final financial report by e-mail. It was **NOTED** that the BDC grant had finally been received. RA reminded Council that the report did not take into account that the revised schedule of works for the Granary balcony repairs meant costs would actually be lower than £8,000.

PROPOSED JB/ SECONDED JT that 'the £25,000 overdraft facility, incurring an annual charge of £250, is renewed' **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

6. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

6.1 Flatford Boat Operations Committee

Stour Trusty II has been painted but flooding means that trips are not possible on Easter weekend. The situation will be closely monitored to ensure that operations can begin as soon as possible.

6.1 Sudbury Boat Operations Committee

Over Easter weekend, it is planned to have *Rosette* on Market Hill on Saturday with trips available all day on Sunday and Monday dependant on weather and stream conditions.

6.1.2 FJ maintenance

FJ's pontoons have been sandblasted and the invoice is outstanding. Volunteers have repainted the pontoons whilst the canopy is soon to be power-washed. Council recorded its

thanks to the team of volunteers as well as JB and his firm, *Electromobile Ltd*, for their assistance in transporting FJ.

6.1 Boat Crew Training Presentation Day on Saturday 12 April 2008 at The Granary
RA pointed out that no-one is precluded from the actual training if they cannot attend this meeting that is designed to address concerns and questions regarding the new regulations. Information packs will be issued on the day and it was hoped to confirm how much the training will cost per person as some members had offered to pay for their own training. It was suggested that a meeting between the proposed RST trainers (RA, JB, Roger Nisbet and Tim Smith) as well as AR (Health & Safety Officer) is scheduled to take place after the presentation. **ACTION: RA**

6.2 Venues Management

6.2.1 Relocation of Grill at Cornard

NavCon and Robert Baker (RB) oppose movement of the grill and it was thought that the EA should be informed. LF reiterated that there was no such agreement and it would have been confirmed in writing in any case.

6.5 Stratford Lock Steering Group

JM circulated a written proposal (as below and saved on file with a signed copy of these minutes). He stressed that the proposal referred to fundraising on a smaller scale i.e. tens and hundreds rather than tens of thousands so did not replace any major fundraising plans.

PROPOSED JM/ SECONDED SB that 'Stratford St. Mary Lock Restoration Group

a) spend up to £10,000 this calendar year on:

i) continuing the work to clear the lock channel downstream of the lock - continuing the work done in 2007 according to the Land Drainage Consent, and according to plans previously lodged;

ii) starting preparation work for the footbridge- again conforming to the Land Drainage Consent and Planning Application consent;

provided that there are such funds with the Stratford St. Mary Lock Restoration Account

b) use Stratford St. Mary volunteers to raise funds for this work specifically - i.e. separately from any other fund-raising effort from the RST.' **CARRIED (13 in favour, 1 abstention)**

Council recorded its thanks to all volunteers actively involved with this project. It was stressed that voluntary activities should not have a detrimental affect on any volunteer's personal life and wellbeing.

7. MEMBERSHIP

New subscription rates needed to be discussed before the AGM. **ACTION: PH and JB to put together a proposal and circulate by e-mail.**

It was **AGREED** that Council accept all new members- 'Mrs Maureen Bloys, Mr Peter Graham and Mr Alan Cook'.

The details of lapsed members needed to be checked because if payments were due in March then their memberships were still up-to-date. **ACTION: CB**

8. SPECIAL ITEMS

8.1 Proposed Management Structure

PH asked that Council consider how the management structure can become more streamlined and less bureaucratic. PH shared his initial thoughts and suggested that this be discussed at a future Council meeting. **ACTION: PH to circulate his current outline plan.**

8.2 Annual Accounts

These had not been circulated as expected. **ACTION: PH to circulate copies within the next 24 hours.**

8.3 AGM

It was understood that a date before 15 July 2008 needed to be decided. It was **AGREED** to hold the AGM on Saturday 31 May 2008 at the VEC. AR said Council must discuss recent and important changes i.e. Council co-options, resignations, elections and the current vacancy, as well as proxy voting.

8.3.1 Council Elections

Some members had expressed interest in standing for Council. It was understood that the forthcoming elections would be held under our current Constitution as any proposed amendments needed to be approved at the AGM.

AR had researched voting by ballot and suggested ballot papers be sent out two weeks before the AGM with completed papers to be returned a week before the AGM and opened independently. AR stressed that only postal votes or those actually attending the AGM in person with their ballot paper could have their vote counted.

PROPOSED AR/ SECONDED AS that 'elections are conducted by individual ballot paper sent by post to each member for completion and to be returned to our Registered Office or brought along to the AGM'

CARRIED (12 in favour, 1 abstention)

Following recent changes within Council MF and AR had discussed our Constitution and the interpretation of "...one-third of the members of the Council for the time being....shall retire from office". AR interpreted this literally and had decided to stand down 5 members rather than a third of the whole membership or those that are standing members i.e. those already confirmed by the AGM. Therefore 5 of the 6 following Council members: RA, DB, BC, LF, RAP and AR needed to voluntarily stand for re-election or be picked by a draw. It was suggested that all these members stand but AR explained this was against our Constitution.

ACTION: AR to research this issue to be discussed at the next meeting.

8.3.2 Lobbying

Discussion ensued regarding the detrimental effects of lobbying as there had been some complaints and resignations. It was suggested that this is formally considered within a Voluntary Code of Practice in our revised Constitution. In the meantime, it was thought sensible as well as cost effective to co-ordinate all AGM paperwork within a single postal pack. It was **NOTED** that AR will set timelines for the submission of paperwork.

PROPOSED BC/ SECONDED SB that 'no member of Council will participate in, support or encourage lobbying in any form'

PROPOSED RAP/ SECONDED LF to amend the proposal to end '....in connection with prospective membership of Council'

Vote on the amendment- NOT CARRIED (3 in favour, 10 against. NB: JM had left the meeting earlier)

Vote on the original proposal- CARRIED (10 in favour, 3 against)

9. COUNCIL VACANCY

There was currently a vacancy following David Burroughs' (DMB) resignation.

PROPOSED JT/ SECONDED BC that 'Council does not fill the vacancy until the AGM'
AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

DMB had asked to retain his set of keys to the VEC compound gate in order to be able to access his father's bench. **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

10. RECENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10.1 **SBOC/RST Social Evening - Thursday 28 February 2008-03-30**

This had been an enjoyable and interesting evening for all who attended.

10.2 **Table Top Sale - Saturday 12 April 2008**

It was **AGREED** to postpone the event until later in the year as an organiser was needed and the date now clashed with the Boat Crew Training Presentation.

10.3 **Events & Publicity**

JB suggested that named individuals take responsibility for the organisation of events. RAP asked when events would be publicised to the membership and the general public. PH was pleased to confirm that the next issue of Lock Lintel was near completion.

CB asked when RST publicity information (templates of press releases, publicity addresses, etc) would be forthcoming. It was **NOTED** that LF, acting as *King Media*, claimed Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) on all RST publicity produced since she took on the role and no publicity related information would be made available. **ACTION: AR to research IPR.**

10.4 **SBOC/RST Social Evening - Thursday 27 March 2008**

A quiz is being put together, the bar will be open and all RST members and friends are welcome to attend as usual. There is no charge for the quiz but feedback will be appreciated as a similar charged evening for the general public is being considered.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

11.1 **Mills & Reeve Payment**

Advice had been obtained some time ago in relation to the 'Robert Baker letter' and an invoice for almost £600 had now been received. RB had previously offered and since agreed to pay £200 towards the legal fees and it was suggested that the ten 'signatories' also be approached for financial assistance.

PROPOSED PH/ SECONDED SB that 'Peter Hesketh writes to the ten individuals to ask that they contribute towards the legal costs'

CARRIED (8 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention)

PH stressed that any financial contribution was entirely voluntary and not a demand.

11.2 **Open Letter (from Lesley Ford-Platt to Peter Hesketh)**

PH informed Council that LF had prepared paper copies for every Council member to take away from this meeting and the letter (saved on file with a signed copy of these minutes) referred to appropriate storage of staff records and the virtues of RAP.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 17 April 2008 at the Masonic Hall, Manningtree

JT confirmed that there would be a charge of £1 per head (minimum £10 overall charge) for use of the Hall and that a pay bar was also available before the meeting.

ACTION: JT to inform CB that venue is confirmed.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 **River Stour Boating Community Interest Company (RSBCIC)**

It was **AGREED** that RSBCIC can use VEC toilet facilities free of charge if CB is on site.

13.2 **Dedham Vale & Stour Valley Project- revised bid**

PH informed Council that the outcome of the revised bid would be known in April. There had been 14 concerns with the original bid that had included the archive centre at VEC and a feasibility study on the Stour Lighter. The revised bid focussed on full restoration of the Stour Lighter (up to £100,000). **ACTION: To be discussed at the next meeting.**

13.3 Second EGM

It was felt that voting results of the resolutions should be made available to the membership, particularly those who had voted by proxy. It was suggested that a small explanatory article in LL or a piece on the website would suffice for the time-being. **ACTION: RA and PH to collaborate via e-mail to produce a small article within the following week to send onto HR for inclusion in the forthcoming LL.**

13.4 Debbie Bryce Suggestions/Offers of Help

DB referred to the previous minutes (21/02/08, page 5, item 12.3) to update on each point.

- Office volunteers were categorising the paperwork to her satisfaction
- Council **AGREED** that DB speak with her contact regarding Endowment Funds
- This would be discussed at the forthcoming VEC meeting (to be arranged)

13.5 Jeff Burroughs' Financial Queries

JB sought clarity on RAP's suspended lift loan and LF's publicity expenditure. LF explained that an annual £2,000 publicity budget had been set so 'permission' for expenditure was not necessary from the Treasurer. LF said this explained why the SVM invoice was now due as having been carried over from last year to this year as the previous budget had been exhausted. **ACTION: JB, RAP and LF to arrange meeting to discuss such matters.**

13.6 Flatford - bankside hut

JT informed Council that English Heritage and BDC had not approved the hut due to the sensitivity of the area.

The meeting closed at 10.10pm