

RIVER STOUR TRUST COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20th January 2011

at Visitor & Education Centre, Great Cornard

PRESENT: Mr R. J. Brown (RB), Mr B. Cornell (BC), Mr P. Edwards (PE), Mrs D. Howe (DH), Mr P. J. Hesketh (PH), Ms. A. Hughes (AH), Mr M. Lees (ML), Mr J. G. Morris (JM), Mr A. Richardson (AR)

IN ATTENDANCE: Minutes – Ms C Burrows (CB), IWA Observer – Mr S. Greystrong (SG), RST Members – Jim Lunn, Barry Hyland

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. IDENTIFICATION OF CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS, AND NOTIFICATION OF AOB TOPICS

It was suggested that item 11a (confidential business) be removed from the agenda and discussed at the forthcoming Governance Group meeting. AH was invited to attend but was unable to do so at short notice and expressed dissatisfaction at not being involved beyond bringing the matter to the attention of Council. AR said that he would contact AH prior to the meeting in order to convey her perspective.

PROPOSED DH/SECONDED PE that 'item 11a be discussed by the Governance Group for recommendations to be brought to the February Council Meeting' CARRIED (3 in favour, 2 against, 4 abstentions)

It was **AGREED** to discuss Ordnance Survey Map Licence, VEC Lift and Confidentiality under AOB.

3. Changes to Membership of Council

- a) **Resignations** – John Anderson (from early January 2011), Peter Hesketh (effective 31/01/11) and Adrienne Hughes (effective 31/01/11). It was **NOTED** that Council gave a formal vote of thanks to Peter Hesketh for his undertaking since joining the RST Council in October 2007 that have made a significantly positive impact on the future of the RST.

It was suggested that ML take on the role of Vice Chairman and PH offered to stand down as Vice Chairman effective immediately.

PROPOSED DH/SECONDED RB that 'ML takes on the role of Vice Chairman effective immediately' CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- a) **Company Secretary** – Dorothy Howe will take over the role from John Morris as of 21/01/11.
b) **Co-option of Jim Lunn** – **PROPOSED AR/SECONDED ML that 'Jim Lunn be co-opted onto RST Council' CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

It was pointed out that the workload for Council remained the same although Council numbers had reduced. It was **NOTED** that nominations for Council would be welcomed.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (09/12/10)

It was **AGREED** to accept the 09/12/10 minutes as a true record of the meeting. JM thanked CB for producing minutes that the Council consistently accept as accurate records of their meetings.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (09/12/10)

All items were either discharged or no longer relevant (please refer to minutes of 09/12/10 meeting) except the following:

- 16/09/10, item 17b – *Governance Group to discuss Council minutes on the website*. Although discharged Council briefly discussed concerns raised at previous meetings regarding publishing the minutes online i.e. confidential matters, deciding what information can be accessible to our members and the general public.

PROPOSED DH/ SECONDED BC that 'commencing January 2011, copies of RST Council minutes will be published on the RST website, subject to the approval of the RST Council' CARRIED (6 in favour, 3 against)

- 09/12/10, item 13d – *JM to set up a meeting for AR, DH and PE with the IWA regarding the trading company.*

6. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS – Not applicable.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

- a) **Expenses incurred on behalf of the RST** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – The proposal covered travel expenses, telephone calls and general expenses. In regards to travel expenses, the proposed 20 pence per mile rate was 50% less than the 40 pence per mile recommended by HMRC. It was argued that RST activity and profits would have to increase in order to cover expenses and a contribution towards costs was

reasonable. However, it was pointed out that the option to donate money back to the RST was included within the proposal and true costs could only be calculated if everyone was to claim expenses.

PROPOSED JM/SECONDED AH that 'the 20 pence per rate is increased to 40 pence per mile' NOT CARRIED (4 in favour, 5 against)

PROPOSED PE/SECONDED DH that:

'Travel Expenses:

- For the costs involved in travelling to an arranged meeting/event etc. at the request of the Council or on behalf of Trust in the carrying out of their responsibilities.
- For the cost of fuel, payable at the rate of 20p per mile for travel to fulfil *specific* tasks, necessary for, and, with the accepted approval of the Council up to a maximum claim of £40.00 per month. *[this authority to claim these expenses excludes attendance at Council and other meetings, social events and the general work involved with their Council and Trust responsibilities].*
- With regard to specific projects such as the restoration of Stratford St. Mary Lock, an expenses claim would be permitted for the total cost of travel expenses [at the agreed rate] where a *[full]* day's voluntary work is involved and there would not normally be a maximum monthly allowable claim.
- That there is an option where a Council Member should he/she so desire be able to claim the expenses but donate the value back to the Trust which should enable us to claim Gift Aid where appropriate.

Telephone Calls:

- It was generally agreed that Council Members and those involved in Boat Bookings, Events etc. should be permitted to reclaim these expenses. It would be hoped that where the personal telephone arrangements included free landline calls that this would not be claimed as it does not represent a real cost to the member.

General Expenses:

- This new policy, if adopted does not affect the previous arrangements whereby items purchased/costs incurred by members on behalf of the Trust for the specific use/benefit of the Trust are reimbursed in full upon submission of a Petty Cash Claim.'

CARRIED (8 in favour, 1 abstention)

- a) **Domain Names/Technical Assistance with our Network & Computers** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – It was explained that the RST currently paid £300 per year for 18 domain names. It was **AGREED** that ownership of some of the domain names was unnecessary because the RST does not have 'competitors' that could benefit in any way. **PROPOSED PE/SECONDED JM that 'Council accept a reduction in the number of domain names held by the RST' CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
- b) **Replacement Computers** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – Council were informed that the RST office computers are slow and suffer recurring problems due to their age. Taming Technology Limited (TTL) has been contacted and is able to offer updated equipment that is no longer required by another client. TTL will assist with the installation and changeover at no charge but the existing hard drives will need to be data shredded and replaced. The cost involved is unlikely to exceed £100.00 and is therefore within the authority of the Treasurer to approve. SG said that he would send on the details of two organisations, CTX and Pugh, who offer discounted software to charities. **PROPOSED PE/SECONDED JM that 'TTL are offered a free advertisement in the next issue of Lock Lintel' CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
- c) **Broadband Connection at the Granary** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – PE referred to his paper to reiterate that this would respond to queries made by potential and regular hirers and also enable the Administrator and others to carry out certain tasks away from the main office. Plus Net offers a 10gb connection at a cost of £77.88 per annum (domestic terms offered as we are a Charity). The cost and benefits of their packaged telephone service will also be looked into and, if cheaper than our existing service, will also be changed at the same time. **PROPOSED PE/SECONDED BC that 'broadband connection from Plus Net is installed at the Granary and, should it be cheaper than the existing contract, that their telephone package is installed at the same time' CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
- d) **Profit & Loss Statement** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – PE said that it was expected that the Accountants will approve the RST 2010 accounts by the middle of February. Council were informed that PE has extended his resignation until the end of April 2011. The RST now has access to on-line banking, a Debit Card for the main account and the ability to pay salaries, VAT, PAYE etc. directly from our account which will resolve a number of difficulties experienced in the past. The RST Pay Pal account is also being set up

and will be set up to process various RST income streams e.g. membership subscriptions, venue related payments, donations, sales and events i.e. S2C.

8. **RIVER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (RMC)** – Not applicable.

9. **FACILITIES MANAGEMENT GROUP (FMG)**

- a) **VEC Veranda** – Gawn Associates have prepared drawings for the remedial works so progress is ongoing.
- b) **Granary Balcony** – ML informed Council that, upon looking through documentation compiled when the project was looked at 4 years ago, Richard Jackson plc expect payment upon completion of works to the Granary. The financial records do not show a payment and no contractual agreement has been found within the initial files for this project.

10. **MARKETING, EVENTS, PUBLICITY & FUNDRAISING (MEPF)**

- a) **Possible Sources of Funding** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – It was pointed out that relevant funding information available on the subscription scheme, GrantsOnLine, would have to be extracted and this would require someone in the role of fundraiser. SG said that he was attending a meeting about the scheme on 22/01/11 and would pass on further information. DH is pursuing other avenues for grant support including Business Link which offers free and impartial funding advice and is recommended by the East of England Development Agency.
- b) **New Brochure** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – Council were informed that RST supplies of the new boat trip brochure are very low. Furthermore, due to operational changes at Flatford and Sudbury, some modifications will be required for the next print run. It was suggested that a print run of 10,000 was preferable. **PROPOSED JM/SECONDED BC that '£800 expenditure is approved for the next print run of the boat trip brochure' CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

11. **FINANCE, GOVERNANCE, COMPLIANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE** – Not applicable.

12. **ANY OTHER REPORTS**

- a) **Minutes of Lower River Group Annual Meeting** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – For information only.
- b) **Minutes of River Stour Collaborative Meeting** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – For information only. There was brief discussion on the potential changes to the Navigational section of the EA. DH mentioned that the EA had clarified the correct procedure for reporting incidents was to call their National Incident Line on 0800 807060 e.g. tree blocking river.

13. **MEMBERSHIP** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – For information only.

14. **SPECIAL ITEMS**

- a) **Moorings & Storage** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – There was brief discussion about point 7 of the Policy and Conditions document and Council **AGREED** that the wording be amended as follows: 'Craft moored or stored are for private pleasure use only -no commercial activities are permitted, other than those expressly permitted by the River Stour Trust'. **PROPOSED PE/SECONDED BC that 'the Moorings and Boat Storage Policy and Conditions are approved by Council, subject to the above amendment to point 7' CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
- b) **A new boat?** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – Council were informed that the Henny Swan was very keen to use the trip boats as much as possible. It had opened late last year so its full potential was yet to be realised. It was suggested that the RST lease a third boat during the busy months of the 2011 season. PH said that the idea had been broached with Jeff Burroughs (re: Elsie Mary) but further information was required if any negotiations were to take place. It was suggested that costs could be determined by contacting other boat leasing companies as well as looking through RST 2009/10 financial records for the Sudbury boat operations. **ACTION: SBOC to research the leasing of a third boat and to present its recommendations to Council.**

There was further discussion regarding the weedcutting boat owned and operated by Jeff Burroughs. It was pointed out that terms of engagements needed to be established because a weedcutting service was required on the operational stretches for the trips boats and at Stratford St Mary. The EA cannot respond to the demand because funding has been cut and their resources have dwindled. Council **AGREED** to obtain quotes for weedcutting on the River Stour for at least 80 hours during 2011. **ACTION: SBOC to obtain quotes from ML's contact, Essex Waterways and Jeff Burroughs.**

- c) **Managing a Masterpiece (MaM)** – The MaM Community Heritage Officer, Dan King, will be based at the VEC up to 3 times per week. He will also be on site during the forthcoming courses at the VEC so RST staff will not be required for opening and closing duties. Refer to further related information under item 16a.
- d) **Email Etiquette** – DH suggested expanding point 4 under Sender so that when using 'cc' the appropriate action for recipients is made clear in the body of the email i.e. Address line - TO: Mr A and CC: Mrs B, Main body of email – ACTION: Mr A and INFORMATION ONLY: Mrs B. **ACTION: DH to formulate the wording in order to propose this addition to the email etiquette. PROPOSED AH/SECONDED JM that 'the email etiquette paper is adopted effective immediately' CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

15. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- a) **SBOC Laying Up Supper at the Henny Swan, 28/01/11** – Council **AGREED** to extend an invitation to Mr and Mrs Layzel in lieu of the free of charge storage for *Francis J* and *Rosette*.
- b) **Managing a Masterpiece course 'Surveying Riverside Structures' at the VEC, 29/01/11** – The Council were pleased that the VEC was to be used for this and forthcoming MaM courses.
- c) **RST Social Evening at the Granary, 11/02/11** – Fish and Chip Supper with talk by Peter Hesketh about his trip on a container ship.

16. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) **Big Lottery Fund** – Council were informed that copies of the VEC floor plans and descriptions of its use had been sent to the Big Lottery Fund (legal successor to the Millennium Commission) in order to ascertain that the VEC as built, and our use of it, does not contravene the terms of the Millennium Commission grant. It was **NOTED** that the Millennium Commission are satisfied that the Visitor Education Centre (VEC) does not breach their grant terms.
- b) **Riverside Advisory Group (RAG)** (paper saved on file with these minutes) – The RAG group were supportive of the riverside footpath link between Sudbury and Great Cornard. AR informed Council that he will represent the RST at the next RAG meeting on 11/05/11.

17. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – Thursday 24th February 2011 at Stour Sailing Club (NB: NOT third Thursday of the month)

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) **Ordnance Survey Map Licence** – ML explained that a licence was required to copy ordnance survey maps and this was an annual cost of £65. The RST had proposed and ongoing projects that required land drainage consent, planning permission, etc and up to 5 copies of a map could be needed for any one submission. Council **AGREED** to split the annual cost with ML.
- b) **VEC Lift** – A RST member had queried whether the VEC lift could be sold to the Quay Theatre for use in their proposed Media Centre. However, the associated costs of relocating the lift and the likelihood that this would contravene the terms of the Babergh District Council grant made this untenable. It was suggested that the Granary was a preferable location for a lift whether or not the VEC lift was able to be relocated.
- c) **Confidentiality** – AH said that a recent email classified as 'Strictly Confidential' had not been treated as such. Council were reminded of the importance of abiding by the stipulated conditions of any correspondence/discussions to avoid a breach of confidentiality.
- d) **Francis J Canopy Frame** – Council were informed that the work had not gone ahead as planned although agreed at the last Council meeting (09/12/10, item 9c). It transpired that new side screens would probably be required to fit within the proposed frame but the decision had been overturned without recourse to SBOC or Council. The work to *Francis J* is still outstanding. It was clarified that the correct procedural course of action was to contact and involve relevant parties rather than overturn decisions. **ACTION: SBOC to ascertain whether to proceed with the suggested alterations without recourse to Council unless expenditure exceeds the £960 previously agreed by Council (09/12/10, item 9c).**
- e) **David Coppock** – Council and boat crew volunteers were saddened by the news that David Coppock had passed away. Details of the funeral and wake have been circulated to Council and boat crew volunteers for whom an email address is held. A short piece about David will be included in the forthcoming edition of Lock Lintel. The family sought advice from the RST regarding a sponsored boating event that will raise funds for a memorial bench near the Mill Hotel in Sudbury. It was **AGREED** that the RST would help to promote the event once further details are available.

MEETING CLOSED AT 21.45