

Minutes of the River Stour Trust Council
held on Thursday 17 May 2018 at The Granary, Sudbury

Those present: John Morris (JM, in the chair), Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Roger Brown (RB), Susan Brown (SB), Pam Johnson (PJ), Jim Lunn (JL), James Parkinson (JP), Norman Ryan (NR), Alan Thomas (AT). Minutes Secretary: Catherine Burrows (CB, RST Administrator)
RST Members: Mike Finch (MF), Kevin Taylor (KT)

1. **Apologies received from:** Bob Foster (BF), Graham Simmons (GS)
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2018** (paper previously circulated)
 - A. **Full version of the minutes** – Approved.
 - B. **Online version of the minutes** – Approved.
3. **Matters arising from those Minutes of 12 April 2018**
 - A. Item 3-b, page 1: **RESOLVED**. MF to represent DVB at RSUG meetings.
 - B. Item 3-d, page 1: **RESOLVED**. Cheaper storage option for DVB boats and trailers. **ONGOING – ACTION: RB**
 - C. Item 3-f, page 1: **RESOLVED**. EA will instead apply for this expenditure under their 2018/19 budget.
 - D. Item 5-g, page 1: **RESOLVED**.
 - E. Item 3-i, page 1: Clarification on whether RST rate relief entitlement is affected by proposed RSNC activities. **ONGOING – ACTION: GS (in lieu of JR)**
 - F. Item 3-k, page 1: SBOC to appoint representative for Quay Lane Trust. **ONGOING – ACTION: PB**
 - G. Item 4-a, page 2: **RESOLVED**. Completion of AGM paperwork for mailing to membership.
 - H. Item 4-b, page 2: **RESOLVED**. Updated MAA sent and accepted by Charities Commission.
 - I. Item 6, page 3: **RESOLVED**. Our insurers had provided clarity on the conditions of RST insurance in terms of lock operation by a RST volunteer, RST member or private/commercial user e.g. accidents/injury/damage to people and/or the lock during its operation was obtained from our insurers in order to finalise lock usage agreements.
 - J. Item 6, page 3: **RESOLVED**. The locks are adequately insured.
 - K. Item 6-a, page 3: **RESOLVED**. The EA had issued dispensation letters before the lock opening ceremony event. It was **NOTED** that the EA stressed that RST should not wait for anyone to complain about electric boats on the river but to actively engage with these people.
 - L. Item 6-b, page 4: **RESOLVED**. RB's contact had withdrawn their interest but RB was also happier with the method to be adopted by Salix since the recent onsite meeting. DMMC are seeking an additional quote.
 - M. Item 6-c, page 4: **RESOLVED**. JM had a response from the EA's Project Manager (regarding their contractor's use of unsuitable material for the resurfacing of the Flatford footpath). They were consulting with NT and Suffolk Footpaths before obtaining quotes to rectify the work. It was decided to delay writing to the Head of the EA and instead assess the situation as it develops.
 - N. Item 7-b, page 4: **RESOLVED**. The FJ stability test had been completed and results to be formally confirmed after the weekend.
 - O. Item 14-a, page 6: **ONGOING – ACTION: CB to compose letter offering Gordon Denney life membership for JM to sign.**
4. **Treasurer's Report**

It was reported that this quarter was tight, as we had already known it would be, so income was desirable!

5. Locks

A. Roger Brown Lock (AKA Stratford St Mary Lock)

The formal opening event had gone very well with many thanks to everyone who helped before and on the day. Subject to funding, Langham Parish (LPC) Councillor, Elizabeth Schofield, is keen for LPC to get a bench situated near the lock. Dedham Parish Council was impressed with the success of the project and is keen to see similar success with Dedham Lock restoration.

James Cartlidge MP was interested to learn more about the existing byelaws and John Flack MEP would be more than happy to support the RST by putting his name to letters sent to influential people. Both were potentially able to set aside time in their diaries to paddle the river which would potentially be great publicity both for the RST and businesses promoting use of the river. There was some leverage to further our aims arising from the EA's comparison of the impact of electric craft to that of manually propelled craft in their 'Your Rivers For Life' document.

There had been great media coverage of the event and the RST on BBC Radio Suffolk, ITV News Anglia, BBC Look East, East Anglian Daily Times and numerous other newspapers. EB will submit an article and photos for publication in Waterways World. Mark Harling (Enovert) had invited RB to tour their facility and there could be some publicity from their methane emissions powering the electric boat batteries.

B. Dedham Lock

The onsite meeting with Salix had allayed concerns. RB's contact had withdrawn their interest in the project but EB has another contact and DMMC are also seeking an additional quote. KT said that some charges had been put forward. Unfortunately, a letter regarding the grant application was still awaited.

DMMC would be asking about funding for the project. The costs were in the region of £30k initially and it was **AGREED** to alert the membership about donations towards this project (verbally at the AGM and in writing). **ACTION: JM**

C. Flatford Lock

The water levels are causing problems and Trusty is regularly running aground. The Field Studies Centre (FSC) is continuing to not close the sluices properly despite reasonable requests from RST and the EA. The EA's most recent attempt is a lengthy email from Gary Cockett (sent on 11 May) with sensible suggestions on how to manage the situation. If this does not garner a positive response then it was suggested that the next stage would have to be a letter to the FSC Head Office. It was also pointed out that FSC lease the land from NT so they would also have an interest.

D. Great Cornard Lock

Council was informed that the sale of the 15 wooden stop logs was sought due to their immovability. This would bring in approximately £1200 and go towards funding steel replacements.

6. Boat Operations

A. Boat Operations Manager (BOM)

- FJ needs a risk assessment for the handling of wheelchairs.
- Budgeting for boat maintenance (larger items) in future years is underway.
- An influx of new volunteers are being trained on both ends of the river.

- Plates for each boat that confirm their capacity allowances are to be fixed on each boat to be visible to all. FJ's plate will include the proviso regarding wheelchairs.

B. Sudbury Boat Operating Committee (SBOC) (three papers circulated)

- FJ needs RST logo and her full name, Francis J Batten, on the side of the boat. **ACTION: SBOC**
- It was **NOTED** that Council thanked Tim Smith and David Kirkman for all their efforts regarding the FJ refurbishment. **ACTION: JM to write a formal letter of thanks to TS and DK.**

C. Dedham Vale Boating (DVB)

- The work carried out on Kathleen (to reduce her weight and enable 10 people onboard) was complimented.
- The DVB's rota/charter coordinator will be on holiday in June. During this time, the 0844 number will be diverted to the RST office to field enquiries.

D. John Constable (JC)

It was reported that the motors are behaving with gentle handling. She is being used for the Walk 'n Water events and some upcoming charters.

7. Company Secretary's Report

Companies House needs updating given recent changes. A proactive and dedicated Company Secretary is needed.

8. Administrator's Report – (paper circulated)

- CB presented the draft publicity/communications strategy document that was initiated by Gill Thomas (GT) following discussions with CB, Keith Grinstead and EB. **ACTION: CB to contact GT about using web@riverstourtrust.org as form of contact.**
- Lock Lintel - Dennis Watts is to write an article and provide photos covering the lock opening event. NR to potentially take on the task of obtaining advertising/sponsorship for Lock Lintel.

9. Membership Report (paper previously circulated) – PB proposed, JM seconded 'to accept all new members' **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10. Recent & Forthcoming Events

- Saturday 12 May, Stratford St Mary Lock Opening Ceremony – as previously reported.
- Thursday 14 June, AGM – as previously reported.
- Thursday 2 June, Suffolk Day
- Saturday 23 June, Electric Boat Gathering at Bures – It was planned to invite no more than 20 or so small electrically powered craft (up to 10 foot and easily launched i.e. no crane or slipway required). This event would promote boating on this stretch of river and it was **AGREED** to postpone the event until later in the year. **ACTION: MF and EB.**
- Saturday 14 July, Water Frolics at Dedham & Flatford: Since this event has not been actively pursued, CB has contacted a local SUP group in the hopes of getting their involvement.
- Sunday 22 July, Members' Party at VEC – This event would be ticketed and had been postponed from 20 May and Jane Rogers was still partially involved. Costings and final details for food and entertainment were yet to be clarified. The RST boats were all assigned to act as water taxis between Granary and VEC whilst use of personal boats would also be encouraged.
- 10-12 August, Trailboat Festival at Sudbury – It was **AGREED** to postpone the event until 2019.

- H. 17 & 20 May, 31 May and 3 June, Walk 'n' Water events at Sudbury (as part of the Suffolk Walking Festival)
- I. 28 May, Teddy Bear Boat Rides at Sudbury
- J. 27 August, Pirates on the Stour at Sudbury
- K. 15-16 September, Sudbury to the Sea/S2C

11. Correspondence

- A. Norrington email – JM to call Mr Norrington directly to ascertain his interest in our activities to permit electric craft on the whole of the river. **ACTION: JM**
- B. Invitation to Griff Rhys Jones (GRJ) to speak at event as a fundraiser for his chosen charity– **ACTION: CB to forward to GRJ's PA.**

12. Any Other Business

- A. **Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Forum 2018** (paper circulated) – for information only.
- B. **Quay Lane Trust minutes** (paper circulated) – for information only.
- C. **What is our Mission Statement?** – NR wanted to establish RST's remit and what it encompassed (walking, wildlife, etc.). Our main focus is the Navigation but we do actively support other organisations and activities that facilitate activities by, on or near the river.
- D. **Relaunch event for refurbished Granary kitchen and FJ** – EB suggested that these two projects should be promoted to the local community. It was **AGREED** to combine the event with the Members' Party day by holding the relaunch event in the morning (10am-12pm) followed by the Members' Party in the afternoon (from 2pm). The Mayor, Sudbury Town Council and local people to be invited along to ribbon cutting ceremony with boat trips. **ACTION: EB**
- E. **Riverside strip of land at Stratford St Mary opposite Swan Inn** – AT offered to liaise with Northumbrian Water about use of this land by river users on behalf of RST. **ACTION: AT**
- F. **Trustee retirement** – SB confirmed her decision to retire as Trustee effective immediately since the postponement of the AGM had extended her time on Council. Council thanked SB for her time and work whilst on Council.

13. Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 14 June, 2pm at VEC **Apologies received in advance:** AT, JM
Council meeting to be followed by AGM, 7pm for 7.30pm at Granary

MEETING CLOSED AT 16:52