

## RIVER STOUR TRUST COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 23 February 2012 at the VEC, Great Cornard at 19.00 hours.

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**Present:** Andrew Richardson (AR); Dorothy Howe (DH); Peter Edwards (PE); Brian Cornell (BC); Jim Lunn (JL); John Morris (JM)

**In attendance:** Tony Brown

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Roger Brown; Spencer Greystrom
2. **Identification of Confidential Business and AOB topics** – Item 20 was on the Agenda as a confidential item. Item 10 from the Minutes would be discussed under AOB as confidential.
3. **Minutes of the Meeting of 19 January 2012**

JM suggested that the policy agreed on Item 6, Members attendance at Council Meetings, should be amended. The wording was re-phrased to read 'the Members Forum would no longer be held. Before the meeting any Member attending would be asked if they had anything to discuss. During the meeting if a member wished to comment the Minutes would be suspended whilst that Member raised his point of view.' Other minor amendments were agreed. JM then proposed and BC seconded that the Minutes be approved subject to the amendments. 5 agreed with one abstention.

JL proposed that confidential items 6, 7, and 10 should be removed from the Minutes before publication on the web-site. BC seconded the proposal. 5 agreed with one abstention.

#### 4. **Matters Arising**

- a) **Granary Balcony** – BC reported that the new work had received one coat of paint. A company, Green Leaf, had inspected the stairwell with a view to providing a quotation.
- b) **Cattawade Picnic Site, Brantham** – AR reported that Suffolk County Council Legal Department had delayed in responding. The legal notice had been placed in the EADT. He would contact SCC again the following day to advise that RST had had no contact from them.
- c) **Lighter, John Constable** – BC reported that it would be September or October before the lighter was ready to go into the water, and therefore the official launch would be delayed until 2013. It would be powered by two outboard motors. He had supplied a check list of items required and all had been agreed except navigation lights. RST would provide these. Instead of a small generator BC had opted to have cushions provided.
- d) **VEC Veranda** – DH had circulated the revised quotation received by Gould Construction the previous week. She had referred the item back to Council because the increase was more than the 5% agreed at the previous meeting mainly due to increase in VAT. She would write to Gawn and Thorpe as previously agreed, requesting that the piling work be carried out. She would suggest that they approach Carters for their share of the cost. Once the work was completed they would invoice RST for the balance of £476.25.

#### 5. **Treasurer's Report**

The financial statement was circulated. The Profit & Loss Account for January 2012 was not available as the Accountant was still working on the 2011 accounts, but there had been little activity. PE proposed that financial records of no historical or archival value or interest should be destroyed. DH seconded the proposal and it was carried unanimously. Following delays by HMRC Charities the Gift Aid Claim up to the period 5 April 2008 had been approved. 2009 paperwork was now complete.

Helen Richardson had resigned as Editor of Lock Lintel and the Administrator had agreed to take on this role. DH would write to Helen thanking her for her work in producing the magazine over the past three years.

#### 6. **Naming of the New Boat**

JL proposed that the new boat be called 'Kathleen' in memory of Kathleen Grimwood, who had taken a great interest in RST and booked a boat trip each year on her birthday. The family were going to hold a Ceremony of Remembrance on one of our boats. It was agreed that the name could be adopted and included in the new boat trip leaflet, but the family would be approached for agreement before any publicity would be undertaken. This was seconded by BC and carried unanimously. BC produced a draft sign for FJ renaming the boat Francis J Batten as previously agreed.

## **7. Dedham and Flatford Locks**

DH had circulated a report on her research into archive material. A conveyance map showing the area of land claimed by Clover's by 'adverse possession' included the lock bed but there was no supporting evidence by NRA. She had had no response from EA to date. DH was prepared to head a fundraising project as it is very likely that RST would have to fund the replacement of the lock gates. She was requested to approach RST Solicitors for advice on ownership and responsibility.

## **8. Running of the River Stour Trust Council**

JM had circulated the email in which he had objected to Council decisions being requested by email. He had been asked to vote on three issues and he considered that only on Trusty's motor did he have enough paperwork to accept this method of contact. He requested that paperwork should be circulated a week before the meeting so that research and consideration could be made. This should be discussed at Council so that Members could ask questions in a positive and constructive way. DH commented that issues requiring immediate decisions would sometimes arise within a few days of Council meetings and that email discussion enabled members to carry out research and make informed decisions. At Council meetings further information could be required before a decision could be reached creating further delay. Modern technology was a useful additional tool and in her opinion a balanced policy should be implemented. It was agreed that email contact was necessary if it involved lost revenue to the Trust.

JM reminded Council of past practice where information did not go through the office and was kept as private records at an individual's house. He requested that all decisions should go to the Administrator so that there was a public record of what happened. AR stated that occasionally information which had been sent in confidence been leaked out to other people and he wished to protect the Administrator from inference that she was breaching confidentiality. One of the reasons the Administrator had requested not to attend meetings was to remove her from politics and in his opinion bringing her into a private debate was not in the remit of her job. DH stated that she always used the Company Secretary webmail address for official emailing, for example to EA or SCC, but emails between Council Members could be private and/or confidential. AR saw no reason why employees should be burdened with them. It was agreed that PE would set up a webmail address to which Council Members could forward copy but to which the Administrator would not have access. This would be held with a secret password only available to the Secretary.

JM then raised his concerns around the handling of the purchase of the new boat and the fact that he did not get the paperwork before the meeting. He was concerned that a decision at one Council Meeting had been overturned at the next. DH commented that a new boat had been discussed at the Council meeting of 2 January 2011, at the RST AGM and had also been part of the fundraising proposal put forward to Liz Proctor. The purchase of the boat had also been raised at the December 2011 meeting and BC commented that at that time the purchase price had been quoted at £11,000 without the trailer. It was agreed however that the matter could have been handled better. DH also quoted the RST Memorandum of Association which states that 'no part of the income of the Charity shall be paid directly or indirectly by way of profit to members of the Charity...' and therefore the Trust should not have entered into an agreement to hire Elsie Mary.

## **9. Trusty's Motor**

DH reported that Mick Rogers had taken Trusty to Thames Electric so that the preliminary work could be done before the new motor arrived. He had received an email from Emrhys Barrell stating that the charging unit was worn, but no further details were available at that time. It was agreed that this should be replaced if necessary but Emrhys would be asked to provide specific details of what model he would be supplying so that Council Members would then check that this was a fair quote.

## **10. RST AGM**

DH explained that all previous Members who would have been up for election had since resigned. PE, BC and DH had all been elected two years ago and the remaining Members had been elected at the last AGM. BC and PE agreed to stand for re-election. She then outlined the timetable of dates leading up to the AGM.

## **11. Replacement of Side Curtains for the New Boat**

PE had circulated a proposal to purchase new side curtains at a cost of £590 and circulated a fabric sample at the meeting. DH stated that the quote was comparable with what SLC had charged for replacing Trusty's canopy and side curtains the previous year. BC seconded the proposal and it was carried unanimously.

## **12. The Granary Gas Heaters**

PE had circulated a report which stated that the gas heaters would have to be replaced before the next annual service as they would not pass the safety check next year. Following discussion on the condition of the Granary floor it was agreed to look into the possibility of using volunteer work to sand and re-varnish the floor.

## **13. Restoration/Work Party Safety Equipment**

PE proposed that safety equipment, as identified by Gordon Denney, should be purchased as and when required at a maximum of £1,400. It was agreed to increase this figure to £1,500 as the equipment was necessary to comply with safety regulations. JM seconded the proposal and it was carried unanimously.

## **14. LRG Signs**

DH had circulated a report regarding the purchase of three A-frame clip boards required for the operations at Flatford and Dedham and the time and mileage involved in obtaining two quotes for the art-work for these and for two clock boards and one existing rubber based board currently held in stock. After discussion JM proposed that on this occasion three A-boards could be purchased for a maximum of £150 and that Peter Evans would carry out the art work and this was seconded by BC. 4 voted for the proposal with 2 abstentions.

## **15. New Boat Trip Leaflets**

It had previously agreed that 10,000 leaflets should be produced at a cost of £670. The option of an additional cost of £27 per thousand was discussed and it was agreed to purchase 20,000 at a cost of £940. This was proposed by DH, seconded by JL and carried unanimously.

## **16. Membership**

JM had visited Mrs Osborne with a copy of the article David Raynor had written for Lock Lintel and also told her that Council had held a minute's silence in John's memory. She had been very appreciative of the consideration shown. JM also reported that when a membership lapsed the Membership Secretary sent out an email reminder as an attachment carrying the RST logo. If there was no response she then sent out a physical letter. She was concerned that some people did not receive the email attachment and therefore she was seeking Council's approval to send the first reminder by simple email with the RST headed logo. This was agreed. JM proposed that the membership report was accepted. This was seconded by JL and carried unanimously.

## **17. Minutes from other Meetings**

- a) **SBOC 6 February** – no late May Bank Holiday so Teddy Bear's day will be on 7 May.

## **18. Recent and Forthcoming Events**

Apart from the events listed JM had done a presentation to Shimpling Village Hall on 16 February and another on 14 March to Colchester Tourist Guides.

Bazaar Feedback Meeting - AR asked DH to pass on Council's thanks to everyone involved in organising the Christmas Bazaar.

## **19. Correspondence**

- a) **Funding Agreement Canals & Rivers Trust** - this had already been circulated
- b) **Grants on line** – DH sought Council's approval to ignore requests in future. This was agreed.

## **20. Granary Bar - CONFIDENTIAL**

## **21. Any Other Business**

**Item 10 from previous Minutes – CONFIDENTIAL**

## **22. Date and Time of Next Meeting – Thursday 29 March 19.00 hours at the VEC**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 22.10.