

RIVER STOUR TRUST COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 29 March 2012
at the VEC, Great Cornard at 19.00 hours.

Present: Andrew Richardson (AR); Dorothy Howe (DH); Roger Brown (RB); Brian Cornell (BC); Jim Lunn (JL); John Morris (JM)

In attendance – Sue Brown (SB)

1. Apologies for Absence were received from Peter Edwards (PE)

2. Identification of Confidential Business and AOB topics – Item 20 was identified as confidential.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of 23 February 2012

JL proposed and BC seconded that the Minutes be agreed as a correct record. 5 voted for the motion with one abstention. JM proposed that Item 20 and the Item 21 under AOB (Item 10 from the previous Minutes) should be removed from the Minutes before publication on the web-site. This was seconded by BC. 5 agreed with one abstention.

4. Matters Arising (not covered by the Agenda)

Cattawade Picnic Site – DH and AR had approved the draft Agreement with Suffolk County Council and this was now in the hands of the Solicitors. Suffolk County Council will pass on some historic documents relating to the picnic site.

Safety Equipment – DH had emailed Gordon Denney regarding purchase.

LRG Signs – these were being made and would be ready the following week.

5. Financial Report

PE had submitted the Draft Accounts and a proposal that they should be accepted. Several amendments were identified. DH expressed her annoyance that the Trustees Annual Report had been submitted and as Company Secretary she had not been consulted concerning the content. Subject to the amendments JL seconded the proposal that they should be accepted and this was carried unanimously. JM proposed that in future the Company Secretary should be included in the drafting of the Annual Report. This was seconded by BC and carried unanimously.

6. Report 'Kathleen'

BC reported that the boat was running well and Emrhys Barrell had made some changes to the switching mechanism. It was considered to be an excellent purchase for the Trust. RB raised the problem of there being no spare wheel for the trailer. BC proposed that a spare wheel should be purchased. Costings would be investigated. This was seconded by DH and carried unanimously

7. SSM Lock

RB refuted some of the content of Spencer Greystrom's email. Nicole Lupton (EA) had submitted a list of what was needed and said that this was not negotiable. Chard had initially been invited to discuss forward progress and to get the IWA's point of view and it was Chard who advised that Spencer should be included. They seemed determined to have a canal camp but it had been explained that part of the reason for the meeting was to make a decision regarding the problem with Dedham and Flatford locks, which were considered more urgent. RB had contacted Nicole to ask whether drawings had to be submitted for work at Dedham and Flatford as it involved replacing like for like and she stated that these were required.

AR reported that Spencer had been critical of the procedures adopted by RST Council in general. There was discussion on whether RST needed an observer from the IWA to attend the meetings. BC proposed that Council manage without an IWA observer. This was seconded by RB and carried unanimously.

A maintenance fund of £1,200 p.a. had been set up by John Marriage towards projects such as the repairs to the locks but there appeared to be no record of this being continued. This was re-introduced by Alan Davison. According to the present accounts there was £5,500 in this fund. AR was happy to re-instate the designated funds.

A meeting with Nicole Lupton had been set up for the following Tuesday to discuss what measures needed to be undertaken at SSM immediately to comply with the EA's criteria. A site meeting would then be arranged and the outcome would be presented to Council. RB agreed to withdraw the request for funding of £10,000 for work on SSM at the present time. It was then agreed that SSM lock restoration would be put on hold for a short time whilst refurbishment of Flatford and Dedham locks was carried out.

8. VEC Veranda

In her previous proposal to Council DH had omitted that the hire of a digger to enable ground work to be carried out by RST volunteers was part of the terms of the estimate given by Gould Construction. The cost of hiring a digger at approximately £200 was agreed and also that DH would write to Messrs Gawn and Thorpe asking for a response to her letter. If the result was negative, given the time lapse since the VEC was built, the necessary work would be carried out by RST volunteers.

9. Dedham and Flatford Locks – Update

DH submitted a paper outlining the situation regarding both locks. She was awaiting a site visit by Jeff Field to Flatford lock to give an estimate for the work required before progressing with Land Drainage Consents and a fundraising initiative. From a LRG point of view Flatford lock was the most important. JM had obtained a quote from another company and he would look at this as a comparison. The original paddle gear would be kept as a dummy and a windlass mechanism would be installed beside it to comply with current Health & Safety regulations. DH reported that the river was at least a foot lower than it had been the previous year. If this continues it might be difficult to operate later in the season. It was hoped that the EA would arrange a site meeting at Dedham following the Collaborative meeting on 17 April.

10. Proposal Jeff Burroughs Apology

JM forwarded a proposal and RB seconded that Jeff Burroughs should receive an apology for the manner in which the agreement to hire Elsie Mary was rescinded as this was poorly handled by Council. No appreciation or acknowledgement had been given to Jeff for the hire of Elsie Mary in the past. The proposal was agreed unanimously. DH was asked to draft a letter of apology which would be forwarded to Council Members for comment and agreement before it was sent to Jeff.

11. Terms of Reference/Rules of Engagement

JM advised that the correct term should be 'Standing Orders for Committees'. He had looked into this but had no formal proposal at the present time. It was agreed that a strict procedure was not required for Council meetings, but a guideline to prevent too many decisions being made by email. There was discussion on whether Council meetings should be held more frequently. DH pointed out that in the six weeks between meetings work was actually done, whereas previously a long list of action points carried over from one meeting to another proved that monthly meetings gave very

little time to achieve things. Council had gone through quite a period of change over the past year and controversial matters had been brought up as part of change and restructuring. It would take a year to settle down and to address all problems. It was agreed that as venues had been booked through the summer the dates of the meetings would not change but timescales would be reviewed later in the year. There was some discussion on revising the procedures for obtaining quotations for work required. DH would prepare a proposal and bring it to the next meeting.

12. Official Launch of 'Waterbus Service' at Dedham

DH had circulated a proposed invitation list for Council's comments. All suggested dates were available to the Chairman and it was agreed that it should be held on Wednesday 23 May. It was suggested that invitations should be sent to the Chairman of the Blue Badge Guide Association in Colchester, Sir Bob Russell MP and all Vice-Presidents as well as the attendees listed. It was anticipated that if 50 people attended the cost would be £325. Council agreed that this event was of prime importance for publicity and the cost of catering was justified. The proposal was seconded by JM, and carried unanimously.

13. Lighter John Constable

BC suggested that several points which he wished to raise could be discussed under this item. He reported that the hull of the lighter was now completed. Emrhys Barrell had come to Brightlingsea to discuss propulsion. Oak posts were required for the new jetty to accommodate the lighter. Quotations had been obtained for £14, £23 and £26 for 8ft posts, 4 inches square. JM seconded BC's proposal that 22 posts should be ordered at a cost of £14 each.

BC also raised the replacement of the stairwell at the Granary. He had received three quotes and proposed that the estimate of £5,000 from Apex for the work should be accepted. He had requested that Apex install two props instead of the work being carried out by RST volunteers. This would mean that all the cantilevers would be supported. DH seconded the proposal and it was carried unanimously. It was also agreed that he should proceed with ordering the name sign for FJ, renaming the boat 'Francis J Batten', from Hudson signs. He commented on the excellent work that Mike Finch, Jim Lunn, George Whybrow and others had done.

14. Weed Cutter

BC had circulated the specification from Reedman Services Ltd regarding their Weed-mate weed cutter at a cost of £2,125 including VAT and delivery. This would require the purchase of an additional 12 volt battery. The Company had offered to send a weed-cutter for the Trust to try and if not suitable it could be returned to them. It was agreed that BC and some Council Members would visit the company to have a demonstration before a formal proposal for purchase would be made. The weed-cutter could work from the back of Laurie B for operating at Flatford/Dedham. JM was familiar with all the specifications of operation required by the EA.

15. Forward Planning

It was agreed that further discussion on this proposal was required and that DH would arrange a date for a separate Strategy Meeting. Council members could get together and talk about forward planning, priorities going forward and the aims of the Trust over the next few years.

16. Membership

JM proposed and AR seconded that the membership report should be accepted. This was carried unanimously.

17. Minutes of other Meetings

There was no comment on the LRG meeting and the SSM lock meeting had been discussed under Item 5 on the Agenda.

18. Recent and Forthcoming Events

Wedding Fair – the Administrator had submitted a report on this very successful event, which made a profit of £224 for the Trust and was a good publicity event for the venue. Further wedding fairs during the season would be considered.

Presentation on the Lighter – Granary 20 April - talk by Nick Temple

Teddy Bear's Day - 7 May – JM would do bankside but not dressed as a teddy bear.

19. Correspondence

The six items had been circulated for Council's information. Each one was discussed but no action was required for them.

20. CONFIDENTIAL – Security & Keys at the Granary & VEC

21. Any Other business

RST were members of the Quay Lane Trust, which was responsible for the upkeep of the car park. All groups had agreed to pay £250 per annum towards upkeep and AR proposed that RST also contribute £250 per annum. JL seconded the proposal and it was carried unanimously.

JL proposed that Council should thank Mike Finch for the lead he had taken for the restoration of Francis J. DH would write to Mike to express Council's appreciation. She would also write to Emrhys Barrell to thank him for his many contributions of time and expertise recently.

22. Date and Time of Next Meeting -Thursday 10 May at the Stour Sailing Club, Manningtree at 19.00 hrs.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 21.50 hrs.