

**Minutes of the River Stour Trust Council meeting  
held on Thursday 14 April 2016  
at The Marlborough Head, Dedham**

**Those present:** Roger Brown (RB), Sue Brown (SB), Gordon Denney (GD), Mike Harrington-Spier (MHS), Jim Lunn (JL), Andrew Richardson (AR, Chairman), Mick Rogers (MR)

Taking Minutes: Catherine Burrows (CB, Administrator)

Observers: Mike Finch, Pam Johnson, James Parkinson, Ian Whale, Sue Cooper

1. **Apologies received:** Emrhys Barrell (EB) – NB: it was discovered shortly before the meeting that no internet or mobile reception can be achieved at this venue, Bob Foster (BF), John Morris (JM)
2. **Confidential Business:** Appended to these minutes.

**Any Other Business:**

- a. Automatic Lifejackets – JL

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2016**

- Removal of Item A under 'Any Other Business' - this was actually a reference to Kathleen's BSS certification and was discussed under 'Boat Operations'.
- Item 8, 'Flatford Lock' had an action that was attributed to RB.

Subject to these amendments **JL proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded by GD; approved unanimously**

It was agreed that the removal of the Confidential item was all that was required for the minutes to be published online. **Action: CB**

4. **Matters arising from those Minutes of 17 March 2016**

FJ Stability – A test had been carried out on Tuesday 5th April and it was **NOTED** that JL, EB, GD and Mike Finch had an on-site discussion about its validity because it disregarded previous Council agreement to use the American Coastguard Agency pontoon testing scheme. It was stressed that the testing carried out was not a stability test but an assessment to give an initial indication of the boat's angle of heel and residual buoyancy at various passenger numbers and positions. It was **AGREED** that RST must adhere to a recognised scheme backed up by data and proven track record. GD informed Council that EB was looking into a Canadian scheme for testing pontoon boats. AR asked whether it was possible to utilise the data from the recent assessment to meet the requirements of the Canadian scheme. **ACTION: GD to follow up with EB. All required data (including photographs) to be filed in RST office for future reference.**

**AR proposed, MS seconded that 'FJ would not be back in service until GD and EB recommend a course of action.' 6 AGREED, 1 ABSTENTION**

Quay Theatre car park drainage issue – AR reported that the Quay Theatre has apologised and agreed to pay for the drainage to be diverted underneath the RST jetty. **ACTION: AR**

5. **Secretary Role** – Confidential

6. **Treasurer's Report & Appointment of New Treasurer**

AR introduced Sue Cooper (SC) who was willing to undertake the role of Treasurer and referred to reports generated from Sage. It was mentioned that Granary income was high and CB pointed out that this would include money that RST would not retain e.g. £100.00 per party function to be paid to the bar contractor and £250.00 breakage deposit per party function. CB said that the bar profits were poor and needed to be reviewed more closely this year.

MHS and IW were keen for the boat operations to be kept informed of their income/expenses every quarter and SC said this was certainly possible once she had established how this information was inputted onto Sage.

SB asked that SSM Lock Restoration funds be clearly defined and GD said he was in contact with a number of funding bodies about this project.

SB and RB felt that a courtesy call to the Treasurer about planned expenditure had been welcome in the past and SC was happy to be contacted in this regard.

**AR proposed that the Council co-opt Sue Cooper onto Council, seconded by SB; approved unanimously**

**AR proposed that the Sue Cooper undertake the role of Treasurer, seconded by MHS; approved unanimously**

**ACTION: AR to update our banking information i.e. removal of Mike Finch and replace with Sue Cooper as signatory and access to online banking. AR to process required paperwork for new Trustee.**

The balances on the bank accounts (as at 9 March, 16:42) were circulated. Note: This does not reflect the true position of Trust finances, as it includes deposits for future events and does not include uncleared cheques. CB had investigated the sum of £750.00 in unreturned breakage deposits and confirmed all three affected customers had been contacted and their deposits refunded.

## 7. Recent and Forthcoming Events

Walk 'n' Water, Sudbury on 12 April – This had raised £276.00 and possibly gained 2 new members and it was **NOTED** that thanks were due to Pam Johnson and James Parkinson for the running of this event. Council were reminded that a similar event on the lower river between Dedham and Cattawade is planned for the summer.

## 8. Stratford St Mary, Dedham & Flatford Locks & Portages

Stratford St Mary Lock – GD reported that Hargreaves lock Gates had visited the site on Monday and would hopefully submit a quote within the next week or so. There has been no response from Martin Childs as yet. The EA have provided the details of another contractor. GD said he is also in contact with a number of potential funders for the project and had one that could be interested in the Granary renovation.

Flatford Lock – James Parkinson is purchasing brackets and will be working on the repairs this weekend.

Dedham Portage – Ian Bliss had reported at the RSUG meeting that upstream repairs to Dedham portage have been completed. BF is pursuing access to the portage by Dedham Lock. £2000 of the £9500 partnership funding is for the path.

Stratford St Mary Portage – The EA's response to the FDC application is awaited. It was hoped that the Versadock would be delivered soon. **ACTION: James Parkinson to ensure Versadock 'key' is available to LRG.**

## 9. Boat Operations

**Sudbury Boat Operations** – It was reported that JC's motors required Ian Rutter's expertise to align the motor computer but the problem with the bilge pump was a quick and easy fix.

**Lower River Group** – Kathleen has not been launched yet due to the access field being waterlogged. This would be delayed until the field could withstand the launch. LRG were mindful that it was imperative to maintain a good relationship with the new owner.

**Cattawade Picnic Site** – RB is waiting for the gate posts to be ready for collection. These are being galvanised at no additional charge because the supplier decided to add them in with an order for another customer. The site needs to a drainage system but work cannot be carried out until the area dries out. James Parkinson had submitted a list of the costs for the project (1 day digger and dumper hire, pipe, filter, stone and fuel) which totalled in the region of £600 (exc. VAT). **ACTION: CB to check whether there is any grant money for Cattawade for this work.**

It was suggested that Suffolk County Council should contribute toward the costs if it is found that the road is draining onto our land.

**SB proposed that Council approve the work and expenditure for the drainage at Cattawade, seconded by MHS; approved unanimously**

## 10. Granary Refurbishment

CB apologised that there was no further action as yet but her workload has significantly increased with the social events, onset of the new tea room and boating season, the Easter break, viewings of The Granary, work for and with the bookkeeper, training sessions away from the office, school visits and the Lock Lintel mailing. CB said thanks were due to Pam Johnson and James Parkinson for their help in getting the mailing prepared and sent.

## 11. Administrator's Report

Best of Suffolk 2016 advert – RST was asked to place an advert to promote our activities in the 'Best of Suffolk' magazine. This is for an A5 advert in the A4 magazine that is a visitor's guide to the region (available in many hotels, holiday cottages, tourist attractions and visitor centres). The cost of £299 (no VAT) is the charity rate (50% discount) and is the same as last year.

**SB proposed that Council approve the £299 expenditure for the advert in 'Best of Suffolk' magazine, seconded by MR; approved unanimously**

**ACTION: CB**

BMCA use of VEC – CB asked the Council to reconsider its decision to offer the BMCA committee free use of the VEC for its meetings. This had been a 'neighbourly' offer and included comprised a reduced charge for BMCA social events. The BMCA hold at least one meeting per month (usually evening) and although the group hold a key so can open/close, there are associated costs such as administrative time, electricity, cleaning and toilet supplies. CB suggested that the free use instead be limited to 6 times per year. After discussion, it was **AGREED** to offer the BMCA a maximum of 6 uses of the venue without charge for its committee meetings effective from 2017.

Boat Trip Leaflet – CB explained that more leaflets were needed but this had been delayed due to the consideration of new 0300 numbers and also FJ passenger numbers. CB advised that the 03 numbers incurred a monthly fee which would be ongoing throughout the 'closed' season so it was felt that the 0844 numbers currently used without a fee were the only viable option at this time. CB said that some amendments were needed i.e. 0844 call costs was a legal requirement, it was necessary to clearly define which numbers to call for particular services and FJ's passenger capacity was currently unknown. It was suggested that FJ could be described as wheelchair friendly and suitable for those with impaired mobility but to omit any reference to passenger capacity. It was **AGREED** to approve the £528.00 quote from (formerly Peter Evans Ltd) for amendments to the current leaflet and a 10,000 print run. **ACTION: CB**

Granary Fire Exit Doors – CB had obtained a revised quote from Chilton Joinery for replacement of both doors. CB gratefully accepted RB's offer to take over this task and liaise with the potential contactors.

**ACTION: RB**

RSUG – CB expressed concern that there was still no official RST representative to liaise with for these meetings. They only take place 3 times per year but would not happen without the EA and the RST Administrator making arrangements. CB explained that she was never sure what the RST presence was going to be for these meetings. **ACTION: MHS to act as liaison for these meetings. CB to send on further information.**

Section 106/Bakers Mill Project – AR had attended a public forum about this and said the poor turnout showed there was not sufficient local interest. EB was willing to represent the RST at the forthcoming meeting to ascertain whether the £20,000 funding for a waterbus operated by RST was still possible.

JL informed Council that a higher qualification for the boat crew might be required for this type of scheduled service. It was **NOTED** that this could also have a bearing on the LRG waterbus service so clarification was required. **ACTION: JL**

**12. Correspondence** – None to report.

## 13. Membership report

The Membership Secretary had given apologies that a membership report would not be available for this meeting. CB informed Council of the names and reasons for joining of new members only.

**SB proposed acceptance of the new members, seconded by JL; approved unanimously.**

## 14. Any Other Business

- a) Volunteer Harbour Master – **SB proposed James Parkinson undertake the role of Harbour Master, seconded by RB; approved unanimously.**
- b) Sudbury Rowing Club (SRC) Jetty – Mike Finch (MF) had been approached by Jeremy Milbank at the RSUG meeting. He informed Council that SRC are reviving their idea to add an additional jetty opposite the Quay Theatre to make launching their boats easier. MF had indicated that temporary stakes in the position the jetty might occupy would help RST determine if it would be acceptable i.e John Constable's turning needs being the main concern. James Parkinson asked whether a mooring fee would be applicable in this instance but Council felt this was an unfavourable stance. CB suggested that SRC instead be asked to become corporate members (£40 per year) because membership is a part of RST Moorings Policy and this has not been enforced although they already have a mooring. **ACTION: New Harbour Master (James Parkinson) to follow up with SRC.**
- c) **RSNC** – AR informed Council that he was now the only director for this dormant company. AR suggested appointing the RST Treasurer and SC agreed to this. JL and MHS also offered to become directors. **ACTION: AR**
- d) **Lifejackets** – JL recommended that the RST stipulate that crew using personal lifejackets must take responsibility to ensure these are up-to-date and also the automatic type (following a recent incident). JL had been checking personal lifejackets during operational days and found three to be out of date although a test on one of these showed it still worked! It was **AGREED** that an email to all boat crew volunteers be sent about this. **ACTION: JL**
- e) **Barley Straw for Cut** – MHS queried when this was going to be put into the river and JL explained that the working party want to use FJ for this so are awaiting the go ahead to use the boat.

#### **15. Date of next meeting:**

Thursday 5 May 2016, at Visitor Education Centre

NB: An earlier date than usual to ensure as many Council members can attend to discuss AGM arrangements.

#### **16. Confidential Items**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 22.30pm