

Minutes of the River Stour Trust Council meeting
held on Thursday 11 August 2016 at Visitor Education Centre, Great Cornard

Those present: Paul Brewerton (PB), Roger Brown (RB), Sue Brown (SB), Gordon Denney (GD), Pam Johnson (PJ), David Kirkman (DK), Jim Lunn (JL), John Morris (JM Chairman), James Parkinson (JPa), John Phillips (JPh)
Taking Minutes: Catherine Burrows (CB, Administrator)
Observers: Mike Finch

1. **Apologies for absence** - Bob Foster (BF), Mick Rogers (MR), Emrhys Barrell (EB)
2. **Identification of confidential business, and notification of AOB topics**

AOB: Stour Trusty II replacement - LRG, Veranda ramp - JP, Valuations - PJ

3. **Minutes of the Meeting of 14th July**

- Correction

Item 10, page 3, Dedham was the location.

- Identification of confidential items

- a) Item 9, page 2, remove the last 2 sentences from the online minutes due to confidentiality
- b) It was agreed that references to Stratford St Mary Lock and negotiations with landowner/s be confidential.

4. **Matters arising not covered by the agenda** – None.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

JM informed Council that Sue Cooper has stood down from the role of Treasurer as she did not feel she was able to fulfil the duties and tasks required. [JP arrived]. JM expressed concern that there was no-one to undertake this vital role.

It was **NOTED** that GD pointed out that, should all the funding applications be successful, a large proportion of the expenses relating to Stratford St Mary Lock restoration and The Granary renovation would be covered. But RST would be paying circa £40,000 (before being able to claim back any VAT) so it was vital to have a clear view on the financial position.

6. **Stratford St Mary, Dedham & Flatford locks**

Flatford Lock – Contrary to recent comments, it is working without issues. There had been temporary operating difficulties due to the high river levels and silt build up.

Dedham Lock – Temporary steps will be installed by the EA before our S2C event.

SSM Lock – [Some confidential discussion took place- refer to Confidential Business below]. The bespoke permit from the EA is awaited and has exceeded the EA's response period. Ian Watts and Paul Separovic had recently visited the site, mainly to discuss RST plans for the project in 2017, and they were positive the overdue permit was forthcoming. It was suggested that the bridge will be an exemption rather than a permit application from the EA. A permit for work next year is also being submitted at the end of the August for approval before the end of October.

Colchester Council had accepted the preliminary planning application and the actual application have now been submitted (at a cost of £385.00).

All 3 quotes from the lock builders have now been received: Hargreaves Lock Gates (HGL) at circa £78k, Martin Childs (MC) circa £125k and Wijma circa £137k (all figures exc. VAT). GD said that the grant rules state that the lowest quote be chosen but we should also have confidence in HLG because of their experience and recent works undertaken for the Cotswold Canal Trust. The main reason for HGL's quote being the lowest relates to the method of getting the lock

gates onto the island. They will float them on the RST's Versadock down the river as opposed to using a crane and this option was offered to everyone. RST will pay 10% of the costs plus VAT (of which a percentage can be reclaimed). Public use of the lock is fundamental to the funding from Veolia (stage 1 completed for up to £75k) and Corys (currently being worked on for up to £50k). It was **NOTED** that JM expressed thanks on behalf of Council for all GD's work to get this project to this stage.

There was concern that unrestricted use of the lock was unwise due to potential flooding issues. Council was reassured that HMRC was only interested in paid or free use whilst the grants would be happy with the public having use of the lock via our trip boats.

Mike Finch reminded Council that the RST VAT status was amended following the 2014 restoration of Flatford Lock. Council discussed whether it was necessary to make a case for reclaiming 100% of the VAT instead of accepting the 80/20 split (former being business use and latter being public use). It was calculated that RST would 'lose' in the region of £3k adhering to the 80/20 split.

SB proposed, JPh seconded that 'Council accept the 80/20 split on the VAT' AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

GD said that all the lock builders are aware and happy that 1 March 2017 is the deadline for funds being confirmed for the project. A decision on which lock builder needs to be made within a month. **ACTION:** JPh and JM to look through the quotes and come back within a week so GD can complete the EA permit application (as the method of the works needs to be confirmed).

GD proposed, SB seconded that 'Hargreaves Lock Gates be chosen as the Stratford St Mary lock builder and installer subject to JM and JPh review of the quotes received' 9 YES, JM Abstention

Ian Watts has told GD to include time constraints within his new permit application because of the funding timeframe. RB queried whether it was worthwhile sending a formal letter of complaint because of the late permit but it was suggested delaying any potentially inflammatory action until the end of October. The Council **AGREED** that work on site should continue although not officially consented by the EA.

7. Minutes of other Meetings:

Sudbury Boat Operations Committee (SBOC) - DK mentioned some maintenance that has been undertaken and briefly outlined changes to crew volunteer induction. New signage for Sudbury boat operations has also been ordered and is on the way. Remedial repairs have been undertaken at the Henny Swan jetty with a view to potentially expanding it before next year's season.

Winter boat storage – PB said that Bob Stoneham had suggested an unoccupied building that has no power but is relatively secure, very large, has a dry concrete floor and store all the boats as well as their trailers. The storage cost would only be a couple of boats for a Henny Swan Lunch Cruises for the local WI group. PB said a padlock, some work to the gates and a generator for electrical power would be required. It was **NOTED** that a smooth running generator that could perform a rapid charge for charging the batteries over the winter should be chosen.

PB proposed, JL seconded that 'Council store the SBOC boats and trailers in the suggested building over the winter' AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

Action: PB to contact Jane Rogers in regards to updating our insurance information.

JL and DK explained that there was still no progress in getting the required parts from Aquamot. JPh said, having had a long discussion with EB prior to this meeting, that he was convinced the only option was to install the spare encoder in EB's possession. JPh offered to drive the motor to EB so that it could be fitted with this encoder to see if it solved the problem. EB is not convinced that simply replacing the encoder is the solution because there is an inherent problem with the design. Should the second motor fail then we do not have another encoder available. To replace the motors in their entirety would cost in the region of £10,000 and an alternative supplier would need to be found. **ACTION:** JPh to transport the motor to EB for the new encoder to be fitted and tested.

PB said that it was particularly difficult to find crew for evening wedding charters and asked CB to not overly promote this feature.

Lower River Group (LRG) – Council accepted the kind offer from one of the nearby residents to Cattawade Picnic Site to lock our newly installed gate at dusk and re-open it early morning. This a dual benefit for both parties since there have been issues on the site. **ACTION: JM**

It was **NOTED** that Council expressed thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the installation of the new gate. RB asked whether Jane Rogers had sent the £50.00 boat voucher to the post maker, as requested. **ACTION: CB to check with Jane Rogers.**

8. Granary refurbishment

JM had sought advice from Peter Hesketh in regards to the tenders received. He too saw no issue with the architect's recommendation to accept M.D.Mills quote. However, he did query the details of the architect's brief and JM had made several attempts to contact Barry Whymark but received no response as yet.

Tea Room volunteer, Margaret Cresswell, and CB will arrange to visit Jam Tartz's unit to view their kitchen and get feedback on equipment they think is required. DK queried whether the new kitchen would have raw items being prepared and cooked because he had been told that work stations had to be stainless steel and movable. This was a possibility so the regulations would be researched.

GD said that funding as in place but all equipment but be A-rated for efficiency (this includes lighting, hand dryers, etc). GD was also in the process of completing the HLF application asking for up to £75k. He asked whether it was feasible for this to be undertaken in Jan-Mar 2017. JM expressed concern that no Trustee was taking responsibility for the project. CB said that although the architect will undertake a project management once it was underway there were decisions that had to come from RST before that could happen. It was suggested that the membership be approached for anyone with project management, architectural and/or building experience/knowledge. Also an approach to Andrew Phillips or Peter Mimpriss could be a good idea because of their connections. It was **NOTED** that someone within RST was need to liaise with CB and the architect. **ACTION: JPh to email JM his suggestions.**

9. Administrator's report – No report

10. Correspondence

- a) **Free Business Breakfast, Friday 23 September 2016 'Helping Your Business Grow', 7.30am-9am** – CB offered to send further details to interested parties to attend on behalf of RST.
- b) **IWA 'Planning' Workshop, Monday 17 October, London Canal Museum** – CB offered to send further details to interested parties to attend on behalf of RST (need to RSVP before 17.09.16)
- c) **Mill Race Weed** – This has to be cleared by riparian landowners. Green Blue Marine was formerly undertaking this for the Bakers Mill Residents' Association and has suggested to all interested parties (group email) that a meeting to discuss future works is arranged. It was decided to await contact from the other interested parties.

11. **Membership Report** - CB apologised for not printing copies of the report that had been sent earlier that day. It was **AGREED** that JM approve the new members on behalf of Council.

12. **Trading Company** – Mike Finch had kindly agreed to take on the role of a Director. JPh queried the structure of the trading company but this is still in the early planning stages. A meeting with Carol Green at Peyton Tyler Mears (our accountants) was to be arranged. Further advice was also being sought from other organisations e.g. Neil Edwards at IWA, Cotswold Canal Trust Trading Company. JM asked Mike Finch to also raise the issue of an absent RST Treasurer with Carol Green.

13. **RST Roles, and Role Descriptions** - JM circulated his updated paper on RST roles and tasks. He asked all present to review the paper and come back with any comments/suggestions. **ACTION: For discussion at a special meeting in November (date and venue to be arranged).**

14. Recent and Forthcoming Events

- a) Wild Swim at Flatford, Sunday 14 August – Information only
- b) Coracle Regatta, 1 August 2016 – cancelled a week before due to low river levels at Bures
- c) S2C, 24 & 25 September

15. Any Other Business

- a) **Overdue Craft Storage** – Final letters have been sent over a month ago with no response received to date. Craft will now be removed/sold as seen fit by the Harbour Master. **ACTION: JPa**
- b) **Stour Trusty II Replacement** – LRG would like to research Stour Trusty's II replacement within the next 2-3 years. Everyone would like to have a 12 seater operating on that stretch and RST member, Chris Spraggon, had recommended a model called 'Phoenix 21'. **ACTION: JL to investigate.**
- c) **Veranda Ramp** – John Mills had prepared a diagram with the ramp located alongside the building with steps into the picnic area off the decking and this was a cheaper alternative to a disabled lift. It was thought that a decision could only be reached once the gain/loss of car parking spaces was known. **ACTION: JPa to contact John Mills to ascertain car parking spaces gained/lost from the two plans.**
- d) **Property Survey** – PJ said she understood that updated property valuations were required for insurance purposes and she had family members that were qualified to complete this. **ACTION: PJ to pass on details to JM.**

Date and time of next meeting - Thursday 8th September 2016 at 19:00, Dedham?

It was **NOTED** that RB, SB and JL gave their apologies for the next meeting.

NB: The date of every Council meeting will be the second Thursday of the month for continuity and scheduling reasons

Meeting closed at 21:45