

River Stour Trust

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 8 September 2016 at The Grove, Dedham, courtesy of Mr Bob Foster.

Those present: John Morris (JM) in the chair, Paul Brewerton (PB), Gordon Denney (GD), Bob Foster (BF), Pam Johnson (PJ), David Kirkman (DK), James Parkinson (JP), Mick Rogers (MR)

1. Apologies for absence: Emrhys Barrell, Roger Brown, Sue Brown, Jim Lunn, John Phillips

JM introduced:

Mike Finch (MF) – lead on Trading Company set up
Andrew Sheldon (AS) – lead on Granary Refurbishment

and

Graham Simmons, who joined the meeting after the early stages, to observe as a possible new Trustee and Treasurer.

Also present Catherine Burrows (Trust Administrator; CB) and Jane Rogers (Company Secretary, taking notes; JR)

2. **Minutes of meeting held on 11 August 2016:** After the addition of apologies for absence from Emrhys Barrell, these were unanimously approved. Thanks were expressed to CB for creating these in the absence of JR.

3. **Matters arising from those Minutes**

David Kirkman – addition of plimsoll lines to boats – DK had received details from Steve Moffatt, and was ready to implement.

Paul Brewerton – Insurance of boat storage – still to action. **ACTION: PB to contact JR** with information.

John Morris – Cattawade Gates – JM to contact local resident re locking up. **ACTION: JM**

Roger Brown's request for boat voucher – outstanding – **ACTION: JR and CB**

Passenger loading on Frances J. after much discussion, it was agreed that the recommendations contained in the report from Moffatt Marine, be implemented until further information was received about new regulations due in 2017. It was further agreed that, as several members had not seen the report, this be circulated as soon as possible. **ACTION: JR**

4. Pension arrangements for the **Administrator:**

Details having been circulated to the Trustees, a majority responded and it was agreed that the Trust would use pension provider NEST, and that the Company Secretary would enrol the Trust in the scheme, with CB as an eligible member of staff. **ACTION: JR**

5. **Treasurer's Report:**

Without a Treasurer in post, it has not proved easy to provide more detailed reports for the Council meeting. It was agreed that JR and CB would investigate further, in order to provide this, including a monthly cash flow report. **ACTION: CB and JR**

6. **Stratford St Mary Lock:** GD reported that much progress had been made in the summer to clear the lock channel, in preparation for new gates. Digger driving, done by Roger Brown, Mike Finch and James Parkinson, had gone a long way towards this. Coupled with their ingenuity, tools and skill, they and other members of the work party were to be thanked for their efforts.

Planning permission had been applied for, for the installation of gates in 2017. The EA had acknowledged receipt of the request to carry out this work, and Colchester Borough Council had acceded that the lock was in fact within their responsibilities and would process the application.

Access Bridge: Essex and Suffolk Water had donated £500 towards the cost of the bridge. GD had written to their Legal Department for confirmation of their permission to construct the bridge, but had received no reply to date. He would take the matter further using contacts higher up in ESW.

The EA have requested that an on-going report be kept of the works at SSM. This was agreed, and GD had started this. A copy of this would be lodged in the office at the VEC, and would be available to the EA and to Trustees on demand.

Water Framework Directive: This would have an impact on the work at SSM. It was felt that part of the EA were trying to disrupt the installation, whilst other parts were in favour, in spite of reports circulating that boating was bad for the river, and that there were communication issues concerning this. The EA wanted to meet with the RST to discuss the situation.

It was felt that it would be important to seek the support of the IWA. MF agreed to take on the role of liaison with the IWA and it was suggested that a representative be invited to the meeting with the EA.

BF referred to the Atkins Report, relating to the restoration of waterways, would be good news for the aims of the Trust.

It was noted the WFD was an EA initiative. It was further noted that the EA should produce a River Basin Management Plan every six years; no-one on the Council could recall seeing a copy of one of these. Consultation with the RST should form part of this Plan. There was no mention of navigation issues in the RBMP; it was agreed that GD and MF should initiate a conversation with the EA on this matter. **ACTION: GD and MF**

Dedham Lock: No further progress here, although Steven Bunting and another resident had visited the site at SSM to enquire about the state of negotiations. They expressed the view that some residents would like the work to be carried out. No new information was available for them.

Flatford Lock: River Stour Boating, who use the lock on a regular basis, reported that the lock was working well.

7. Boat Operations:

- a. **SBOC** had not had a meeting since the last Council meeting. However, DK reported that the faulty motor from JC had been returned to Goring for repair, and had now been reinstalled on the boat. Tests had been carried out which proved satisfactory. The surplus caulking had been removed from the decking, and a non-slip coating was in the process of being applied.

Chairman of SBOC – no-one had been formally appointed to this role, and it was suggested that a job description be created, noting that the Chairman did not have to become a Trustee.

SBOC were planning a recruitment drive for new crew members in the spring; a proposed advertisement was circulated.

- b. **LRG:** Notes from the meeting held in July had been circulated.

8. Granary Refurbishment:

Andrew Sheldon presented his report (circulated) and noted that progress was being made in this project. It was agreed that Airblade hand driers (or a similar model)

should be included in the specification for the cloakrooms as these were felt to be the best option. It was also noted that GD had allowed a contingency fee in his grant applications, as a sum of £5000.00 was suggested in AS's report.

9. Administrator's Report – tabled

Recent donations to the Trust totalled £943.00. A further donation of £500.00 from Sudbury Rowing Club, towards the annual cost of weed cutting had been offered. It was agreed that this should be accepted with thanks. **ACTION: CB**

Venues: No bookings had been made for the Granary between January and March 2017 to allow for the refurbishment. It was noted that a penalty clause had been put into the contract to cover any over run in completion of the work.

VEC – new terms had been agreed for bookings for Bakers Mill Community Association (full details available if required, from the Administrator). A new art group had made a weekly booking, with effect from 1 September.

Special Events – the Trust had been invited to take part in Beat the Street, a national initiative to encourage people to become more active, as part of the Sudbury response. This would give free advertising in the event leaflet, in exchange for a free cup of tea/coffee for anyone producing the requisite card and taking a boat trip, during October 2016.

River Stour Users Group – the Trust needs a formal representative on this group, prepared to attend the meetings and report back to Council. Offers to undertake this role should be forwarded to John Morris. **ACTION: JM**

- 10. Membership Report** – previously circulated. Following a statement supported by several members of Council, it was agreed to accept all applicants, except one. It was agreed that JM would write to the person concerned. With this proviso, the report was accepted. **ACTION: JM**

- 11. Trading Company:** MF reported that no progress had yet been made but contacts were being made and a meeting was due to be held shortly. **ACTION: MF**

- 12. Correspondence:** The Waterway Recovery Group had written asking about sites for their projects for 2017. AS suggested that perhaps the channel round Lady Island be a possible suggestion.

13. Recent and Forthcoming Events:

Pirates' Day on Bank Holiday Monday was a very successful day with near record takings and some great costumes.

Ivan Cane of the East Anglian Waterways Association, with some members, had visited the site at SSM. Mr Cane had been involved in the action in the 1960s to protect the Navigation, which led to the formation of the Trust. He has a large collection of black and white photographs of the early days, which he offered to show us. An article about the RST is planned for the October issue of the EAWA magazine.

The Tea Room Ladies had a very successful day out, with a trip on Edwardian Lady, from the Granary to Henny, for a drink, and then a return trip to the VEC for lunch, before returning to the Granary. Admiration of the boat crew in their aprons pouring tea was expressed! As JM had approved expenditure towards the cost of the refreshments, he suggested that recognition be paid to all the boat crews. It was agreed that this might prove difficult to provide but maybe a token system would work. Further thought was required. **ACTION: ALL**

The Field Study Council brought a group of learning disabled students for a trip on Trusty II. Those who participated enjoyed their experience, although some members of the party did not feel able to board the boat.

14. Any Other Business

- a. **Company Secretary's Report** – previously circulated.

It was agreed that JR should obtain costings for a part-time Administration Assistant, together with information on the relevant employment legislation.

Theft of Laurie B – it was agreed that the insurance company's offer of £1400.00, less the £50 excess, be accepted, and the money held in the funds towards a future replacement. JP reported that there was a dinghy in the compound at the Granary, which was now the property of the Trust, which would be suitable as a temporary replacement.

Sudbury to the Sea was now fully booked and almost all roles had been filled.

JR reported that she would not be running S2C in 2017, and a replacement should be found as soon as possible.

ACTIONS: JR

- b. Trip Advisor: an adverse report had been posted on Trip Advisor by an unhappy customer. CB had posted a 'holding' reply, and it was agreed that JR would compose an appropriate reply. It was also agreed that some training in the field of company policy was needed and this would be put in place. **ACTION: JR, SBOC**

- c. Tea Room Organiser – JM announced that Margaret Cresswell had agreed to take on this role, with effect from the start of the 2017 season. Some adjustments would be made to the role.

- d. John Philips' Report – JPh had submitted a report relating to John Constable, which was tabled.

- e. Email from Emrhys Barrell – EB told Council that because of health issues, he was no longer able to continue with his roles as Publicity Manager and Editor of Lock Lintel. The Council expressed their regret at this news, and requested a formal acknowledgement of EB's work be made. **ACTION: JM**

It was agreed that JR contact Colchester Volunteer Scheme to register our interest in finding someone to help with publicity and someone to edit the magazine. The vacancies would also be circulated to members via Mail Chimp. **ACTION: JR**

- f. Boat Operations Manager – JL's appointment ends early in 2017. Alan Thomas, a skipper from the LRG, is working alongside JL at present, with a view to taking over in due course. He has gained, at his own expense, qualifications which will help him in this role; he has also undertaken to gain more knowledge of the upper river and the workings of SBOC. It was suggested that he be invited to the next meeting of SBOC on 19 September, at The Wagon and Horses, in Sudbury at 7.00pm in the back room. **ACTION: DK**

- g. Land Opposite The Swan at SSM – agents acting for the current owners, Northumberland Water, had requested an increase in rent for this land, which on negotiation had been reduced to £1000 pa for a three-year lease. This would not be

acceptable to the landlord of the pub. Various options were discussed and it was agreed that GD would speak to E&SW, the local owners about the matter. JM would act as back-up as needed. It was also suggested that the RSUG should become involved. **ACTION: GJ AND JM**

- h. Starting date of the Trust – it was agreed that 19 September 1968, the date of the incorporation of the Trust, be recognised as its starting date. JM suggested that we should celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of this date, and had already asked CB to block that weekend out on the Trust’s calendar. Various suggestions were offered as ways of celebrating and members were asked to send their suggestions to JR (secretary@riverstourtrust.org) in time for a list to be co-ordinated for the next meeting. It was agreed that a team leader was needed, with other people taking on responsibility for the various activities. **ACTION: ALL**
- i. River Etiquette – MR mentioned a sign on the lower river requesting rowing boats follow the standard procedure with regard to travelling on the river. Problems were being experienced with the crews of row boats hired from both The Boathouse at Dedham and The Granary at Flatford. Although it was dubious how much effect more signs would have, it was agreed that JR contact the EA, who had posted the original sign, to request at least two more signs along the stretch between Dedham and Flatford. **ACTION: JR**

15. Date and time of future meetings:

1. **Thursday 13 October 2016, at the VEC at 7.00 pm**
2. **Thursday 10 November 2016, at The Grove at 7.00 pm (venue to be confirmed)**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.15pm

Confidential item:

The Administrator reported that the amount of money held in the various bank accounts as at 9 September 2016 was approximately £100,000.