

River Stour Trust

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 8 December 2016, at the VEC, Great Cornard.

Those present: John Morris (JM) in the chair, Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Roger Brown (RB), Sue Brown (SB), Gordon Denney (GD), Bob Foster (BF), Pam Johnson (PJ), David Kirkman (DK), Jim Lunn (JL), James Parkinson (JP), John Phillips (JPh), Mick Rogers (MR)
Also present Jane Rogers (Company Secretary, taking notes, JR) and Catherine Burrows (Administrator, CB)

1. Apologies for absence – Graham Simmons
2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 November 2016

These were approved, subject to the following corrections: Corey should be spelled Cory; meeting date with Cory to be on 17 January 2017.
Confidential items were identified.

3. Matters arising from those Minutes
RB reported that Mr Chris Griffin, who lives near Stratford St Mary Lock, had agreed to take on the role of Honorary Lock Keeper. It was agreed that honorary membership of the Trust be awarded to Mr Griffin, as long as he undertook the role.
JL reported on difficulties in trying to convene a meeting between SBOC and LRG to discuss the Operating Manuals and their revision. SB pointed out that the Trust's Boat Operations manual was approved by the IWA and should be common to all boat operations. JL added that final responsibility for boat operations rested with the Trustees. JM reminded the meeting that LRG had a view, which although differing from that of SBOC, should be heard. GD suggested that a meeting should be held and the results reported back to Council. After much discussion, PB recommended that a meeting should be held. JL agreed to confer with Tim Smith, who had offered to host the meeting, for a suitable date, and to invite two members from each of SBOC and LRG to represent each group and to put their points of view. JL would then report back to Council on the outcome. JM suggested a deadline of the February Council meeting. **ACTION: JL**
GD – no action yet on deadlines for Granary funding for electrical equipment. **ACTION: GD**
JR - Granary planning meeting yet to convene. **ACTION: JR**
JR – Health and Safety Officer – still to action. **ACTION: JR**
BF – Dedham Lock meeting – to be held on 9 December. JM had responded to Gary Cockett (EA).
PB and MF – PB had started working on the Memorandum and Articles, but needed more time. **ACTION: PB**
CB – Payment Card Industry Compliancy – PayPal had confirmed that as users of PayPal Standard the Trust was compliant in this area.
CB – RSUG – GD had been sent RSUG draft minutes and proposed 2017 dates, that were also sent to Paul Separovic (EA).
CB – Utility Contract Renewals – better rates and revised/new contracts were being progressed.
RF – the Trust had been notified that the tilting gate in Flatford Lock would be raised for the winter of 2016-17. It would be lowered again in March 2017 and would be left in that position permanently. Dedham tilting gate would also be lowered in 2017, permanently.
4. Wormingford and Wiston river alterations
GD reported that a letter had been received from Andrew Raine (EA) claiming that the EA had the right to carry out any alterations to the river. The IWA had been notified of the situation by the Trust, and were now assisting. A letter had been drafted to both Andrew Raine and Irven

Forbes (EA) expressing the Trust's view on this and it was agreed that this should be sent as soon as possible. **ACTION: JR**

EB reminded Council of the River Stour Plan 2006, when the EA stated that they would investigate the use of small, electrically powered boats on the river, including investigating the amendment of an existing byelaw with DeFRA. The Plan showed that this should have been done by 2010. **ACTION: CB to circulate link to plan.**

It was agreed that EB should send the consultants' report to Will Akast (EA). **ACTION: EB**
JM reported that representatives of the Canals & Rivers Trust (CRT) were coming to Sudbury on 9 January 2017, to meet with Council members, and to see the river for themselves. Trustees were invited to join that meeting, which was scheduled to start at approximately 10.00am.
ACTION: ALL to notify CB and JM of their intention to attend.

5. Eden Rose Coppice

It was noted that, while the Charity Commissioners had no objections in principle to the proposed land exchange, it would be necessary for the Trust to obtain a formal valuation of the land involved. **ACTION: JR to arrange valuation**

It was noted that in the exchange, neither party was permitted to make a profit.
JL proposed that the exchange should proceed. Approved unanimously.

6. Financial Report

The current Profit and Loss report had been circulated. SB queried the fundraising elements, and it was noted that while the profits recorded for S2C and other activities had been shown separately, the expenses involved in fundraising had not been shown in the same way. BF explained some of the accounting methods involved. DK thanked CB for her help in interpreting the figures. JR explained that a refinement of the accounting system was to be undertaken at the start of 2017.

Treasurer: Graham Simmons had offered his services as Treasurer to the Trust. JM proposed that Mr Simmons be co-opted to Council with immediate effect and this was approved unanimously. **ACTION: JR to write to Mr Simmons**

CB reported that the Trust held approximately £100,000 in its bank accounts as at 8 December 2016.

7. Stratford St Mary Lock

GD reported that Essex and Suffolk Water (ESW) had removed their objection to the Trust's plans, and that planning permission had been granted for the installation of new lock gates. The Trust would need an abstraction licence, costing £1500.00, for the next 10 year period. If the application needs to be advertised, the Trust will need to pay for advertising costs. There would be an £100 advertising administration fee and the actual advertising costs, which could be in the region of £1000.00. The EA had supplied a letter of intent to approve the lock gates, to help with grant applications. Three applications, as had been discussed in previous meetings, were in place and results were expected in the early part of 2017. GD had spoken to Hargreaves, confirming that if the IWA grant, which would be the last one to reply, was successful, the planned schedule could still be met.

SB requested that the Trust's thanks to GD, for all his work in connection with Stratford St Mary Lock, be recorded. Approved unanimously.

GD reported that planning approval for the proposed bridge at SSM, had been sought. The original plan had been modified slightly to avoid an existing tree. BF reported that he was in consultation with the relevant Highways Department. The cost of the bridge was estimated at £4500.00; a grant of £500.00 had been received from ESW towards this.

Dedham Lock – nothing to report.

Flatford Lock – the Field Study Council had carried out repairs to the sluices at the Mill, which were now operating. There were fluctuating water levels at Flatford.

8. Boat Operations

SBOC – minutes of their last meeting were not yet available. PB gave a verbal report. The committee had discussed the operating manual; had discussed the need for refresher training for less experienced skippers and crew, and had agreed to run sessions before the start of the 2017 operating season. DK requested information on how the Small Boat Code of Practice should be implemented. JM stated his opinion that this should be added to the Operating Manual. It was agreed that this topic should be added to the agenda for JL's meeting to discuss the Operating Manual.

SBOC had proposed increasing charges for boat trips. It was agreed that for the 2017 season, the Henny Swan cruise fares should increase to £15.00 per adult, and £7.50 per child up to the age of 12. Charges for the short half hour trips should remain as they are - £5.00 per adult, and £3.00 per child up to the age of 12. Charter fees would also be increased.

It was agreed that the Trust would participate in a Water & Walk scheme being proposed by a local group, whereby passengers would go by boat in one direction and walk back. CB had the details and would circulate them. **ACTION: CB**

It was noted that all the SBOC boats were now in their winter storage.

LRG – no minutes were available. However, it was reported that both boats were now in winter storage. A training need had been identified, and action was in hand.

9. Granary Refurbishment

A meeting to discuss alternatives for the refurbishment would be set up. **ACTION: JR**

GD stated that it might be possible to apply for funding from Landfill Tax sources. JP reported that a local adult learning centre in Sudbury had received funding from the Post Code Lottery, but GD reported that he had looked at this, and the project did not meet their criteria for funding.

10. Company Secretary Report

This had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed that while the Trust could not financially support the Sudbury Green Belt initiative, it could offer use of a meeting venue for the initial meeting.

11. Administrator's Report

This had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Henny Swan Jetty – DK asked Council to fund the refurbishment of the jetty, at a cost of approximately £1400.00, so that materials could be purchased before 2017 price increases and so the work could be carried out before the season. Following negotiations between the pub owners and DK and PB, it had been agreed that the pub would pay for the materials involved. The pub had asked for access to be made for dogs to enter/exit the river, and for canoes to be able to pull their craft up onto the greensward. This issue was discussed. Proposed DK, seconded SB, agreed, with JP abstaining.

Granary Electricity supply upgrade – this was linked to the Granary refurbishment; it was agreed to delay this action until a final decision had been made on the refurbishment. **ACTION: JR to notify M J Maynard**

Quay Lane Car Park – the new barrier had been installed, and regular Granary hirers had been informed of the new system. The Trust's caretaker and cleaner had both been advised of the code needed to open the barrier.

Granary Bar – CB had raised concern at the low returns from bar trading and had met with Jam Tartz. They have agreed to 4.5 hours as standard bar hours inclusive within the hire charge then an hourly charge for additional hours. They claim that the cellar/keg system is contributing to high wastage and have proposed trialling a bottle only bar. However, the Trustees felt that at least one drink on draught should remain on offer.

Following ongoing issues with drinks being brought onto the premises, a £100 drinks deposit is now collected by the Trust. Jam Tartz want to stipulate this is only refundable subject to “no alcohol or non-alcoholic drinks being brought onto the premises that have not been purchased through the bar. If staff find drinks on the premises, including in cars in the car park, the entire drinks deposit is forfeited”. It was decided that drinking activity beyond the venue and its perimeter could not be controlled.

It was felt that the Trust needed supporting paperwork alongside the spreadsheet overview in order to analyse its financial activity and satisfy requirements of potential audits. **ACTION: CB to advise Jam Tartz.**

Various options were discussed and it was agreed that members give some thought to what could be done, and to discuss the matter at the next meeting. **ACTION: JR/JM to add to next meeting’s agenda**

Waterways World Annual – it was agreed to defer this until the January meeting. **ACTION: JR/JM to add to next meeting’s agenda**

NCVO – it was agreed not to register with this organisation but to utilise Community Action Suffolk instead.

Future Dates – all approved, and to be entered in Lock Lintel, and on Sudbury Events Listings. **ACTION: CB**

12. Membership Report

Five new members were unanimously approved.

13. Trading Company

MF had been looking into the possibility of the Trust sub-letting the Granary to another user. He had found that this was not possible in the terms of the lease we hold. It would also prove very difficult to vary the lease to allow this. If the Trading Company had to hire the venue for each and every event it ran, this would negate any benefits.

However, a new form of charity, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, might be a solution to the position in which the Trust finds itself. This would allow the Trust to trade as a charity, and would involve a change to the Trust’s Memorandum & Articles. It was thought that the Trust should take the opportunity, if this was agreed upon, to broaden the scope and aims of the Trust, to add education and community benefit to our aims. **ACTION: JM/MF/JR to investigate further, and to consult Carol Green of Peyton, Tyler, Mears, the Trust’s accountants.**

14. Correspondence – none

15. Recent and Forthcoming events

Boat Operations – SBOC Easter Saturday (15 April) to Sunday 29 October

Opening of Katherine’s Quay – Sunday 16 April

Boat Operations – LRG – Easter Saturday (15 April) to Sunday 29 October

Granary Tearoom – Easter Sunday (16 April) to Sunday 29 October

Teddy Bear Boat Rides – Monday 29 May

Coracle Regatta – Saturday 5 August

Pirates on the Stour – Monday 28 August

S2C – 9-10 September

16. Any Other Business

Quay Lane Trust – it was noted from the Minutes of recent meetings of QLT that an offer of £50 towards the cost of repairing the car park wall at the Granary had been made. JR was currently obtaining quotes for this work and would report back to Council in January. **ACTION: JR**

JPh raised the question of the Quay Theatre drain which presently had an outfall across our jetty, discharging into the river. JM agreed to finalise JPh's draft letter to send to the Quay Theatre. **ACTION: JM**

JL raised the matter of the surveyor's report into the stability of both Trusty II and Kathleen. It was pointed out that the test which had been used related to sea-going boats, and not those operated on inland Category A waters. It was further noted that the cost of the tests had not been authorised.

JM stated that mistakes had been made but that the Trust needed move on and draw a line under this. JL as Boat Operations Manager had the authority given to him by Council to decide on an appropriate test and to see that this was carried out.

Concern was also expressed concerning some of the actions being considered by LRG to meet the stability requirements for Trusty. It was agreed that any irreversible alterations to Trusty's hull be stopped immediately. **ACTION: JM to implement this.**

Survey on Francis J – DK had received a quote of £340 to test the hulls of FJ, in particular the condition of the aluminium welds. It was agreed that this was necessary, before a decision was reached on how much to spend on refurbishing FJ. JL recommended that the survey should go ahead.

JM expressed his thanks to everyone who had held the fort whilst he was out of action in November. He was happy to report that all the signs of Mrs Morris's recovery from surgery were good. JM announced that he would be away from 30 January to 3 March 2017.

17. Date of Next Meeting

GD suggested that a daytime meeting would be better, particularly in winter, and it was agreed to discuss this at the next meeting on 12 January 2017.

12 January 2017, at the VEC at 7.00 pm

Meeting closed at 10.30 pm

AFTER MEETING NOTE: JM circulated a note suggesting that the meeting be held at 1.30 pm on Thursday 12 January 2017, at the VEC. Confirmation to follow. **ACTION: JM**