

RIVER STOUR TRUST COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 4 September 2014 19:00 hours, at the VEC, Gt Cornard

Present: Andrew Richardson (AR) - Chairman; Mike Finch (MF), Gareth Cole (GC), Jim Lunn (JL), Roger Brown (RB), Brian Cornell, Emrhys Barrell (by video-link). Also present: Jane Rogers (JR), Sue Brown (SB), Mick Rogers (MR)

1 Apologies for Absence

Ed Gittins.

2 Identification of confidential business, and notification of AOB

New members of Council, advertising, canopy for John Constable.

3 Minutes of the Meeting of 24 July 2014 – identification of confidential items for web version

Motion: GC proposed MF seconded, That the minutes were a true record. Carried unanimously. Motion: GC proposed JL seconded, That the web-site version of the minutes be shown with the agreed corrections. Carried unanimously.

4 New members of Council

Sue Brown and Mick Rogers had both volunteered to join the Council, and AR thanked and welcomed them. Motion: AR proposed BC seconded, That Sue Brown be elected to Council. Carried unanimously. Motion: AR proposed JL seconded, That Mick Rogers be elected to Council. Carried unanimously.

5 Matters Arising not covered by the Agenda

MF said that weedcutting by Jeff Burroughs was underway, and a sufficient cut for the Sudbury Regatta had been done in time, but no agreement with the Environment Agency had yet been signed. It was noted that there had been only 1 discount voucher from the Daily Telegraph promotion scheme presented for a boat trip.

6 Treasurer's Report – GC

GC presented his report. He said the balance in the main a/c was £33,823 and £55,987 in the Special Projects savings a/c. He said Veolia were about to pay £20K of their grant, and a similar amount from Essex Environmental was expected. He noted that our caterers at The Granary were still slow in forwarding our commission. He said that an electrical inspection of The Granary had lead to some remedial work being required. JR said that was mostly complete, and the remainder to finish shortly. GC said that the dead tree on our Gasworks Cut land near the flats could now be removed.

7 Dedham & Flatford Lock refurbishment

GC said that all Flatford finance was now secured and Martin Childs had started work, although he had encountered difficulties in removing the old gates. He said the contractor planned to install new gates in the week beginning 15th Sept. AR suggested a formal opening ceremony afterwards, and he would ask Griff Rhys Jones if he could attend.

GC said that at a meeting with EA and DMMC, the Agency had stated that following continued financial cut-backs, it was their intention to discontinue use of the tilting gates at Dedham and Flatford, citing as reason the lack of cost-effectiveness, the relatively small benefit in flood prevention and the Agency's legal position. He said under the current law the Agency now expected the owners of the existing river control structures to be responsible for structure operation, not the Agency, who had previously only acted using discretionary powers. GC said the DMMC rejected the Agency's position and they would fight it. RB said the Trust might consider taking over responsibility for the gates as it would offer benefits for lock operation/maintenance. It was agreed to ask the EA for estimates of the cost of maintaining the gates. Action MF to contact EA.

8 Stratford St Mary lock

MR said that a tree was blocking the downstream channel. RB said that £5000 approx was needed to finish the downstream channel works, and it was agreed to allocate £5000 for the work next year. SB said Land Drainage consent for the work still had problems. RB said a temporary flash lock might be a way of providing a dam for the works.

MF said that John Baxter intended to make contact with Mrs Tolhurst to try and see if he could find ways of advancing the Trust's cause, and in particular suggest constructing a new landing stage on Tolhurst land near the footbridge for passenger access at Stratford.

9 Minutes of other Meetings

SBOC. JL said that wedding passengers preferred to use Edwardian Lady due to its greater size and stability. JR said the current package price was based on Rosette, and would be increased next year for the new boat.

Action JR to investigate wedding prices.

It was agreed that volunteers would be expected to pay for their own private charters at a reduced rate of £50 once per year rather than getting free use of a boat. EB said that other volunteers, who did not crew, also need to come within this scheme.

The crew dress code was discussed. It was suggested that identity badges could be put on lifejackets so trainees did not need RST clothes until they were qualified. Action BC to investigate.

AR suggested that a risk-assessment workshop was needed. Action AR.

BC said that advertising/display boards were needed on the boats, particularly the lighter. SB said that following some incidents we need to emphasise that all crew are volunteers and not paid. AR said any displays need more thought and agreement.

LRG. MR said that LRG had difficulties paying into our bank account, due to the lack of local branches. GC said he would look at Post Office paying-in arrangements. MR said that Trusty had hit an underwater object which affected her prop and rudder. The rudder had been sorted. It was agreed to get a spare prop which could be used to replace Truty's one this winter.

10 Recent and forthcoming events

S2C. JR said it was fully booked, but more volunteers were needed. She said that there was no organiser for next year, and emphasised how important the role and the event was to the Trust. RB said that he and James Parkinson will organise grass-cutting with the Trust's new strimmer in preparation for the event.

AR noted that the Trust still needed to organise a display board at the picnic site.

11 Correspondence

MF said he had written to Sudbury Rowing Club to ask for a mooring fee for their training boat. He would also contact the owner of the boat moored at the Quay Theatre.

12 Administrator's report

JR circulated her report. She said Sudbury Town Council were objecting to A-board on pavements. EB said that Tony Platt had agreed to put up a finger sign in the town pointing to our boat trips. JR said the Henny Swann was up for sale, and would also be closing 26 Sept to 7 Oct. She also said that phone handsets needed replacing. Action: JR to investigate,

13 Membership report

None

14 Any Other Business

Rain canopy for John Constable. BC said that we should investigate an easily removable rain-cover for the lighter, as bookings were cancelled in bad weather. Action: BC.

Marketing. AR said that a marketing team were needed. Action: AR & JR.

SB said that more tea-room volunteers were needed.

15 Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 16 October 19:00 VEC. RB and SB offered apologies in advance as they would be on holiday.

Meeting closed 21:30