

## **River Stour Trust**

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 19 February 2015, at 6.00 pm at The Visitor & Education Centre of the River Stour Trust

Those present: Emrhys Barrell (EB), John Baxter (JB), Roger Brown (RB), Sue Brown (SB), Gareth Cole (GC), Mike Finch (MF), Jim Lunn (JL), Mick Rogers (MR), Jane Rogers (Administrator, JR)

Observing: Nick Thompson

### 1 - Apologies for Absence

Brian Cornell, Andrew Richardson (Chairman)

In the absence of Andrew Richardson, it was agreed that Mike Finch (Company Secretary) should chair the meeting.

### 2 – Identification of Confidential Business

It was agreed that there was no confidential business to discuss.

Items were added to the agenda under AOB

### 3 - Minutes of the meeting of 17 January 2015

Minor corrections were made to the circulated draft, and the Minutes were approved subject to these amendments.

Proposed MF, seconded JB. Approved unanimously.

### 4 – Matters arising from those Minutes

There were no matters arising which would not be covered by items already on the agenda for the meeting.

### 5 - Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report was circulated before the meeting.

GC further reported that a VAT inspection was scheduled for 23 February 2015, following our VAT return for December 2014.

The question of our subscriptions being subject to VAT had been raised; RB suggested that we could refer to the IWA for advice if needed.

Accounts for 2104 were ready to go to our accountants, Peyton Tyler Mears, for checking and auditing once the VAT inspection was completed.

It was further noted that GC would monitor our trading income for VAT purposes, and that a check should be made on our trading status.

Various questions on the current figures were answered.

MF raised the question of authorisation for spending of small amounts, e.g. when working on boat maintenance. After discussion it was agreed that the Treasurer's preferred method of looking at each item on its merits, would continue. However if a task had already been approved by Council with an agreed figure, it would not be necessary to refer each item back to the Treasurer. If an unexpected expenditure arose and could not wait until the next Council meeting, it was agreed that two or three Trustees could discuss and approve the expenditure, whilst referring it to the next Council meeting. The Treasurer would report back to Council at each meeting, on current expenditure.

### Flatford Lock

GC reported that plaques supplied by Veolia had been fitted to the gates to mark Veolia's contribution to the project.

Discussion followed on the sluices at Flatford Mill, when it was agreed that the Trust should maintain contact with the National Trust on this matter.

It was noted that we would consider a gate that is also a sluice at Dedham.

### 6a - Dedham Lock

MF had written to Irwin Forbes of the EA about the continued use of Kathleen above Dedham Lock, while the lock was inoperable. He was also asked to write a separate letter to Paul Separovic concerning the use of tilting gates, as previous enquiries had failed to elicit a written response. No further communication had been received from Dedham Mill Management Committee (DMMC), and it was understood that we were waiting for the EA to make contact with them. It was felt that before any further progress could be made, an agreement on flood control had to be reached between the EA and DMMC.

With regard to the tilting gate currently in place at Dedham, the Trust would prefer the option of removing the gate, and leaving the mechanism lying flat in the bottom of the lock chamber or removing it. Again the Trust is awaiting action from the EA.

### 6b - River Stour Map

Work on the revisions to the existing guide had begun and proofs were expected shortly.

### 6c – Weed cutting

The EA seem prepared to continue working with the Trust and Green-Blue Marine (Jeff Burroughs) on the necessary weeding cutting on the Stour. Jeff Burroughs has provisionally agreed to carry out the work at the appropriate time, depending on his other commitments

### 7 - Stratford St Mary Lock

Discussion was held about the purchase of Versadoc raft blocks. EB was asked to investigate the best prices and it was agreed to defer a final decision on purchase until after HMRC had refunded VAT from the purchase of Flatford Lock Gates. It was also agreed that EB should look at the cost of handrails for the Versadoc. **Action: EB**

RB told Council that there was some pipework on the site at Stratford St Mary, which was now redundant, and it was agreed that this should be sold.

A work party had been re-established and work had commenced on brush clearing, in preparation for work in July. The EA have placed an embargo on work during the bird nesting season.

Martin Childs Ltd had estimated a sum of £125,000 for the replacement of the gates and refurbishment of the lock itself. It was agreed that it would be necessary to work from the Essex & Suffolk site adjacent to the lock, and negotiations would be put in place to make this possible.

Planning permission would be necessary to carry out the gate replacement and GC undertook to ascertain which would be the appropriate local authority. **Action: GC**

RB mentioned the need for a contingency plan for the disposal of spoil material from the site.

### 8a - SBOC

The proposed meeting had been postponed until Saturday 21 March, 10.00 am at the VEC.

JL requested antifoul paint for the boats at Sudbury. It was noted that FJ had never been antifouled.

FJ's motor had been serviced and Seamark Nunn were arranging to re-fit the engine to the boat.

It had been planned to re-launch FJ, Edwardian Lady and Rosette on 20 March, with the help of Pat Corps, who had retrieved the boats in November.

Boat Safety Certificates were due for Rosette, FJ and Trusty in April and it was agreed to engage Steve Moffat to carry out the necessary inspections, at an estimated cost of £100.00 per boat.

It was also agreed to spend £100 on new fenders and ropes for Edwardian Lady, and a similar sum on navigation lights for her.

EB suggested that in order to prolong the life of the side screens, the boats should be covered over in winter. It was agreed that EB would look for appropriate tarpaulins and prices. **Action: EB**

#### Rotary School Project

JL had put together a programme of appropriate activities which had been sent to the Project co-ordinator. It was agreed that JL could purchase six pond dipping kits at a cost of approximately £16.00 each for future use on educational projects. **Action: JL**

#### 8b – LRG

A sum of £700, donated for work to be carried out at Cattawade, was confirmed as available for LRG to carry out work at Cattawade. The possibility of using contractors for site maintenance in the future was discussed.

#### 9 - Lighter Inspection and re-painting

Brian Kennell (original builder) had been to look at John Constable. He reported that the idea of craning the boat out of the water for maintenance was a good one. Costs for this, plus the cost of softwood sleepers to build a suitable cradle for the vessel were estimated at £1300.00.

Mr Kennell had also provided a maintenance schedule for John Constable, which was available to Trustees.

Various treatments were discussed and it was agreed that MF would contact Pioneer to determine what the original coatings had been. **Action: MF**

The condition of the hull would be assessed once the boat was out of the water.

It was also agreed that no bookings would be taken for JC until it was known when she would be back in the water.

#### 10 – Granary Refurbishment

A preliminary plan had been circulated for consultation and various amendments had been identified. These would be passed back to the architect. The services provisions for the building would need to be identified, in order to ensure that new facilities could be connected.

Once the plans had been approved, planning permission could be sought and the plans put out to tender.

Granary decking – a sample was shown of a plastic, heavy duty, non-slip, material which would provide a long term solution rather than wooden decking. However it was deemed that the existing piles would last for some years yet, and it would not be desirable to mix plastic decking and wooden piles. It was therefore agreed that wooden decking would be used. A rota system for jet washing the decking would be put in place to maintain the decking.

It was agreed that if any new jetties were built consideration would be given to using the plastic material with matching plastic, long life, piles.

It was noted that the jetty at the Henny Swan required maintenance.

## 11– Recent and forthcoming events

Risk Assessment Workshop – this had been well attended and thanks were extended to AR for producing an excellent session.

LRG have formed a work party under the leadership of Colin Daines to work on risk assessments on the Lower River Group. SBOC will set up a work party after their forthcoming meeting. The tearoom assessments will be carried out by the administrator and members of the tearoom team. There may be cost implications after the assessments have been carried out. **ACTION: SBOC, LRG, JR**

### Forthcoming Events

Sudbury on Show – Saturday 7 March

### Flatford Lock Opening

There was still no news of the availability of Griff Rhys Jones, so no date could be fixed. **ACTION: AR**

### Great Cornard Village Fete – 4 July

AR had agreed to cover this.

LRG - Pre-season meeting – Marlborough Head, Dedham, 5 March, 2.30 pm

### River Stour Trust Annual General Meeting

It was proposed and agreed that this would take place on Wednesday, 24 June, at 7.00 pm in the Granary. **ACTION: JR to check other users of car park**

## 12 – Correspondence

A letter had been received from Ian Williams, Anglian Adventures, discussing the possibility of camping at Stratford St Mary. It was agreed that there was no objection in principle to the proposals, subject to him finding a suitable area for tents, and providing adequate supervision of the young people attending the event.

A letter had been received from a resident of Quay Lane outlining various concerns about traffic, and ball games. It was agreed that MF would reply. **ACTION: MF**

## 13 - Future of EA Navigations

EB had produced a paper concerning the future of the River Stour in light of the proposal by the Government to proceed with the transfer of navigation rights from the EA to the Canals and Rivers Trust, early in the next Parliament. Discussion followed concerning the best way to proceed with protecting the River, the work that had been done over previous years in maintaining the river and the navigation. It was agreed that the profile of the river and navigation needed to be raised and this would be discussed at the forthcoming Strategy meeting. It was agreed that seed money would be needed for publicity documents and this would also be discussed at the Strategy meeting.

## 14 – Administrator's Report

This had been circulated prior to the meeting and was accepted.

It was agreed to purchase embroidered badges for Boat Crews to attach to personal garments, where Trust garments were not available in the correct sizes.

It was also agreed to purchase car windscreen stickers with the Trust logo. These would be issued to Trust members only.

Donations totalling £214 had been received during the preceding month and had been acknowledged.

#### Sudbury Tourist Information Centre

The TIC was interested in stocking our merchandise and in us stocking their postcards. No decision was reached on this point.

First Aid courses had been arranged for Wednesdays in March, in co-ordination with JL and had been advertised to all boat crews, working parties and tearoom crew.

#### 15 – Membership Report

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. New members proposed were Mr & Mrs P Sebbage, Mr N Thompson, Mr G Clark and Ms S Kenyon and Mr & Mrs M Clark.

Acceptance of the report was proposed by GC and seconded by JL. It was unanimously approved.

#### 16 – Any Other Business

River Stour Trust Calendar – EB suggested producing a calendar at a cost of £1800 for 500 copies. After discussion, it was agreed that we would be unlikely to sell sufficient copies to make this economically viable and the idea was dropped.

Weed Cutting at Stoke by Nayland – Residents at Stoke by Nayland had approached members of the Trust to ask about cutting the weed at Stoke by Nayland in exchange for a donation. After discussion it was agreed that the matter should be further investigated.

#### 17 – Date of next meetings

Strategy meeting – Sunday 8 March, at 10.00 am at the VEC – GC to circulate a paper for discussion, and Trustees were invited to add further ideas and proposals to the paper

Council meeting – Sunday 15 March, at 10.00 am at the VEC.