

RIVER STOUR TRUST COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 12 November 2015 19:00 hours, at the VEC, Gt Cornard

Present: Andrew Richardson (AR) - Chairman; Mike Finch (MF), Roger Brown (RB), Sue Brown (SB), Emrhys Barrell (by video-link), Gordon Denney (GD), Mick Rogers (MR), Mike Harrington-Spier (MHS), Catherine Burrows – Administrator (CB). Members also present; James Parkinson, Pam Johnson

1. Apologies for Absence

Jim Lunn.

2. Identification of confidential business, and notification of AOB topics

Confidential: President's role.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of 15 Oct 2015 – identification of confidential items

Motion: MR proposed GD seconded, That the minutes were a true record. Carried nem con. Motion: GC proposed JL seconded, It was agreed that the web-site version of the minutes needed no changes.

4. Matters Arising not covered by the agenda

SB said that recent S2C experience showed that without a lengthsmans scheme there was a need for a river inspection immediately prior to S2C. It was agreed to ask River Stour Boating to help us by reporting any problems. RB said he did not support paying LRG for clerical work. AR said that some of the work might be done at the VEC by the suggested additional clerical support.

There was discussion about the next edition of Lock Lintel, and it was agreed to include recent events provided the postage costs were kept down. Action EB & CB

There was discussion about lack of progress with Flatford Mill sluice problems, use of the tilting gate and flooding. MF said there was a meeting of interested parties in early December, but action was down to the Environment Agency and the National Trust. MHS suggested another letter from us to the NT regional office, but from the Chairman this time.

MHS said that SBOC had looked at the stability of Francis J and were comfortable with it. AR said the Trust had many years experience of this without problems. EB said that the problem was proving the stability of pontoon boats with a set number of passengers, and said the only appropriate test recognised in the UK for boats made prior to the Recreational Craft Directive was in the Inland Waters Small Passenger Boat Code (IWSPBC) published by the MCA; this was the 7 degree max lateral stability test. AR said this Code was not law, but if FJ passed it showed due diligence by the Trust. MF described the US Coast Guard test for pontoon boats. There was much further discussion about boat weight, passenger numbers, stability and possible changes to Francis J to improve all these. Motion: MR proposed SB seconded, That FrancisJ must be tested asap to see if it can pass the 7 degree test, before any further action could be discussed. Carried unanimously. Action MHS, JL.

5. Treasurer's Report & appointment of new Treasurer

MF reported that the balance in all 3 accounts was £62,400 approx. He said that the bookkeeper was making progress with resolving the office errors which affected SAGE entries. It was agreed to pay the additional costs for work on the end of year accounts (approx. £500) enabling our accountant to visit the office and work alongside the bookkeeper to resolve matters; as both the bookkeeper and Treasurer had found this beneficial for the Trust last year.

CB said that there was some notable outgoings such as £2699.20 to the EA (for April-September 2015 sales of craft registration, river guides, navigation keys); and £1800.00 for the renewal of The Granary's licence to be an approved venue for weddings for 3 years (until 2018).

- Insurances. After discussion it was agreed to continue with all insurance policies as at present.

- Pensions. MF noted that the Trust needed to have a pension scheme in place by next autumn, and he would start making enquiries. Action MF.

There were no volunteers for the Treasurer's role, and it was agreed to re-advertise amongst members but with less onerous requirements. Action AR, CB

6. Granary refurbishment

MF said that planning permission was granted for the changes, but that builders needed to be sought, and/or further drawing for Building Regs permission. CB said the plans were flawed concerning Trust storage needs, and needed revision. It was agreed to postpone the works for a year. AR said he would manage the project alongside CB.

7. President's role

MHS presented his paper on this. EB suggested that the format be less prescriptive and said it was important to keep regular contact with a possible new president, and not let things slide. It was agreed to discuss this further at a strategy meeting.

8. Recent and forthcoming events

It was noted that a wedding had been booked at the Granary which clashed with next year's proposed S2C date of 10/11 Sept. CB said the only other close and available date was 24 Sept as the other weekends are also booked for weddings and it is impossible to have S2C coincide with these type of functions. AR said he would not be available 24/25 Sept weekend but it was agreed that this was the only viable option.

9. Stratford St Mary, Dedham & Flatford locks

GD said he was planning to meet Environment Agency reps at Stratford to discuss the problem of the decaying tree root by the lock. RB proposed that the Trust makes a start on digging out the upstream channel, as little other work would be taking place at Stratford next year. It was agreed to look further into this option. Action RB..

MF said that it was recently found that the owner of Lock Cottage at Dedham owned the bank where the canoe jetty was located, and was against helping the Trust use that jetty for wedding trips. Also the other field owners were not in favour of vehicle access. It was agreed to pursue other options for those trips, such as a private garden at Stratford.

10. Minutes of other Meetings:

- SBOC. 3 boats had been removed from the water for winter storage. The Bakers Mill residents committee had been informed afterwards that a bollard fixing opposite the VEC gate had been broken by the Trust. MF reported that this was because of lack of maintenance by Bakers Mill residents.

- LRG. Both boats taken out for winter storage.

- Bakers Mill project group. AR said the section 106 money was likely to be lost back to Barratts. It was noted that the footpath from Sudbury is still delayed due to no agreement with the fishing club.

11. Administrator's report

CB presented her report.

It was agreed to investigate buying new doors for the Granary balcony. Action CB.

It was agreed not to service the VEC lift, and thus it stays out of action.

It was agreed not to continue with a 10% services commission fee, and to look at alternatives for when the renovations are complete.

It was agreed that no significant time should be spent preparing the 2015 boat movement survey information for the EA, and just provide estimates. Action CB.

It was agreed to respond positively to a request from Bures Scouts for help in building a jetty. Action MF

It was agreed that the Trust would reiterate its recent decision not to put a grill over the mill-leaf culvert following another request from the Bakers Mill residents committee. Action CB.

It was agreed to get an ink cartridge and cleaning kit for the franking machine. Action CB.

It was agreed to facilitate an instalment payment plan for customers that had not been invoiced and/or paid their final balance payments. Action CB.

It was agreed that MF would take over as CB's line manager for the present. Action MF.

It was agreed that boat booking T&Cs were needed. Action CB.

It was agreed to progress a mobile card payment facility for boat operations and tea room. Action CB.

It was agreed to research 03 numbers to replace the 08 numbers currently in use for the boat operations. Action CB.

12. Correspondence

MF noted another complaint from a fisherman, which showed ignorance of navigation needs and rules, and will respond appropriately once SBOC have commented on the assertions. Action MF

13. Membership report

Motion: MF proposed MHS seconded: That the new members be accepted. Carried unanimously.

14. Any Other Business

MF described EB's offer to build new throttle/controller installations for Rosette and Kathleen. EB said the old controllers & throttles cannot now be repaired, and any failure would cause many weeks delay to build new ones. He recommended buying a spare controller also, as although a current item, the manufacturers lead time might still be several weeks. Motion: MF proposed GD seconded, That we get new controllers & throttles for Rosette and Kathleen plus a spare controller. Carried *nem con*.

15. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 10th December 19:00 at the VEC