

## RIVER STOUR TRUST

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY, 13 APRIL 2017

At the VEC, Great Cornard

Those present: John Morris (JM, in the chair), Emrhys Barrell (EB, via Skype), Paul Brewerton (PB), Gordon Denny (GD), Bob Foster (BF), Pam Johnson (PJ), David Kirkman (DK), Jim Lunn (JL), James Parkinson (JP), Graham Simmons (GS, Treasurer). Jane Rogers (JR, Company Secretary, taking notes), Catherine Burrows (CB)

1. Apologies for absence: Roger Brown, Sue Brown, John Phillips, Alan Thomas
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2017.  
Confidential items were identified. Proposal of acceptance JP, seconded JL, approved unanimously.
3. Matters arising from those Minutes:  
Action points were identified and progress reported.  
Other matters not appearing on the agenda were identified and placed in AOB.
4. Financial Report – GS – circulated  
GS ran through his report and outlined his plans for controlling and providing for future expenditure. He had produced a spreadsheet with known future plans outlined, and asked that this be kept up to date, with information to him. Any new projects were to be identified, with possible dates, so that finance could be provided.  
GS spoke also about changes to the way SAGE would be used, to provide better reports and to maximise efficiency. Staff training would be needed and would be put in place.
5. Locks
  - (a) Stratford St Mary – GD reported on funding received from the IWA's Tony Harris Legacy Fund, which provided the 10% sum required by Cory as funding from another source. GD agreed that he would deal with the straightforward conditions required by the IWA in accepting the money. He would circulate details, and the formal acceptance would be dealt with at the Council's May Meeting. EB suggested that the Trust let the IWA know that we only needed £8600 because of successful grant applications and the long time labour of volunteers. **ACTION: GD and JR**  
Working Party – GD reported that the lock chamber was now completely clear, though it had been a daunting task. The stop logs were holding well. Hargreaves (the gate builders) would be coming in May to remove the old gates to use as a pattern for the new gates. A working party and raft would be required.  
Huge thanks were expressed to those who had worked on emptying the lock chamber – a very muddy task.  
JM proposed that the lock be named the *Roger and Susan Brown Lock* and this was accepted unanimously.  
It was further proposed that the new footbridge be named *Gordon's Bridge*, in recognition of GD's work on the SSM project. This too was accepted unanimously. GD expressed his delight and thanks.
  - (b) Dedham Lock – JM reported that he and Kevin Taylor (KT, a member of LRG) had met with Gary Cockett (EA), with very productive results. They had also corresponded with Dedham Mill Management Committee, and had agreed a special meeting on 26 April.

- (c) Flatford Lock – JM reported on the situation regarding the tilting gate. At the meeting with GC, he reiterated that the Trust did not wish to take over the tilting gate and its operation. The gate has now been lowered for the immediate future; it will be lifted again in the summer so that divers can go down, to clear the floor of the lock before the gate is finally lowered and decommissioned. The electricity supply will be disconnected from the gate mechanism, but will be left in place on the lockside.
- GD stated that there was a need for a set of stop logs to be kept at Flatford, in case of future need. It was agreed that he obtain a quote for a set of metal logs, as used at SSM, as these were light enough for a working party to handle, while effective enough to hold back the water flow.
- Discussion followed about placing non-slip material on the lock itself, as the walkway could be slippery in wet conditions. JP suggested the use of metal tacks, left ¼” proud, and JM commented that he had seen staples, again left proud of the surface used, but BF requested that material similar to that used on the jetties be used. This was agreed.
- ACTION: BF**

6. Boat Operations

- (a) BOM report had been previously circulated and was accepted unanimously.
- (b) SBOC report had been previously circulated. PB added some information subsequent to the meeting. An advertisement for recruiting additional crew had been published. Two new crew members had qualified. Installation of anti-slip material had been completed at the Granary and Dedham.
- (c) LRG report had been circulated. BF reported that the group would like to install a permanent jetty in place of the temporary raft jetty at SSM, now that they had trialled the service between SSM and Le Talbooth for weddings. It was agreed that, at an estimated cost of £300, the work should go ahead.
- BF further reported that the group would like to change its name to Dedham Vale Boating, to reflect better that area of operations of the group. After discussion, including a comment from GS that as a Trust we should be treating the river as a whole, it was agreed that the name change to Dedham Vale Boat Operation Committee, in line with Sudbury Boat Operation Committee, be accepted.
- JM proposed that the Boat Trip leaflets be amended as necessary.

7. AGM – Wednesday 28 June, 7.00 for 7.30 pm at the Granary

It was agreed that the report from the directors to be included in the Annual Report and Accounts be discussed at the meeting of Council in May. GS would provide wording to cover the position of Thames Electric Launch Co and EB in relation to supplies for the Trust. The Accounts would need to be formally approved at the June Council meeting (proposed date 8 June), in order to circulate them in time for the actual AGM. Mail out date was agreed as 12 June.

8. Granary Refurbishment – JR reported that work was due to start in the week beginning 17 April 2017 on the upgrading of the toilets.

9. Company Secretary’s Report – circulated

CB was asked to leave the meeting while a possible pay-rise was discussed. It was agreed that the Administrator’s pay be increased with effect from 1 May 2017. Proposed PJ, seconded JL, approved unanimously. **ACTION: JR**

CB rejoined the meeting.

Maintenance of Fire and Security systems – it was proposed by GD, seconded by GS, that the quotation from Anglian Fire and Security be accepted. Approved unanimously. **ACTION: JR**

Fire Risk Assessment – this report had been circulated; comments were made about some details, so it was agreed that AT and Colin Daines (CD, Health & Safety adviser) be asked to work through the Report, and report back to Council on possible errors, and what recommendations were essential to be carried out.

10. Administrator’s Report – previously circulated

This was accepted unanimously.

11. Membership Report – previously accepted. Three new members were proposed and accepted unanimously.

GD told the Council about help received at SSM during the lock clearing and proposed that free membership, for one year, be offered to Tom Brown in appreciation of his efforts. This was unanimously approved. **ACTION: CB/JR**

12. Recent and Forthcoming Events

St George’s Day event – 23 April – the Granary would be open as usual, with the boats operating short trips, and offering would-be crew the opportunity to try handling a boat. Other events would be taking place on the Cricket Ground opposite the Granary.

13. Any Other Business

- i. Willow Tree overhanging Gas Works Cut – DK reported that this was now blocking access to Katherine’s Quay. It was noted that Eden Rose Coppice had no objections to the tree being pollarded. A tree surgeon was needed to carry out the work.  
**ACTION: JR to find tree surgeon urgently**
- ii. Chairman’s Discretionary Fund – BF proposed that the Chairman have a budget for immediate actions which could not wait until a future council meeting. This was unanimously approved.
- iii. Trading Company – JM requested that the setting up of a trading company be re-investigated. RST had taken over weed-cutting operations from the previous contractor; however the EA were unable to pay the Trust directly for this, although they could pay a third party nominated by the Trust. JM proposed the setting up of a trading company, initially with a limited scope, to cover this, and reported that he had requested a meeting the Trust’s accountants to carry out further research. DK questioned the Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT) policy on such matters; no information has yet been publicised. It was agreed that JM should carry on investigating.  
**ACTION: JM**
- iv. Sudbury Rowing Club had notified the Trust of their intentions to modify their jetty; no problems were identified with their proposals.
- v. River Stour Boating CIC had copied the Trust in on a report to the EA on the condition of the river and its environs, prior to the start of their season. Gratitude was expressed to RSBCIC for their work. Help was offered for future clearing, including an offer from GD to help with chainsaw work.
- vi. Access to the VEC – JR reported that children had been seen entering the grounds after hours, by squeezing through the gates. She also reported on teenagers playing on the weir. It was noted that other than adding extra warning signs, there was not much the Trust could do, but JP agreed to look at the gates to see if they could be improved to prevent illicit entry. **ACTION: JP**
- vii. JP reported that lifelines were missing from the lifebelts situated in the VEC grounds; it was agreed that he should go ahead and replace as necessary. **ACTION: JP**

14. Date, time and venue of next meeting: Thursday, 11 May, 7.00 pm at The Grove, Dedham, courtesy of Bob Foster.

Meeting closed at 9.00 pm

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