

## RIVER STOUR TRUST

### MEETING OF COUNCIL ON THURSDAY 13 JULY 2017

At the VEC, Great Cornard, at 7.00 pm

Those present: John Morris (JM, in the chair), 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), Graham Simmons (GS), Alan Thomas (AT); Jane Rogers (JR, taking notes)

Apologies for absence: Emrhys Barrell, Catherine Burrows

JM welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then quoted from Article 49 of our Memorandum and Articles of Association, which state that the Council should annually elect a Chairman. It was unanimously proposed and agreed that Mr Morris should continue in his role as Chairman of Council.

#### 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2017

Various corrections were identified.

2(a) SB queried the wording of the paragraph relating to boat loading. It was agreed that AT would write a definitive statement. **ACTION: AT**

Amendment to text – following JL's abstention on the vote regarding passenger numbers, the text should read: Proposed by JP, approved by majority. JL abstained.

Paragraph 9 – confidential information would be redacted before publication on the website.

Paragraph 10 – DK requested that his name be removed from the Action relating to filming of S2C.

3. (a) Identification of confidential items. These were identified.

3. (b) JM went through Action Points:

3b JM had arranged meeting with Gary Cockett re the tilting gate at Flatford. Mike Finch and James Parkinson would also attend.

7d GD and JP had visited Flatford Lock, and determined that there was a gap at the bottom of the gates. Hargreaves would be looking into a possible repair.

7a – Abstraction Licence. GD reported that the volume of water we would be allowed to flow through SSM lock would be the equivalent of 6 fillings in any one day. He was still investigating the refund of the abstraction licence fee, which had been discussed earlier.

7b JM had obtained the breakdown of costs for maintaining a tilting gate.

7c JR had now revised the insurance of our locks, simply to include the lock gates, and this was now in place.

8 – the life jackets at DVB had now been checked. The member of crew with the injured hand had stood down from crewing and skippering duties for the present.

#### 4. Annual General Meeting

This was held on 28 June at the Granary, and was deemed to be a successful event. The Trustees who stood for re-election were unanimously appointed, and the co-option of Mr Graham Simmons and Mr Alan Thomas as Trustees was confirmed.

SB commended GS on his excellent, clear report.

## 5. Financial Report – previously circulated

GS added to his report the need to build up a buffer over the summer to finance future projects. He and CB had worked on PayPal Governance between the Trust and PayPal, and this had now been resolved.

He also reported that CB had training in hand for use of the card payment terminals for use by SBOC and DVB.

RB suggested changing the name of the Lock Navigation and Maintenance bank account to something more appropriate. GS recommended waiting until the end of the financial year to do this, when the proposed financial strategy was in place. This was agreed.

## 6. Locks

(a) Cornard – nothing to report

(b) SSM – GD reported that the gates had been built and that everything was in place for installation to commence, week beginning 7 August.

(c) Dedham – Kevin Taylor had been in discussion with Dedham Mill Management Committee; following their AGM where they had agreed to continue negotiations with the Trust. DMMC wanted to retain the tilting gate, but it was made clear that RST would not contribute any funds towards this aim. Negotiations were ongoing.

(d) Flatford – GD had reported earlier in the meeting on the leak at Flatford. He also reported that there was a need for stop logs at Flatford. It was noted that the EA might not use stop logs, but rather divers to close down the tilting gate. There was insufficient time to obtain stop logs for work on the lock or tilting gates in August.

## 7. Boat Operations

(a) SBOC report circulated.

John Constable. DK had asked for his note to be circulated concerning the future of JC. EB had replied that he and Ian were still working with Curtis for a solution to the control problems, but they were unable to guarantee that a repair could be effected which would solve the problem. It was agreed that a group consisting of AT, DK, EB and PB be formed to consult on the options and report back to Council.

DK noted that if replacement engines were needed, perhaps the Trust should consider Torqeedo electric motors, which could be supplied by Charity & Taylor, a Lowestoft based company.

MF was endeavouring to find the original agreement for our ownership of John Constable in order to determine what restrictions there might be.

It was noted that several charters had been affected by the breakdown of JC, which resulted in some compensation having to be given.

(b) DVB – report tabled. It was noted that they were putting together a proposal for some paid help in managing their charter bookings to bring to the next meeting of Council.

(c) Boat Operations Manager's Report – previously circulated.

AT reported that work would be needed on the 12v wiring on the Frolics. PB stated that he was able to obtain a free condition report, which would determine if any repairs were essential immediately, and what could be left until the winter. GS asked if it would be possible to check all the electric boats at the same time. The 12 volt system covers horn, lights, bilge pump and chargers.

8. Company Secretary's Report – previously circulated.

JM agreed to follow up on replacement of the disabled access at the VEC which was in need of some repair. Plans had been drawn up to remove the ramp, and replace it with a new ramp parallel to the side of the VEC building. John Mills had been asked to carry out further repairs to the existing steps in the meantime.

Long Melford Fair – JR was asked to circulate information, asking for volunteers. **ACTION: JR**  
JM also mentioned Great Cornard Village Fete 2018, who were very keen that RST should have a presence as many residents of Great Cornard seemed not to know of our existence. S2C –SBOC reported that they had at least one person for each of the tasks on their list, but teams were not yet complete. DVB had been asked to supply volunteers, but had not yet reported on their progress. Otherwise progress was being made for other arrangements for the event.

9. Administrator's Report – no report

JR admitted that it was her fault that no report was available and apologised that this had not been done. CB was on holiday, and JR ran out of time to deal with this in her absence.

10. Membership Report – tabled

The report as tabled was accepted.

JM proposed a new Honorary Member. This candidate had allowed the Trust to place a temporary jetty at the foot of her garden, to facilitate bridal trips to Le Talbooth Hotel, which had allowed the continuance of this option for wedding at the Hotel. They had held an open garden recently in aid of charity and had asked for Kathleen to be present to offer boat rides. This had proved very successful, resulting in a donation to the Trust.

JM's proposal was unanimously accepted. **ACTION: JR to write to the candidate.**

It was noted at this point that the Versadock jetty needed some stabilisation; solutions would be sought. **ACTION: JP, BF, RB**

11. Recent and Forthcoming Events

2018 Celebrations – JM had formed a small group to co-ordinate plans for the year. MF, JR, SB and PJ were members, chaired by JM. Initial plans included the following:

Members' Fun Afternoon – May – at the VEC, with boat trips, some entertainment, waterbus service from the Granary to the VEC. JR to organise

Mid-Summer Festival – 23 June – Bures – Small Boat rally – more plans to come

Raft Racing etc. – mid-July, Flatford. SB to organise – more plans to come

Trail Boat Rally – August, after Coracle Regatta, and Rowing Regatta – Friars

Meadow, Sudbury, possible celebratory event in Granary, with entertainment on the Saturday evening – MF involved

S2C – 22-23 September – SB and RB to organise.

Still to fit in – formal opening of Roger Brown Lock, and anything else that might occur.

DK to look after some publicity in the Suffolk Free Press – possible double page spread; MF and JL can help with historical information about the Trust and the River. JM will liaise with local broadcast media, and the national waterways press.

SB suggested that the Trust should push wherever possible to deliver talks about its work.

PB suggested a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary decal, which could be displayed on the fleet, and which could be used on everything published about our celebrations. It was agreed to approach local artists' groups and George Whybrow to see if anyone was interested in designing this.

It was noted that Babergh and Mid-Suffolk were responsible for the overall management of Friars Meadow, and that it might be possible for a one-off camping permit be granted for the Boat Rally in August.

Many volunteers would be needed to make all this happen, and appeals would be circulated.

## 12. Correspondence

An email had been received from Moffatt Marine, re the safety testing of our boats. This matters was handed over to AT to resolved. **ACTION: AT**

## 13. Any Other Business

GD reported that ITV wanted to film the installation of the new gates being installed at SSM. Hargreaves had agreed, subject to strict Health & Safety controls being in place. It was suggested that banners advertising the Trust and Hargreaves be in place for the filming. GD agreed to act on this. **ACTION: GD**

SB asked the whereabouts of two electric outboards which she thought belonged to the Trust. It was thought that there was one in the shed at Dedham, and one in the VEC shed. JL thought that there were originally three motors. It was agreed that investigations would be made, and information passed to SB. **ACTION: SBOC and DVB**

Access to the river at Stratford St Mary: This particular access was via a jetty opposite the Swan Inn on land belonging to Northumbrian Water, represented here by Essex & Suffolk Water (E&SW). In earlier years the Swan had paid rent on this land, but after a request for a rent increase which they declined, discussions had been ongoing. GD had been in touch with E&SW to suggest that they offer free access, and erect a notice to note that this was at their discretion, so that the jetty could still be used by the public.

It was further noted that the Swan and RSBCIC might be willing to contribute to a small rent for the area concerned.

It was also noted that negotiations might needed with the Swan, for the use of their overflow carpark to facilitate use of the jetty. Negotiations were ongoing.

It was also noted that, on the lock island, there was a potentially dangerous dead tree, which if it fell might land across the jetty. At present no-one owned the island, making it difficult to deal with the tree. Babergh Council might be persuaded to look into this matter.

GD noted that he had attended the recent River Stour Users' Group meeting, where he noted that the EA did not wish to be involved in a possible new scheme at Wiston.

A request had been received from a member who moored his boat in the cut leading up to the Quay Theatre, for dredging the area, as it had silted up. It was agreed that it was our water way, and that we could, if we wished dredge here. The big problem would be the disposal of the dredged material. It was noted that boats had been moved around on that jetty, enabling the boat in question to be moved to deeper water. It was then agreed that the task be added to the work list, with no priority.

DK raised the issue of a child falling into the water during a pond-dipping exercise at the VEC recently. After discussion it was agreed that our Risk Assessment for such visits should be reviewed and strengthened.

It was suggested that before the school arrived, RST should have sight of the school's risk assessment; that RST does not take responsibility for any land-based activities during the visit; and that the school's risk assessment should include the provision of life jackets.

JM reported that a volunteer crew member, having been suspended earlier in the season, had asked for his suspension to be reviewed. After discussing the situation, it was agreed

that AT would meet the member concerned to assess the situation, and report back to Council. **ACTION: AT**

GS suggested that there should be an appeal system whereby the member could appeal to Council, if he disagreed with the ruling of the Boat Operations Manager.

Quay Lane Car Park – DK noted that the yellow cross hatchings normally visible outside the main Granary entrance, prohibiting parking in that area, to permit emergency access to the cut, had been eroded, and asked when they might be re-instated. JL, who represents RST on the Quay Lane Trust, reported that QLT was experiencing some difficulties at present, but he would make enquiries. He also reported that the barrier, which had blown down in high winds, was to be repaired and re-instated. **ACTION: JL**

JM reported a message from Paul Separovic of the EA, who told him that the Ely-Ouse Transfer Scheme would be suspended in August, because of prevailing weather conditions. This might result in a slower flow in the Stour, but should not affect water levels.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10 pm

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday, 10 August, 2017, at The Grove, Dedham, at 7.00pm**

Apologies were noted from John Morris and Graham Simmons