

Minutes of the River Stour Trust Council meeting

held on Thursday 12 October 2017 at The Grove, Dedham

Those present: Emrhys Barrell (EB - via Skype), Paul Brewerton (PB), Gordon Denney (GD), Bob Foster (BF), Pam Johnson (PJ), David Kirkman (DK), Jim Lunn (JL), John Morris (JM - Chairman), James Parkinson (JP), Graham Simmons (GS – Treasurer), Alan Thomas (AT)

Taking Minutes: Catherine Burrows (CB, Administrator)

Apologies for absence - Roger Brown (RB), Sue Brown (SB), Jane Rogers (JR)

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes be approved with no amendments required for the version published online.

3. Matters arising from those Minutes:

(a) Identification of confidential items – none identified.

(b) Follow up on action points:

3.1 Clarification on work needed at SSM to deepen the water at one of the portage points (21.09.17, item 2&3) – Ongoing. **ACTION:** RB

3.2 Report missing August Tea Room income (21.09.17, item 4a) – Completed. Revised and updated report circulated prior to the meeting.

3.3 SSM Lock figures breakdown YTD to SB (21.09.17, item 4a) – Completed. Emailed to SB.

3.4 Transfer of responsibility for SSM Lock (21.09.17, item 5a) – Ongoing. Meeting to discuss operational protocol yet to be arranged when RB and SB return from holiday. **ACTION:** GD

3.5 No report on Wendy's condition in the BSS surveyor's documents (21.09.17, item 6a) – Completed. AT has emailed report to JL and this is available to trustees upon request.

4. Governance of the Trust

GS explained that Charity Commission (CC) has written to all charities and RST needs to ensure its governance and Memorandum & Articles of Association (MAA) complies. There is now more of an onus on the auditor to analyse figures at the end of the year e.g. has money been apportioned correctly, any conflicts of interest, etc?

RST Trustees need to discuss and propose any changes for circulation to RST members well in advance of the 2018 AGM. What are the ongoing aims and objectives of the RST? How will we operate? What changes are required to our structure and MAA? What is the role and responsibility of a Trustee? Where is the demarcation between Trustee, staff and volunteer? Should Trustees have an overview but an operational board handle the day to day? These are areas that CC expects to see clear divisions and explanations of the RST structure.

GS said a strategy session before Christmas was necessary to make progress on these important decisions. It was decided that this would take place at The Granary on Wednesday 25 October. It was

agreed that some non-Trustees should be invited to attend to where they could contribute to the session e.g. some members of SBOC and DVB committee members. **ACTION: GS to prepare an agenda and information for circulation to attendees.**

5. Financial Report (report saved previously circulated)

August financial reports had been circulated and these were an updated version of those prepared for the last meeting. GS reminded everyone that some costs and income are still misplaced and it was particularly noted that the CETB grant for SSM Lock is currently included under the Donations header but needs to be clearly identified as a Grant. GS said that it was taking longer than anticipated to make necessary amendments but there is some progress with administrative office staff booked in for a couple of Sage training sessions in November.

5.1 Special Projects Financial Report

Each project was reviewed to clarify budgets and whether they were ongoing, completed or cancelled. Some additional projects were added including: housing for stop logs and housing at SSM Lock, stop logs and housing for Flatford lock, Kathleen canopy replacement, tackling the byelaws, dredging.

6. Locks

a) **Roger Brown Lock** – Outstanding work at the end of October will include landscaping, jetties and bases for the stop logs. There was general appreciation of the overall appearance of the lock and the work undertaken by the voluntary team and the lock contractors, Hargreaves. GD thanked trustees for their rapid response to his email regarding the abstraction licence approval. EB said that some PR material had been sent to Waterways World regarding 2018 activities but he really needed up-to-date photos and a boat passing through the restored SSM lock would be most welcome. **ACTION: GD to send EB a selection of photos.**

b) **Dedham** – Salix of Thetford have a possible solution to the lock island stabilisation and JM expressed thanks to GD and Kevin Taylor for their involvement in pushing this project forward.

c) **Flatford** – Stop logs and housing required (as raised under Item 5).

7. Boat Operations

a) **BOM** – Nothing further to ad from last meeting.

b) **SBOC (report previously circulated)** – Report circulated for information only.

c) **DVB (report previously circulated)** – Report circulated for information only.

d) **John Constable** – Nothing to report.

8. Chairman's Report

JM referred to plans for 50th Anniversary celebrations next year. CB said that Griff was unable to confirm his availability for any specific date next year. RST could get in touch nearer the time but it was best to have a Plan B! JM said that the actress, Barbara Windsor, was known to be related to John Constable and also had links to Bures (family were brickmakers). He had a means of approaching her to gauge interest in formally opening the lock. It was suggested that a good date would be mid-May

since RST boat operations were well underway and it would serve as a good promotional tool for this activity. **ACTION:** JM

9. Company Secretary's Report

The current version of the plan was discussed and JP had some possible amendments. **ACTION:** CB to arrange site meeting within a week for JP and architect. It was pointed out that the plan needs to go to tender imminently to enable the building work to be completed before the first booking in 2018. It was agreed that the current plan (possibly with modifications) is sent out for tender within 2 weeks. GS said that an additional 10% contingency budget would be added.

GD said that JR had asked him to look at a new potential funding stream for project management and architect's fees but some of these costs hinged on builder's quotations and the closing date for applications was unfortunately too soon and would not be paid out retrospectively.

GD said that the BEE Anglia 28% funding towards equipment applied only to new, A-rated items and it was now more likely that RST would be purchasing second-hand equipment.

10. Administrator's Report

Dedham Vale Boating activity photos – **ACTION:** BF to provide to RST office.

S2C Drone Footage distribution – **ACTION:** JL to advise on an appropriate charge and terms of use for anyone seeking copies of drone footage/RST photos.

Lock Lintel Editor – Those present were pleased to learn that Sheila Morris has offered to take on this role.

Boat Operations and Use of Venues – CB and PB to implement changes for the 2018 season.

Fire Safety – Colin Daines and John Phillips to be approached for their opinions on required action.

ACTION: CB

Confluent art installation proposal – Those present did not object to this being at the VEC.

11. Membership Report

It was unanimously agreed to accept all new members.

11.1 Paper from Sue Brown re Awards (previously circulated) – There was some discussion but it was ultimately agreed to defer this item until the next meeting. **ACTION:** JR [Company Secretary] to include on next meeting's agenda.

12. Recent and Forthcoming Events

12.1 2018 celebrations – CB explained that Suffolk Walking Festival was keen to include a boat/walk combo again next year (13 May- 3 June 2018). Ideally JC would be the boat used for the upper river and Ann Lunn has already offered to lead on a couple of walks a month next year (Tuesdays and Thursdays). **ACTION:** CB to liaise with Ann Lunn, JL and PB.

12.2 The Wool Towns Initiative (paper previously circulated) – PJ had previously expressed an interest in representing RST. **ACTION:** PJ to follow up RST participation with this initiative.

13. Correspondence – None

14. AOB

14.1 **Anti-slip strips** – JP reported that an additional 80 metres of anti-slip strip had been acquired at no cost to the Trust. This had been fitted at various jetties at VEC site.

14.2 **Dredging** – DK reported that dredging works at Gasworks Cut and the mooring area alongside the VEC needed to be looked into. JP said Sudbury Rowing Club (SRC) would need dredging undertake to enable another second craft to be moored alongside their clubhouse. GD said that EA consent would not be required for damming the Cut but recommended contacting the EA to arrange a site visit to discuss the proposed work. It was suggested that the Waterways Recovery Group (WRG) be contacted to gauge their interest and availability to carry out the manual labour required. JP said that SRC should also be approached for both financial and volunteer assistance. **ACTION: GD to send DK email addresses for Paul Separovic and Ian Watts. EB to contact WRG.**

14.3 **Refurbishment of Francis J (paper previously circulated)** – There was discussion about the intention of the refurbishment since there was disagreement regarding how much it would improve stability. EB had circulated a paper shortly before the meeting to query some of the plans/intended materials as any work carried out needed to take into consideration suitability for a boat, HSE guidelines and intended improvements to stability. It was clarified that any improvements to stability (therefore being able to increase passenger load) was an added bonus. The refurbishment was necessary if the Trust wanted to be able to use FJ in 2018 since the hull was rotting (due to wood incorrectly sold as marine grade). It was felt that a subgroup to discuss the intended refurbishment would be beneficial and the final recommendation was to be presented before the next Council meeting. **ACTION: PB to liaise with DK, TS, EB, AT and JL to set this up.**

DK said that Tim Smith was unhappy with EB's comments and would most likely walk away from the Trust once this course of action was made known. Those present hoped that this would not be the case but any queries and concerns must be addressed.

PROPOSED JL, SECONDED JM that 'Council reinforces its commitment to spend funds on Francis J's refurbishment' **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meeting ended at 4.45pm

Date of next meeting: Thursday 9 November 2017; venue TBC; Time TBC