

RIVER STOUR TRUST

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Thursday, 11 January 2018, at the VEC, Great Cornard

Those present: John Morris (JM, in the Chair), Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Roger Brown (RB), Susan Brown (SB), Jim Lunn (JL), Pam Johnson (PJ), James Parkinson (JP), Graham Simmons (GS), Alan Thomas (AT)
Jane Rogers (JR, Company Secretary, taking notes)

Observers: Gordon Denney (GD), Mike Finch (MF, representing DVB), Norman Ryan (NR), Kevin Taylor (KT)

1. Apologies: Bob Foster
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2017.
There being no amendments, PB proposed acceptance, seconded by GS. Approved unanimously.
3. Matters arising from those Minutes:
 - (a) Identification of confidential items - Item 4 – Financial Report – it was agreed that part of the Financial Report be redacted, before posting the Minutes on the RST website.
 - (b) Action points:
 - JR to ensure letters of appreciation were sent to Gordon Denney and David Kirkman.
 - Lock Opening – at a meeting held during the morning of 11 January, identified other potential guests for the lock opening.
 - RSNC – following discussion, the following resolutions were tabled:
 - (i) That AR be removed as a director of RSNC
 - (ii) That RST would appoint James Parkinson and Catherine Burrows to be directors of RNSC
 - (iii) That Sandra O’Sullivan be appointed Company SecretaryAcceptance was proposed by Jim Lunn, seconded by PJ, and approved unanimously.
 - It was agreed that a formal meeting of the directors and Secretary be set up. GS would meet with MF to discuss the relationship between the two companies. GS and JR would discuss financial set ups and an agenda for the proposed meeting. **ACTION: GS, MF, JR, S’OS**
 - DVB – signage now in hand for Roger Brown Lock and Gordon Denney Bridge.
 - Drainage from Quay Theatre car park – RB and JP had visited the site earlier in the day, and proposed the digging of a soakaway below the drain pipe which emptied onto our jetty at the Granary. They estimated a cost of £100.00, and the scheme was unanimously approved.
 - Dedham Lock – JM had contacted the EA and CRT; Paul Separovic of the EA would like a meeting.
 - Waterbus between Dedham and Flatford – MF reported that after discussion, DVB had decided to discontinue this service, partly as the local Hopper Bus had been dropped. A short trip service would be introduced this summer on a Saturday. The website would need to be updated. **ACTION: CB**
 - Granary refurbishment: JR reported that she and GS had met with Whymark & Co, and agreed that MD Mills should be the contractor for the works. UK Power would be installing a new 3-phase electricity supply at the end of January, with final switch over on 5 February. The new kitchen equipment was being selected. Listed building consent was still outstanding but was being chased by Barry Whymark. Mr Whymark would also act as Project Manager, at a fee yet to be determined, but based on the value of the project.
 - Packing up of the tearoom equipment would start on 15 January. GD reminded the meeting

of the possibility of a grant towards the cost of electrical equipment. ACTION: JR to follow up.

Reprint of Boat leaflets – still awaiting information from DVB. ACTION: BF and MF, CB
Granary Cut – discussion about the process of re-shoaling and the possibility of working in liaison with Sudbury Rowing Club. RB agreed to lead on this project. GD mentioned the need for exemptions from the EA. Work would need to be completed by end of July in preparation for the planned boat rally. ACTION: RB, JP and GD

John Morton

JM spoke of the death of John Morton, a long-time member of the Trust, who was also a member of crew for SBOC, and a member of various working parties, who had given huge support to the Trust over a number of years. A minute of silence was observed.

A brief note will appear in the current edition of Lock Lintel, with a full obituary in the next edition. JM would arrange for an appropriate contributor. ACTION: JM

4. Financial Report – circulated

GS spoke to his report, stating that there would be a slight delay in implementing the new accounting system as there were some unresolved anomalies in the 2017 figures. However, he planned to present a breakdown of the 2017 figures to the February meeting of Council. Estimated figures for 2017 – Income c£192k, Expenditure c£182k- showed a solid year, broadly in line with 2016. It was also intended to show department breakdowns, including income and expenditure, and draft budgets, including that for the 2018 celebrations.

GS explained the thinking behind the allocation of budgets.

Bank statements showed that the Trust currently had some £92,000 in hand, but in line with recommendations from the Charity Commissioners, should have a contingency fund, based on 50% of its available funds. This would still allow the Trust to carry out the planned refurbishment of the Granary kitchen etc. The budget for 2018-19 would be very tight but the Granary project was the last major item on the current list.

Funding for RSNC still needed to be determined; RST has to be seen to be supporting its subsidiary. ACTION: GS and MF

GS also said that new projects, for inclusion in the next schedule, would need to be costed and programmed carefully.

GD suggested that stop logs for Flatford Lock should be regarded as important.

JL offered to look in the archives for drawings used at Flatford Lock.

SB asked if it was possible to determine the overall cost of the work at Stratford Lock; it would be possible but would take time to go back through at least twelve years' of accounts.

5. Locks

(a) Roger Brown Lock – site tidying was still on-going. A store for the stop logs was needed.

(b) Dedham Lock – KT asked for guidance from the Trustees on the next steps to be taken to move the renovation forward. He reminded Trustees that the document on the table was only a starting point.

After prolonged discussion, covering various points, it was proposed by PB that JM and KT continue to negotiate with Dedham Mill Management Committee, taking into account the views and concerns raised at the meeting.. JM and KT were tasked with talking to the EA before responding to DMMC. Proposed by PB seconded by EB. Approved by a majority of Trustees, with two abstentions.

Points raised in the discussion:

1. The Trust cannot enter an agreement that restricts navigation through Dedham Lock, or contravenes the Anglian Water Authority Act 1977, which states:

....members of the public shall have the like rights to navigate the waterways specified in Schedule 1 to the Act and to pass through and use any locks or other works constructed to facilitate navigation as they had before the passing of the Act but the exercise of such rights shall be subject to the following conditions and restrictions:-

- (a) *payment of any charges, tolls or dues lawfully demanded by the Authority under any enactment: and*
 - (b) *observance of any rules, regulations or byelaws relating to the recreational waterway and for the time being in force*
6. The Trust cannot enter into an agreement that restricts our ability to raise funds through fare-paying passengers. These funds form the major part of our income, which allows us to preserve and maintain the navigation and its structures.
 7. Any agreement that restricts access to the lock by the local community is likely to make it very difficult or impossible to raise funds for the re-gating of the lock and repair of the lock island.
 8. RST will run pre-chartered trips through the Lock and wedding trips from the Lock.
 9. There will be no public walk on trips from Dedham Lock.
 10. For safety reasons, only members of the RST, suitably trained, will be able to operate the lock for passage of correctly licensed craft. Other approved persons may also operate the lock, but only after they have been approved and trained by RST.
 11. Wedding parties will be embarked at the Lock and escorted by RST volunteers.
 12. The Tilting gate may be operated by DMMC, but only in times of flood
 13. SB commented that although it has not been admitted, RST has strong reason to believe the existing gates were broken during the process of putting the tilting gate out of action for the summer season, when the lock gates are closed for lock operation. No mention is made of this operation by DMMC, when a mistake or ignorance could again damage the new gates. Who pays to repair damage so caused?

It should be noted that no decisions were reached at this point.

As the meeting had overrun, further agenda items were forwarded to the next meeting.

New Trustee – JM introduced the appointment of Norman Ryan as a new Trustee. Proposed by RB, seconded by PB, approved by a majority. EB abstained as he had no knowledge of the candidate.

Gordon Denney then said a formal farewell to the Council, as he planned to move away from Essex at the end of January. Thanks were expressed for all the work that Gordon had done for the Trust, as a member of several working parties, as a Trustee, and as a fund-raiser.

Meeting closed at 4.35 pm.

Date of next meeting: Thursday, 8 February 2018, at 1.00pm at Dedham, courtesy of Bob Foster.