

**Minutes of the River Stour Trust Council**  
**held on Thursday 28 June 2018 at The Granary, Sudbury**

**Those present:** John Morris (JM, in the chair), Paul Brewerton (PB), Bob Foster (BF), Norman Ryan (NR), Graham Simmons (GS).

Minutes Secretary: Catherine Burrows (CB, RST Administrator)

RST Members: Mike Finch (MF), Mike Oelman (MO)

**1. Appointment of Chair of Council & Re-appointment of Trustees & Council members**

With JM's acquiescence, it was AGREED he continue in the role of Chairman of Council. JM asserted his decision to stand down from this role at the end of the year (sooner, if possible). He reminded Council that a decision regarding the scope of the Chairman's role needed discussion.

The Council wanted to formally record its thanks to the retired Trustees (Sue Brown, Roger Brown, Pam Johnson and James Parkinson) for all their work whilst on Council. The re-elected trustees were also congratulated.

**2. Apologies received from:** Emrhys Barrell (EB), Jim Lunn (JL), Alan Thomas (AT).

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2018** (paper previously circulated)

A. **Full version of the minutes** – Approved.

B. **Online version of the minutes** – Approved (following the removal of the sentence regarding figures after the colon in item 5b).

**4. Matters arising from those Minutes of 17 May 2018**

A. Item 3-b, page 1: Cheaper storage option for DVB boats and trailers. **ONGOING- ACTION: Dave Jacketts (instead of Roger Brown).**

B. Item 3-e, page 1: Clarification on whether RST rate relief entitlement is affected by proposed RSNC activities. **ONGOING – ACTION: GS**

C. Item 3-f, page 1: SBOC to appoint representative for Quay Lane Trust. **ONGOING – ACTION: PB**

D. Item 3-o, page 1: **RESOLVED.** CB read out Gordon Denney's reply to Council.

E. Item 5b, page 2: Approaching RST members for donations towards the Dedham Lock project. **ACTION: JM**

F. Item 6b, page 3: **RESOLVED.** Simply adding the name alongside was to be looked into.

G. Item 6b, page 3: **RESOLVED.** JM had written a formal letter of thanks to those involved with the FJ refurbishment.

H. Item 8, page 3: Publicity team to potentially share [web@riverstourtrust.org](mailto:web@riverstourtrust.org) as point of contact for people to send photos/stories to feature on RST social media accounts. **ACTION: CB**

I. Item 10d, page 3: Electric Boat Gathering (paper submitted for discussion under item 11).

J. Item 11a, page 4: **RESOLVED.** Mr Norrington has joined RST.

K. Item 11b, page 4: **RESOLVED.** The invitation was declined and the group was informed.

L. Item 12d, page 4: Event to relaunch Granary kitchen & FJ (paper submitted for discussion under item 11).

M. Item 12e, page 4: **ONGOING.** BF confirmed progress being made but access has been secured.

**5. Treasurer's Report**

Boats at both ends of the river are very busy. The Henny Swan Lunch Cruise is particularly popular on both its scheduled weekend days (fully booked until mid-September) and as a private midweek charter.

The office is dealing with a multitude of phone and email enquiries and it was AGREED for the office to close for an admin day once per month (every first Wednesday). It was also suggested that volunteers should be sought for specific admin tasks.

A decision regarding the use of funds for RST social events was needed as it would have to apply to all our voluntary activities. A policy on this was required to form part of our expected cashflow with budgets to be presented to the office.

BF was pleased to confirm a meeting to retrieve RST papers from our previous solicitors was finally to take place after 18 months of persistence!

MF pointed out that unrecoverable VAT was not mentioned in the Memorandum & Articles of Association. RST was classified as a partly exempt business. VAT on purchases used partly for business purposes and partly for non-business purposes must normally be apportioned between business and non-business use before dealing with partial exemption. RST cannot claim full VAT for use of locks.

NR is to try and secure some paid advertisements for Lock Lintel to offset the its productions costs.

## 6. Locks

### A. Roger Brown Lock (AKA Stratford St Mary Lock)

New lockkeeper, Chris Griffin (CG), has undertaken full training but the 0844 lock keeper number still currently diverts to AT's landline. Those wishing to use the lock need to book passage with lock keeper and lock usage agreement still need ratification. Insurance queries are being followed up by Kevin Taylor (KT). **ACTION: KT**

### B. Dedham Lock

Paper previously circulated. The Heads of Agreement are being prepared. An Access Lease Agreement is to follow but the wording must be carefully considered to avoid problems later i.e. Do we want access *over* or *on* the lock and land?

DMMC have expressed an interest in the National Trust taking ownership of the lock and this might be a possibility given their current restoration of the Ionic Boathouse on the Essex side of the river. There was the exciting prospect of using this location for our boat, particularly for weddings. **ACTION: BF to contact Jonathan Rhodes (Operations Manager of National Trust for Essex & South Suffolk).**

Salix's written quotation had greatly exceeded their verbal quotation. However, Amicus have quoted £19,000 +VAT so KT shall present their alternative scheme to DMMC. The repair of the gates needs funding and different funding avenues needed to be researched as a group of sponsors rather than one main sponsor was possible more likely to be achieved.

### C. Flatford Lock

The EA are preparing a H&S document as part of the transfer of ownership for Flatford Lock and Dedham Lock. They have been asked to consider the erosion of the Dedham Lock island and possible impact on the lock when preparing these documents.

The Flatford footpath work is now completed and vehicular access is to be banned with specific exceptions. JM has written to Dave Knagg at EA because no access agreement is in place.

#### **D. Great Cornard Lock**

Research is underway to determine costs for the repair for the concrete on the upper end that is breaking up (to be set against the Navigation Maintenance budget).

### **7. Boat Operations**

#### **A. Boat Operations Manager (BOM)**

No report/paper as AT is on holiday.

#### **B. Sudbury Boat Operating Committee (SBOC)**

Paper previously circulated- nothing further to report.

#### **C. Dedham Vale Boating (DVB)**

A temporary jetty at Dedham is to be replaced with a permanent structure (set against Navigation Maintenance budget).

#### **D. John Constable (JC)**

It was reported that there are possible charging issues. The situation is being monitored with test run scheduled for this coming Monday. It was NOTED that her budget for next year was to be increased.

#### **E. Weedcutting**

No progress had been made resolving the issues so JM, on behalf of RST, had emailed JP (as RSNC), to state that the unregistered boat must not be operated and needed to be removed from the water. The weedboat requires engineering/mechanical works to be completed to bring it up to current Boat Safety Certification scheme standards, although there are differences in opinion on the best way forward and whether this can be achieved. The Sudbury Rowing Club have been contacted regarding this predicament as it had a bearing on their annual regatta on 4 August. NR is in touch with Ian Watts at the EA regarding the weed situation at Nayland.

There appears to be no formal weedcutting agreement with the EA but they have recently enquired about our ability to carry out this task on both the upper and lower stretches although we have only ever previously been active on the upper stretch. The lower stretch presents problems of its own due to limited access points and the need of a road worthy trailer for the weedboat. Negotiations and research are ongoing and a River Stour Users Group is taking place on 11 July.

It was AGREED that urgent matters should be referred to either JM or GS for a decision.

### **8. Company Secretary's Report**

#### **a. Permanent Appointment?**

A Company Secretary does not need to be a trustee but the role needs to be filled to demonstrate that the Trust is a competent organisation and assist in its smooth running. It was felt that speaking to potential candidates directly was the best approach.

#### **b. Key points from AGM**

- Informing Charities Commission and Companies House of the updated memorandum
- Restructuring of Council
- Appointment of Chairman of Council

#### **c. Advising Charities Commission of Resolution adopted by membership**

Both the Charities Commission and Companies House will be informed. This needs to be signed by a trustee and completed within 3 weeks of when it was adopted. **ACTION: GS and CB**

### **9. Administrator's Report – No paper submitted. Office very busy!**

### **10. Membership Report – No report submitted.**

## 11. Recent & Forthcoming Events

- A. Walk 'n' Water events - Thu 26 July, Thu 23 Aug, Tue 11 Sep
- B. RST attendance & promotional stalls
  - i. Great Cornard Fete - Sat 7 July
  - ii. Henny Fete - Sat 28 July

CB to liaise with volunteers and organise RST participation.

- C. Sunday 22 July events
  - i. Formal Opening of Granary Kitchen & Francis J (paper previously circulated)
  - ii. Members' Party/Family Event

Following discussions with the office, Jane Rogers had written to ascertain the opinion of the Council as to whether we should proceed with the event. Costs are in the region of £900 for the music and food alone there will be a loss of income from the boats and the tearoom. As yet, no invitations had been sent and it was difficult to set and justify a ticket price for what was being provided. It was AGREED that time constraints, cost and lack of enthusiasm meant the event should regrettably be postponed.

- D. Electric Boat Gathering – 18 August (paper previously circulated)

The paper was noted and MF and EB will approach councillors at the event on the day to invite representatives to attend one of our Council meetings and to assist with our aim to have powered craft operate along the Bures stretch.

- E. Sudbury to the Sea (S2C) – Sat & Sun 15 & 16 Sep

The revised two-tier fee for single (£22) or multiple craft (£25) entries was welcomed although it was suggested that the latter was instead £27. **ACTION: CB**

NR raised concerns about the state of the river and difficulties in navigating the route. He asked how proactive the Trust is in resolving these issues. It was confirmed that RST members, RSBCIC, regularly paddle the river and report their findings both to RST and EA. **ACTION: CB to add NR to RSUG circulation list for the meeting on 11 July and future meetings should he be able to attend.**

## 12. Correspondence

- A. Cattawade rubbish – An unofficial bin had been installed and was overflowing. A member of the public had raised their concerns over its appearance and as a potential hazard. **ACTION: MF**

## 13. Any Other Business

- A. River Stour Navigation Company (RSNC) Contract

The contract between the Trust and RSNC has been approved and simply needs signing by a representative for each party.

- B. Council Membership & Succession Planning

The consensus was that a two-tier structure of a Council (meeting 2/3 times per year to discuss governance, policy, strategy and finance) and Management Groups (meeting more regularly to carry out and progress the 'business') would work a lot better for the Trust.

Ideas had previously been circulated following the October strategy meeting but these had not been formalised. **ACTION: GS to formulate and lead a smaller group to develop these ideas and present to Council at a later date/special meeting.**

## 14. Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 9 August, at Granary

MEETING CLOSED