

Minutes of the River Stour Trust Council Meeting held on 20th September 2018 at the Granary, Sudbury, 7.00pm

Present: John Morris (Chairman (JM), Graham Simmons (GS) Catherine Burrows (CB) Keith Grinsted (KG) Jim Lunn (JL) Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB) Bob Foster (BF)

Public Audience: Mike Finch (MF) James Parkinson (JP) Pam Johnson (PJ)

1. Apologies: Alan Thomas, Norman Ryan
2. Matters Arising from Meeting held on 9 August 2018:

In the light of the recent catastrophic event (serious fire at the Visitor Education Centre on Saturday 8 September), it had been decided to abbreviate the meeting agenda. Therefore, important items had been identified from the previous meeting in order to focus the discussion.

CIL Funding – It was AGREED to defer any application until 2019. **ACTION: CB to contact Babergh District Councillors.**

Weed-cutting. Some time was spent discussing the options going forward for the River Stour Navigation Company to cut the weeds in the Stour for the EA. It was agreed that we should ask the EA to give us a programme of works they wish us to carry out in 2019, then convene a group to discuss if we can achieve these requirements. It was NOTED that it would be beneficial to review the EA's online Service Level Agreements (SLA) documents (link provided to River Stour User Group attendees).

GS Pointed out that under the RST Memorandum of Association the Company Secretary has to be a Director or Member of the Council. Propose by JM that we co-opt KG to the Council, position to be confirmed at 2019 AGM. Seconded EB. Passed Unanimously.

It was agreed that we should set up a small group to look at our Memorandum of Association to update it in light of our present and future commitments and aspirations.

3 VEC Fire

- a) Company Secretary. KG gave the timeline of the fire:

Friday

23.00 Pop Up Fish Restaurant left the premises

24.00 Caretaker locked up

Saturday

01.15 – 01.30 Flames identified on our CCTV footage

01.47 Fire Brigade called by our key-holder who lives opposite

06.57 CB alerted by Fire Brigade

07.00 Fire extinguished

Saturday pm Forensic police officers on site. Police gave us a contact who boarded up the windows and doors for security

Saturday pm. EB contacted Neil Edwards, IWA, who we insure through.

Sunday Neil Edwards sends necessary forms from Royal Sun Alliance

Monday Set up office in Granary. Loss adjusters appointed by Insurers

Wednesday Insurers-appointed Forensic Investigator arrives.

No cause of the fire has yet been determined.

The building is half-burnt and the floors are potentially unsafe

No RST personnel are to enter to remove filing cabinets, and insurers should instruct people to do this

It was understood that all responsibility for future actions to make it safe and then rebuild it lie with the insurers. However, BF suggested we ought to appoint our own loss adjuster/surveyor to oversee the future work on behalf of the Trust.

The Trust is insured for the rebuild cost of the building, and replacement of contents, which was updated in 2016.

Computer files were previously backed up, and hard drives have been rescued though the computers are damaged. Paper archive material and photographs are potentially fire or water damaged, but fortunately have previously been scanned and digitised by JL, and are safe.

Possible time to rebuild is not confirmed, but likely to be at least 9-12 months.

Where to locate temporary offices was discussed and needs to be looked at ongoing.

b) Treasurer update. GS outlined the financial consequences of the fire, including emergency expenditure to cover making the building secure, and getting the office up and running.

He then presented his general financial report for the month. This showed annual income of £130,000, up on last year, but offset by the balance of costs for the Granary refurbishment, giving an expenditure of £162,000. Overall, we are looking like we will have a £25,000 operating surplus for the current year as taken from the 2018 Cash Flow Forecast.

JM gave thanks to the Trust members who have spent considerable time dealing with the consequences of the fire, and to CB for the extra workload she has shouldered as a result, helped by Sandra.

c) Office Manager Update CB outlined the consequences of the fire on the Trust administration. S2C had still gone off successfully as the paperwork for this had been retrieved. Otherwise we were coping, but under pressure.

The question was discussed as to whether we should convene intermediate meetings to approve ongoing actions regarding the fire.

It was agreed that most decisions could be agreed by email, but that if any proved to be contentious, a meeting should be convened.

4 Operations

a) Locks. A problem with one of the paddles/winding gears had been identified so volunteers were seeking to resolve the issue.

b) New boats. EB gave an update on the new Frolic. This is nearly ready for delivery to DVB. Cost including purchase of trailer will be around £6500, but this will be offset by a £6000 grant from Councillor Christopher Hudson, Suffolk County Council. Suffolk CC are very much in support of the project, which will allow us to run Dedham-Flatford trips

c) *Wendy* the weedboat now has a Boat Safety Certificate.

5 Events

S2C was a great success with 500 participants. Thanks to all who helped make this happen.

The Bures Electric Boat Event was also a great success, with extensive media coverage on local BBC TV and ITV, and 120 people from Bures taken out on the river. Agreed that we should repeat the exercise next year, but at another location on the river

Shanty, Cheese & Wine Evening at The Granary, Friday 16 November, 7pm – tickets available from JL, £12pp

DVB Laying-Up Lunch, Dedham Boathouse Restaurant, 25 October
2019 events to be confirmed.

6 AOB

EB said that the All Party Parliamentary Waterways Group had invited the Trust to send a member to its next meeting on Monday 15 October 10 -12.00, which is considering the question of Waterway Restorations and their impact on the local economy. EB said he could not attend, but that it was essential we send someone. MF volunteered to attend. EB also said that he had contacted our MP, James Cartlidge, and asked him to attend to press the case for the Byelaw amendment to allow electric boats to use the whole of the Stour navigation.

EB circulated the EA response to the RST byelaw campaign, which said they do not have the resources, funding, or time to take this on. Agreed RST should press for as much support as possible to get this issue addressed.

EB suggested we should send a positive letter out to all RST members telling them we are very much still in business despite the fire. Agreed. He will write and forward to KG for approval.

7. Proposed dates of next meetings:

Thursday 18 October 7pm Dedham.

Thursday 15 November, Granary. Time was discussed. It was suggested we should move away from evening meetings in Winter, and provisionally agreed to move to 10am.

Meeting ended 9.20pm

Minutes prepared by EB.