

**Minutes of the River Stour Trust Council
held on Wednesday 30 January 2019 at The Granary, Sudbury**

Those present: Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Bob Foster (BF), Keith Grinsted (KG), Jim Lunn (JL), Graham Simmons (GS), Alan Thomas (AT)
Minutes Secretary: Catherine Burrows (CB, RST Administrator)
RST Members: Mike Finch (MF)

1. **Apologies for Absence:** John Morris (JM)
2. **Declaration of Interests (DoI)**– No-one declared any DoI.
3. **Minutes of the meetings held on 15 November 2018:**
 - i. Full file version APPROVED.
 - ii. Online version APPROVED (with redactions/amendments)

It was clarified that Item 7 comprises reports from BOM, SBOC and DVB.
It was AGREED to add Weedcutting and Brian Cornell under Any Other Business.

4. **Matters arising from those Minutes of 15 November 2018:**
 - i. **ONGOING.** Trust Restructure/Update (20.09.18, item 2, page 1): Restructuring Group updating the Trust's Memorandum & Article of Association (MAA), operational structure and researching the Trust switching to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. All to be committed to a timeline for the membership to vote on the proposed changes at the 2019 AGM. **ACTION: Restructuring Group.**
 - ii. **ONGOING.** Weedcutting (20.09.18, item 2, page 1): RST and RSNC working group to be formed in order to discuss issues and next steps. **ACTION: PB/AT**
 - iii. **RESOLVED** Quay Lane Trust Representative (09.08.18, Item 3-b-c, page 1): PB to take on the role.
 - iv. **RESCINDED.** Boats 5-Year Maintenance Plan (09.08.18, Item 4-b, page 2, Project 13).
 - v. **ONGOING.** Lock Usage (09.08.18, Item 5-a, page 3): Prior to enabling extension to our insurance cover for lock usage, we must respond to points regarding training (refer to a, b & c at the end of KT's document 'RST Insurance Question' as circulated for August Council meeting). A training record and risk assessment is being formulated. **ACTION: AT & PB**
 - vi. **RESOLVED.** Cashflow allocation queries (15.11.18, item 7, paragraph 2): These had been answered.
 - vii. **RESOLVED.** VEC Craft Storage (15.11.18, item 7, paragraph 4): Storers have been advised of the situation (further details in item 6 report).
 - viii. **RESOLVED.** Solicitors (15.11.18, item 10): Contact is being made with Backhouse Solicitors.

5. VEC Rebuild – To Approve Draft Surveyor's Proposals (subject to receipt in advance of meeting)

The draft proposals had not been received but are being chased by both KG and the loss adjuster. Once received it is likely a short notice special meeting will need to be convened. It was suggested that contacting Bakers Mill Community Association (BMCA) would be advisable to liaise over VEC building works and site traffic as well as access for larger vehicles. **ACTION: KG & CB**

It had been clarified that appointing an Independent Loss Adjuster/Assessor would fall outside of the policy cover so, following Neil Edwards' recommendation, KG had been in contact with David King (DK). DK's advice was that the Trust does not need to engage an Assessor to handle the claim on our behalf. The Loss Adjuster appointed by our Insurers should provide impartial advice

and ensure that the rebuild is undertaken as quickly as possible, whilst complying with local authority requirements, and that the replacement is like for like with the original. The appointed adjuster will be subject to scrutiny by Insurers in terms of his performance and that is not gauged on how little the Insurers end up paying. However, if at any point the Trust has uneasy feelings about how matters are progressing, then DK is happy to provide advice/guidance at no cost to the Trust. It was AGREED that further discussion take place upon receipt of the draft plan and proposals.

6. Treasurer/Administrator update

It was AGREED that a special budget/finance meeting take place in order to review the 2018 financial outturn and agree a 2019 budget. It was pointed out that it should be possible to manage budgets without ongoing recourse to Council and overestimating costs was always preferable to underestimating costs. Last year's cashflow shows that we broadly kept within budget but restrictions on expenditure remain in place with only essential costs currently permitted until insurance matters relating to the VEC fire become clearer. This applies to any unfunded projects held in the Programmed/Special Works schedule.

CB referred to the office report section, in particular:

- Events: need better coordination and named organisers to liaise with the office for budget, marketing and planning purposes/timelines. Our largest event, S2C, is currently without an organiser this year.
- Boat Trip Publicity: 2019 details were still awaited to updated the leaflet and website. It was suggested that DVB have their own website for their trips that enabled them to make updates on the day. CB clarified that our official website is high on the rankings on search engine results for river stour/river stour boat trips/Dedham Vale boat trips/etc and a specific page with access rights had been created last year www.riverstourtrust.org/timetable. An alternate website would dilute RST branding and awareness so was unnecessary. The website structure can be changed to facilitate quicker access to the required boating page. **ACTION: CB**
- RST representation for River Stour Users Group – CB to be official RST representative, River Stour Festival – CB on minutes circulation list considered adequate, Quay Lane Trust – PB to attend meetings/be added to circulation list. **ACTION: CB**
- Members – all new members were accepted.

6a. VAT exemption

EB has spoken with his own accountant who considered the likelihood of achieving a rebate was highly favourable because a) voluntary organisation could not be expected to know about key changes, b) Funds were directed towards the community and c) undue enrichment as the customer would assume their gross fare was retained by RST. Our records show that the majority of our customers are not invoiced so would not expect VAT to be paid back. EB said IWA can provide a list of other boat operators that zero rate their trips. He thought RST could process its own claim instead of a contractor for a fixed or percentage fee. It was pointed out that this issue had been raised with our Independent Examiner but had not yielded much excitement but the office was continuing to follow this up.

7. Operations – boats and locks

A. Dedham Lock Fundraising / Lease Negotiations

The revised application to Enover for the £55k has been successful. Hargreaves are happy to manufacture the gates and store them until required.

It was pointed out that there are a number of unfunded schemes, including Dedham Lock, with varying levels of priority. Without fundraising or further grants we are reliant on surplus funds being available and cannot assume the VAT rebate will be successful.

Concerns were expressed that losing the Enover grant at this stage would jeopardise the whole project and partial funding might assist with sourcing other funders. A separate funding stream for the project must be implemented.

PROPOSED PB/SECONDED AT that 'we accept the Enover grant and Hargreaves offer with the proviso that remaining funds are raised separately from general income' AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

EB referred to an omission in the Dedham lock Agreement because RST must own or lease the lock as per the requirements of the Enover application (post meeting note: Enover require a lease to be for minimum 25 years). Lock ownership was vital for both funding, legal and insurance reasons. Kevin Taylor sought support and asked for documentary evidence to share with DMMC that clarified the RST's position on lock ownership. **ACTION: A meeting with DMMC to be arranged for the following week as the Heads of Agreement needs to be set and agreed as soon as possible – RST to be represented by KT, PB and EB.**

Our current solicitors, Sparlings, had not proceeded with our requests to finalise the Heads of Agreement despite numerous reminders. Any costs to date were unknown and needed to be confirmed but it was AGREED to approach Backhouse solicitors to act on our behalf instead.

B. Repair of faulty lock gate at Cornard

JL explained there was a leak on one of the upper paddles and it would be temporarily be taken out of action. It was suggested that the local aqua group could check the paddle as a training exercise.

C. Renewal of skipper/crew licences

CB referred to apparent confusion regarding the time limited ID badges. These were not to question the validity of anyone's qualifications but to ensure volunteer details were up-to-date (including emergency contact details). **ACTION: JL to produce the ID badges valid for 3 years so ID photos to be sent to him. Office to follow up emergency contact details.**

D. SBOC Report

Following the VEC fire, it had been necessary to relocate JC to The Granary. So as not to impact on boat operations this year a jetty extension was required and costed at £600. It was suggested that this could be put forward as part of the insurance claim.

E. DVB Report

Planned advertising and relevant budget to be reviewed. BF circulated the revised version of the report after the meeting.

8. Events - Calendar circulated within office report.

9. Any Other Business

A. **Licence on land at Stratford St Mary –** completed.

B. Brian Cornell / George Whybrow

BC is not well and will reluctantly stepping away from boating activity. GW had stepped down a number of years ago and had also been a strong supporter. It was suggested that life membership be offered.

PROPOSED PB/SECONDED AT that 'life membership be awarded to Brian Cornell and George Whybrow for their years of dedication and service to RST' AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

[post meeting note: BC was awarded life membership in 2015]

10. Proposed Next Meetings

Monday 11 March, 10:00am at venue TBA - Wed 8 May, 10:00am at venue TBA

MEETING CLOSED at 12.45