

**Minutes of the River Stour Trust Council
held on Monday 15 April 2019 at The Granary, Sudbury**

Those present: Paul Brewerton (PB), Bob Foster (BF), Keith Grinsted (KG), Jim Lunn (JL) – [arrived later], Alan Thomas (AT)

Minutes Secretary: Catherine Burrows (CB, Administrator)

RST Members: Mike Finch (MF), Kevin Taylor (KT)

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Emrhys Barrell (EB), John Morris (JM), Graham Simmons (GS)
2. **Declaration of Interests (DoI) – None.**

3. Minutes of the meetings held on 11 March 2019:

- Full file version – No amendments.
- ii. Online version - APPROVED with amendments (as below):
 - Item 7, page 2, paragraph 2: Redact figures from the last sentence.
 - Item 7, page 2, paragraph 2: Redact last paragraph.

AT proposed, KG seconded that ‘the file and online version of the minutes are approved, subject to the changes above’ APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

3-A) Matters arising from those Minutes of 11 March 2019:

- 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. **ACTION: AGM 2019 deadline is not feasible but Trust restructure/updates are still a consideration.**
- ii. **RESOLVED.** VEC building works (30.01.19, item 5, page 1): The draft surveyor’s proposals have been circulated and KG is liaising with BMCA about access for contractors/site traffic.
- iii. **RESOLVED.** Weedcutting (30.01.19, item 9B, page 3): CB confirmed contact had been made with EA and meeting was to take place in near future.

4. Treasurer/Administrator update

The circulated financial report and cash flow spreadsheet were presented by CB. It was reiterated that there are three main sections (operational activity, planned works activity and our reserve fund or monies owed to or from statutory bodies that cannot be used for general day to day activity).

The VAT reclaim figure has been set at £25,000 so as not to overinflate our financial position. Our projected surplus is £22,457 but this include the VAT reclaim which is not guaranteed. There were concerns that boat operations income are still being subjected to standard VAT because this would have a bearing on the VAT reclaim period. However, official confirmation from a VAT expert (company recommended by IWA) was sought before any amendments were made and implemented. This was anticipated to be complete before the next quarterly VAT Return.

The main points highlighted included:

- BOM’s 5-Year Plan has been implemented with the boat maintenance budget averaging at £300 per boat.
- Property/River Maintenance budget managed by CB has been increased
- The overall operational income forecast has been increased and includes a restrained figure for the VAT reclaim.
- Insurance – this has exceeded the forecasted spend by circa £1,000. This has been a delayed process due to the IWA switching its broker but we are fully covered for Public/Products Liability, Employers’ Liability & Fleet Policy.

- Jetty Maintenance – A spend of circa £2000.00 but about 50% relates to unexpected Granary jetty extension to facilitate the relocation of John Constable. We are hoping to be able to reclaim some or all of this as part of the insurance claim.
- Jam Tartz have accepted the Trust's decision to cancel the bar arrangement with them as of 1 April 2019. They are in the process of removing their items from the bar and we are due to have a handover meeting on Wed 16 April. The bar needs to be prepared for upcoming functions (glassware, signage, cash register, card machine, etc) and Thom Copping will be employed as our Bar Manager and the Trust will organise the PAL (Personal Alcohol Licence) training he is required to undertake.
- There is still a lack of liaison regarding events and coordinators were sought to work alongside the office to promote and run these properly.
- VEC craft storage and access – a recent site meeting intimates that access could be possible at certain time via a pedestrian route, as agreed with the contractor.
- Sandra gave in her notice after the last Council meeting as she felt unable to offer the support needed. Her last day was Wed 10 April and it was NOTED that the Trust recorded its thanks for her efforts over the last 2 years.
- BookWhen online booking system for Henny Swan Lunch Cruises. had dramatically reduced enquiries being dealt with by the office. Unfortunately, there are too many variables to use the same system for the venues and charter bookings.
- The DVB PayPal card reader was sometimes struggling with intermittent connectivity but it was hoped the Sudbury operation would fare better since it would be connected to The Granary WiFi.
- A bespoke Sage training session was to be arranged to ensure we are correctly recording activity on Sage as well as to set up automated cashflow/budget spreadsheets. These have been previously been manually prepared which is time consuming and more prone to errors. It also recommended we utilise the services of an accountant on a more frequent basis to ensure we are compliant with VAT, PAYE, etc.
- Membership Report – It was AGREED to accept the new member.

5. AGM Planning – Friday 28 June 2019

The written reports and Annual Accounts need approval at the next meeting. KG was verifying Trustee appointment dates and previous elections/re-elections to determine who needs to stand at this year's AGM.

The draft minutes file has been corrupted and admin notes were lost in the fire so the Open Forum section needs checking by those who also took notes last year.

5-A) Membership & Member Benefits

PB referred to his circulated proposal that included a subscription increase and incorporated membership incentives. Unfortunately, any such benefits to being a member would make the subscriptions liable to VAT and may disallow gift aid claims. The knowledge of supporting a good cause should be the only benefit of membership and the Charities Commission would be able to advise further. **ACTION: KG/PB**

6. VEC / Governance

KG gave a brief update on VEC progress which was ongoing. The Surveyor's Report had been received after a delay of 3-4 months. The next step is approach contractors to tender for the rebuild works. The electrical supply is being reinstated and a claim will be submitted to cover loss of items, stock as well as works associated with the Granary jetty extension to accommodate John Constable's relocation.

There was some discussion on the necessity of a lift as it had not been used because there was no means of evacuating a wheelchair user in the event of a fire. The insurers will reinstate the building as it was to include the lift and it was suggested that a safe refuge would be compliant with fire regulations. It was NOTED that KG expressed frustration that this issue had not been

discussed at previous meetings since the project is finally ready to go to tender. **ACTION: KG to check with our insurers to ensure compliance with relevant regulations.**

7. Operations – brief update Dedham Mill / SBOC / DVB

- Dedham Mill/Lock - A meeting of the Dedham Working Group (KT, PB, CB and EB) will take place after this meeting and the first draft lease is back from Backhouse Solicitors. The storage of the lock gates by Hargreaves is going to be verified by EB and the £24,000 cheque contribution from Enoverst has been paid in but is not yet cleared in our account to enable payment to Hargreaves.
- SBOC & DVB – BF's DVB report had been circulated. Winter storage of all boats/trailers remains an issue.

8. Events

It was NOTED that online social media posts were proving an extremely effective tool for attracting visitors to both our regular activities and special events.

9. Proposed date of next meetings

- a) Wed 8 May, 10:00-12:00, venue TBA
- b) Fri 28 June – AGM
- c) Thur 11 July, 10:00-12:00, venue TBA
- d) Mon 9 Sep, 10:00-12:00, venue TBA

10. AOB

A) RSBCIC are not running their guided canoe trips this year. They have some lifejackets available should RST have a use for them.

B) It was reported that GS will be standing down as Treasurer and Trustee at this year's AGM. It was NOTED that his contribution and efforts would be missed and ideas for his replacement were sought.

C) It was suggested that The Granary was overdue for a survey to check its condition and any potential issues that need to be addressed now or in the future. It was suggested that AT and/or Trust member, Alan Ryan, might be happy to carry this out free of charge? **ACTION: AT**

MEETING CLOSED at 12.38