

River Stour Trust Minutes of Council meeting 4th May 2020 (virtual via Zoom)

Present: Paul Brewerton (Chair), Jim Lunn, Emrhys Barrell, Richard Kearton, Alan Thomas, Steve Durham, Mike Finch (observing)

Apologies from Catherine Burrows (furlough)

1. Minutes of last meeting were agreed, and all matters arising are to be covered in the main agenda.
2. Changes to RST Council.
 - a. It was noted with regret that Graham Simmons has resigned from the Council for personal reasons. PB reported that he had thanked Graham for the sterling work he did for the trust as a Trustee and especially as Treasurer. EB raised the issue of providing monthly management accounts and it was agreed that our accountant should in the short term use her contracted time working with the Trust to produce these. PB has volunteered to take on the role of Treasurer in addition to Chairman until the AGM. This highlighted the shortage of Trustees. It was agreed that a letter/email should go to all members asking for volunteers to become Trustees, and that all present would use their best efforts to persuade their colleagues to step up.
Action: PB/all
 - b. Steve Durham was introduced and after appropriate discussion it was agreed to co-opt Steve onto Council. Steve will forward his details to secretary@riverstourtrust.org for registration with Companies House and the Charity Commission. **Action: SD**
3. Implications of Covid 19 pandemic
 - a. Job retention. PB reported that Lisa of Burdett King had prepared the payroll and made the claim which has been paid by HMRC. After some discussion it was agreed that all staff should be paid 100% of minimum contracted hours while the furlough continues, and that our manager, caretaker and cleaner should be retained on a permanent basis on the same terms as at present after the furlough period ends. Our administrative assistant should be retained for a minimum of 3 months from the end of furlough, and the situation be reviewed then in the light of the Trust's income. **Action: PB**
 - b. Grants. PB reported that the £10000 RHL grant from Babergh DC had been received. EB reported that several claims had been made but with limited success so far. SD was persuaded to take on the role of chief fundraiser. **Action: SD/EB**
 - c. Fundraising. It was agreed to send a letter/email to all members outlining the need for an increased membership fee, and an appeal for membership prepayment/donations be included on the letter/email mentioned in 2a. **Action: PB**
4. Reports
 - a. PB introduced the management/financial report which was discussed and agreed. It was noted that there is a potential liability of some thousands of pounds for unclaimed refunds on venue and boat pre-bookings.
 - b. PB reported that work had restarted on the VEC and was progressing well. Also a VAT claim of £32,627 had been included in the March VAT return.
 - c. PB reported that we were chasing Saffery Champness with regard to the VAT refund.
5. Future operations of the Trust. After some discussion it was agreed that there was a possibility of some Granary bookings going ahead, but that was contingent on Government advice. It was further agreed that in the current climate the Trust will not undertake or ask volunteers to undertake any activities that may put them at risk of contracting covid 19, and when lockdown is eased the safety of our volunteers and customers will still be our top priority. PB will issue a statement to that effect to all volunteers.
6. AOB
 - a. Lock Lintel. It was agreed that EB will edit the next issue which will feature as well as the usual updates and articles a centrespread pictorial of the first 50 years and the theme of the issue will be looking forward to the next 50. **Action: EB**
 - b. It was suggested that in these times of non-operations it might be worthwhile enquiring of our insurers whether some form of rebate might be forthcoming, as has happened with some car insurers.
7. Next meeting will be in early June, details to be confirmed.