

River Stour Trust Council Meeting (virtual via Zoom)

Monday 21st February 2022 at 11.00 am

(The meeting was recorded)

Minutes

Present P. Brewerton, C. Burrows, E. Barrell, J. Lunn, J. Rogers, M. Finch. Lisa King (until Item 6).

1. **Apologies for absence** – J. Parkinson. S. Durham missed the meeting due to a diary mix-up, but sent in his H&S Report
2. **Minutes of last meeting.** Agreed with some modifications and redactions.
3. **Matters arising.** EA Response to PB's letter regarding the Licence Consultation was discussed. Still no answer as to why MF's submission on behalf of RST was not recorded. MF expressed his disappointment at the reply especially as the EA seem to have failed to keep records of the state of the navigation at the time of the 1977 Anglian Water Authority Act, so are able to side-step their responsibilities for the condition of the river as laid out in this Act. JR raised the point that the EA mentions responsibilities of riparian owners, but does not itself appear to have a comprehensive list of who owns which stretch of river bank. MF raised the point that the letter states there is no need for weed-cutting between Stratford and Dedham, but this is simply not true, as our crews will confirm as our boats get regularly weeded up. He also expresses his disappointment at the EA's failure to face up to the fact that there is a conflict between licensed boats, and unregulated wild swimmers on our very narrow river. PB agreed to reply to this letter.
The Anglian Waterways Group meeting on 9th February which EB attends on behalf of RST was discussed. At this meeting it was announced that the Neil Pope's was a temporary position, and the new EA Anglian Region Manager will be Katherine Briscoombe, joining in March. (Spelling to be confirmed) Previously with the NHS and Anglian Water. Agreed we will write to her when she takes up post. EA stated that they had taken note of the large number of objections to their proposed new method of assessing licence fees, and as a result of this were in the main keeping with the present arrangements plus 4%. Revenues for the past year were presented, with a total of £2,500,000 from licences. EB made the point that this was the income from 6,000 boats, used to maintain 350 miles of waterway. Compared to this, RST raises between £120,000 and £175,000 each year from our trip boats and grants, all of which is put back into the maintenance of our 25 miles of waterway, in addition to any EA funding. EB asked the question at the AWG meeting as to how much licence revenue is raised from the commercially hired-out paddle-boards. This figure was not available but would be produced.
4. **Reports**
 - a) **Financial** The Financial Reports and monthly figures were discussed by LK . PB said work is still ongoing on preparing a budget for the year between PB, CB and LK that can be put

onto SAGE. The Manager's Report included forthcoming events for the Jubilee year. River Stour Users Group meeting dates were discussed. New members were approved.

- b) **SBOC** We may need a new storage barn for the boats from this year. We should investigate other possibilities.
- c) **DVB** Planning to launch boats for a season start at the beginning of April. Uniforms for new crews were discussed. The new Sumup credit card reader terminals are being trialled for taking ticket payments by the riverside.
The Flatford Lock electricity supply has been checked, and there is good continuity between the land-side cabinet and the lock island point. Approval from the AONB will be required for any new cabinet on the lock island. Grants are apparently available from the AONB for sustainability projects. Possibly worth asking for a contribution to the electricity supply work. EB to investigate.
- d) **Dedham Lock.** The draft lease and licence have been passed to the residents. We are awaiting a reply.
- e) **Granary** Nothing new to report.

5. **Health & Safety** Report followed.

6. **Environmental** Nothing to report

7. **Lock Lintel.** EB asked for a Chairman's Report and updated SBOC and DVB Reports.

8. **AOB** Boxted Bridge was discussed. There is a proposal by Essex Highways to remove the existing 1898 bridge as it is in need of repair and restricts access for emergency vehicles, and replace it with a modern bridge. This will be slightly wider, but similar in visual appearance. It will retain the same headroom beneath to the water level. However there is a campaign to retain the existing bridge for heritage reasons. RST have pointed out that Essex Highway's own Heritage Report recommends that the existing bridge should be retained. It was agreed we should keep a watch on the situation.

9. **Next Meeting: Monday 21st March**