

River Stour Trust Council Meeting (virtual via Zoom)

Thursday 14th July 2022 at 7.30pm

(The meeting was recorded)

Minutes

Present: Paul Brewerton, Steve Durham, Emrhys Barrell, Jane Rogers, James Parkinson, Jim Lunn, Catherine Burrows.

1. **Apologies for absence** Mike Finch, Lisa King
2. **Minutes of last meeting.** Approved.
3. **Matters arising** Environment Agency visit to the river, 4th July. This was a great success, with seven EA staff attending including Katherine Briscoombe, the new Area Manager and Simon Hawkins The Area Director, plus Simon Amstutz, manager of Dedham Vale AONB. The party visited the VEC, travelled on John Constable to the Granary, travelled by car to Stratford St Mary to see the riverside area there, and Le Talbooth, then Dedham to see Dedham Lock, then by Trusty to Flatford and Flatford Lock. We then went to Constable Park for lunch, then Cattawade Picnic Site, which had been strimmed and tidied and looked excellent. Thanks to the crews at both ends of the river for their professional contribution to a very successful visit. During the visit some mention was made of a possible Environmental Fund, which may have some funding available for weed cutting. Jim Lunn gave an update on the situation with the IWA regarding the Crew Training Manual qualifications, which is still confusing. EB reported we had been successful in getting grants from the Dedham Vale AONB for new seats and tables and signage at Cattawade.
4. **Reports**
 - a. **Financial** No Report due to Lisa still working on our annual accounts which will be with us before the next meeting.
 - b. **Manager's Report** Nothing that is not on the rest of the Agenda.
 - c. **SBOC** The lifting of John Constable for its three- year inspection was discussed, and the quote we have received is the only one that replied. This is £2100 per day, plus £250 for extra insurance cover. It was agreed that Brian Kennel, one of the original builders, should be asked to come and inspect the hull. The weed situation means we now always send two boats together down to Henny in case one gets disabled by weed round the prop. On the weed-cutting front, apparently the EA had an accident with their weed-cutting boat, which has delayed cutting. This is now apparently going to be carried out by a contractor, starting on 1st August.
 - d. **DVB** SD read out MF's report. We are starting to have problems with some skippers and crews not wanting to take part at weekends due to the high number of swimmers and paddle-boarders. Also weed is a major problem, and now the river is silting up causing the boats to ground. The need for a new prop for Maria Constable was discussed, as the old one has been damaged due to hitting the bottom. Apparently, the Dedham

Boathouse is now closing early, at 4pm or 5pm, which can cause problems with cars being trapped inside, but we are negotiating spare keys to the gate.

- e. The Mill to Mill Swim is taking place on 14th August, which will cause us to have to stop operations, but they have previously made a conciliatory contribution towards our lost revenue. Fen Bridge is due to be replaced at the end of September. Discussion took place about the permitted number of passengers on our boats.
- f. **Dedham Lock** The latest situation is that the final version of the lease has been passed to DMMCL. Council have received this version, and there was discussion about some detail points on this. On conclusion of this discussion PB asked that Council formally approve the Lease, which was passed unanimously.

5. Health & Safety No incidents to report

6. Environmental. Overgrowth over the river cannot be cut back due to bird nests.

7. Lock Lintel is still work in progress, though an interim newsletter was a possibility.

8. AOB. The Granary kitchen was discussed. The importance of getting new Trustees was discussed, especially with the AGM coming up. It was agreed to get the message out to crews and members. EB said we now have a contractor looking after the grass at Cattawade and it is looking good now.

Next Meeting: Monday August 15th, 7.30pm.