

River Stour Trust Council Meeting (virtual via Zoom)

Monday 9 January 2023 at 7:30pm

Minutes [The meeting was recorded]

Present: Trustees: Richard Blay (RB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Maggie Gardner (MG), Steve Durham (SD), Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR). Others present: Catherine Burrows (CB), Mike Finch (MF)

1. **Apologies for absence:** Emrhys Barrell (all present sent EB best wishes).

2. **Minutes of last meeting:** Item 6 (sentence 1): replace 'chainsaw' with 'electric pole saw'. It was **AGREED** to accept the minutes with this amendment. There were no redactions identified for the online version.

3. **Matters Arising:**

a. Granary Fire Exit

CB had met with Barry Whymark who had advised that Babergh District Council Heritage Team might need to be involved (likely to incur a charge of circa £400). He suggested we arrange for a Structural Engineer to inspect the fire exit and decking and recommended HJ Structural Engineers Ltd. It was **AGREED** to proceed with their quotation (circulated) with an inspection date of 24.01.23.

4. **Reports**

a. **Financial / Management.**

The Santa Boat Rides event had brought in the main final 2022 income. It was split over 3 days with 4 sessions per day with bookings at 95% (some sessions only had one space left due to boat capacity of 12 per session). Recent substantial expenditure of £13,500 for annual insurances (buildings & contents, boats, Employers & Public Liability).

b. **SBOC** (update in lieu of a meeting)

- Santa Boat Rides event using EL instead of JC worked well and likely to repeat this year.
- Steve Waters, Steve Guidici, John Kemp jointly overseeing winter boat maintenance schedule.
- John Kemp has been successful in getting Sudbury Town Council support for Designated Bathing Water status.

c. **DVB** (update in lieu of a meeting)

The Kitchen at Dedham will soon be under new management so it is hoped the current arrangements (mooring and boat charging) will continue as before.

d. **Dedham Lock**

A steering group is to form in order to progress actual implementation of the work. This will comprise PB, EB and Kevin Taylor with suggestion of inviting Alan Ryan due to his knowledge and experience. SD to assist with H&S and legal requirements for construction project and to liaise with EB regarding necessary permissions. There was some discussion about project management and roles of Project Manager and/or Principal Designer that will need to be discussed in more detail by the Steering Group.

e. **River Maintenance Team**

Work had commenced at Flatford as planned on the three priority tasks - workboat re-siting, path raising and bridge end bank repair. RB is preparing ongoing schedule of tasks.

5. **Health & Safety**

- Risk assessment updated for use of woodchipper used by RMG.
- SD had provided names of those who have undergone chainsaw training (for insurance renewal) but queried lack of Sudbury based volunteers. However, this was due to the use of alternative equipment

such as handsaws/extended hedge trimmers. Two members, James Parkinson and Rob Drawbridge, had their own chainsaws but fell within the 'grandfather clause' although SD said that some form of training and onsite assessment would still be required. ACTION: SD and JL.

- First Aid training for DVB volunteers to be arranged by SD.

6. Environmental

Nothing to report other than RMG activity which included restoring the log pile ('bug hotel').

7. Lock Lintel

CB will liaise with Lavenham Press to understand how to present magazine content and discuss timescales. Additional articles to be collated such as River Maintenance Group activity, Dedham Lock update and funding, Designated Bathing Water application, Covid period, moving back to VEC. It was AGREED to work towards publishing the issue in April 2023.

8. AOB

a. IWA audit/assessment visit 13.02.23

Andrew Phasey (trainer and assessor for the IWA Certificate of Boat Management) to observe a classroom re-qualification training session for SBO and DVB skippers and crew. His aim is to gain an understanding of the RST operation and training regime. He can also advise on proposed updates and changes to help with best practice. To further his knowledge and understanding of RST operations, he will review our manual, syllabi, and training programmes.

It was pointed out that RST training needed to be uniform for SBO and DVB (albeit with slight operational differences such as local knowledge, boat variants, etc). Also, it was felt that facilitating 'senior skippers' with 5 years+ experience to oversee the required ongoing assessments would be beneficial. Both SBO and DVB have volunteers that fulfil this category.

The importance of record keeping was stressed (both digital and paper) and JL had been working hard to rectify the previous BOM's failings in this area and compiled a 2-year audit trail.

b. Cattawade storage container

RB had investigated and circulated costings for this but there were various issues including cost, planning permission (AONB area) as well as how it would be installed onto the site. ACTION: RB to contact local authority. The alternative of a wooden shed was dismissed due to security and vandalism concerns. It was suggested that the 5ft x 4ft shed/kiosk at Dedham or finding a local lock up storage facility might be an option.

c. SSM Tree blocking lock channel

A local tree surgeon had advised that a contractor with specialist machinery would be required due to size and location of the tree which overhangs the water and is not safe to climb on. There was some uncertainty on whether it was on RST land but its removal would likely fall to RST to ensure that it was removed and the lock channel cleared. It was pointed out that the neighbouring landowner would need to allow access onto their land which had been denied during SSM Lock Restoration. ACTION: SD.

d. Cattawade maintenance tasks

It was AGREED to proceed with picnic bench repairs and installing bases with expected costings of no more than £300. A new picnic bench has been identified and its purchase is covered by the AONB grant.

Next Meeting: Monday 20 February 2023, 7:30pm