

River Stour Trust Council Meeting
Monday 21 March 2023 at 7:30pm
[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]

Present: Trustees: Emrhys Barrell, Richard Blay (RB) – *for part of the meeting*, Paul Brewerton (PB), Steve Durham (SD), Maggie Gardner (MG), Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR) - Others present: Mike Finch (MF)

1. **Apologies for absence:** Lisa King (LK - accountant), Catherine Burrows (CB).
2. **Minutes of last meeting:** It was **AGREED** to accept the minutes with no redactions identified for the online version.
3. **Matters Arising:**
 - i. **Membermojo** (20.02.23, item C, ii) – MG thought that upgraded RST website could potentially facilitate some of the features offered but CB might benefit from other features.
 - ii. **Granary Fire Exit** (20.02.23, item C, iv) – in CB's absence, it was assumed that the surveyor has been contacted.
 - iii. **Tea Room 2023** (20.02.23, item C, v) – the daily operation has been adapted and various management tasks to be shared in order to alleviate the burden on a single person. Margaret Cresswell has reluctantly had to step back from doing as much as she has done for many years but is still a committed volunteer.
 - iv. **Eden Rose Coppice** (20.02.23, item C, vii) – JL confirmed that Charity Commission had approved a like for like land swap. We are awaiting the agreement of a member of Rob Brooks management team to proceed.
 - v. **Nayland Anchor** (20.02.23, item C, viii) – EB's email was acknowledged but no further progress yet.
 - vi. **RST radios** (20.02.23, item E, ii) – these will be mostly in use at the lower end of the river due to intermittent mobile signal strength. RMG have made use of the radios and they are working well. SBOC had decided that radios for the Sudbury stretch are an unnecessary expense due to a better mobile signal in the area.
4. **Reports**
 - i. **Financial** (2022 profit & loss paper circulated) – PB had met with LK and CB to talk about finances moving forward and downloaded raw data from Sage. This included the 2022 profit and loss report (circulated) which showed profit of £37k, predominantly from RST activities i.e. boat operations and venue hire. Having brought the Granary bar inhouse again was proving both financially and managerially beneficial. It was noted that S2C had also performed well given a pared back attendance of no more than 200 craft. PB was using the Sage reports to formulate budgets for groups that would hopefully be ready to present next month. Any specific projects will need to prepare costings to request funds and/or plan any required fundraising.
 - ii. **Management** – No report.
 - iii. **Membership** – MG said lapsed members have been contacted with 26 choosing to not renew. There were still members who have not responded to recent emails or last year's postal mailing. It was **AGREED** to remove all lapsed members that have not responded. There was discussion about club and corporate membership as it was felt that we should be encouraging canoe clubs to join and support us as members. One of our members was also an Ipswich Canoe Club member and had mentioned the club regularly uses RST Cattawade site for river access. It was suggested that the club could be approached to discuss working together to maintain the site for all river users.
 - iv. **SBOC** – Boats to be relaunched on 30 March with JC to be craned back into the water on 11 April with plans for training new recruits and refresher training to get underway ahead of the new season starting on Easter Saturday. Our participation with the Suffolk Walking Festival was going well with majority of RST walks sold out (or only 1 slot remaining for a couple of the walks).
 - v. **DVB**
 - i. It was **AGREED** that SD take the lead on negotiations with Dedham Boat Yard owner regarding the shed/kiosk and RST onsite storage needs. RST was very grateful for the concessions offered by the restaurant over the

- years i.e. no mooring charge and no electricity charge until last year (with a meter allocated against RST electricity use).
- ii. Pre-launch meeting had been very well attended including 6 new recruits to start their training. The boat relaunch this week is postponed due to stream and weather conditions.
- vi. **Dedham Lock** – A pre-construction and client brief has been written with a summarised version prepared for circulation to potential contactors. This excludes the piling of the lock island which is a separate project.
ACTION: PB to send document to Charles Baker.
- vii. **River Maintenance Group**
- i. **RMG Planned Tasks** – Many of the Cattawade area tasks are completed or well underway (20.02.23, item I, ii) with more sessions planned to include car park resurfacing. There has been tree felling and pollarding undertaken at Flatford in collaboration with Dedham Vale Tree Surgery. A wicker fence will be erected to help camouflage the Flatford electricity box. **ACTION:** RB to send reports and photos to EB for inclusion in membership newsletter.
 - ii. **Cattawade platforms** – SD and Alan Ryan had completed a temporary repair on the canoe platform to re-open it for use. DVB to discuss a vision for the site that will include the platforms and their potential future use. There is an opportunity to create joint purpose platforms for use by RST trips boats as well as smaller craft. The viability and potential adaptation of the angling platforms would also be a topic of discussion as it was known that similar use platforms were available nearby.
5. **Health & Safety**
- i. DVB First Aid Course (8 & 27 March) will bring all DVB Skippers up to date. SD to order crotch straps for DVB and SBO lifejackets.
6. **Environmental** – The tree felling by Dedham Vale Tree Surgery had all required environmental and local authority permits in place.
7. **Lock Lintel** – no significant progress to date. EB suggested that a major re-think was necessary as printed magazines are pointless if only printing once or twice per year; not to mention being costly and time consuming. It would be far more effective and beneficial to stay in touch with members via regular emailed/online newsletters. This would then reflect current news and activities to actively engage with the membership instead of reporting on the past. This could be made available on the RST website for those members without an email address. It was **AGREED** to proceed with a revised Lock Lintel format.
8. **AOB**
- i. **Boat registrations** – RST had been unable to register the boats last year, but this was entirely due to the EA registration team. This year EB had emailed and copied in Waterways Management which had prompted a swift response. CB was following up 2023 registrations.
 - ii. **Historic document** – JL had reclaimed a 300-year-old indenture from the RST's former solicitors. The document relates to the formation of the River Stour Navigation Company and was going to be destroyed. He intended to show this document during a presentation to the Sudbury Society next month and it was **AGREED** with JL put forward the document for possible inclusion as part of the history display at Sudbury Town Hall.
9. **Next meeting:** It was **AGREED** to return to daytime hours. Tuesday 25 April 2023, 1:30pm