

**River Stour Trust Council Meeting**  
**Tuesday 8 August 2023 at 9:45am**  
**[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]**

**Present - Trustees:** Paul Brewerton (PB), Steve Durham (SD), Jane Rogers (JR)

**Others:** Catherine Burrows (CB), Alan Ryan (AR)

1. **Apologies for absence:** Emrhys Barrell (EB), Maggie Gardner (MG), Graham Gardner (GG), Jim Lunn (JL).
2. **Minutes of last meeting:** It was **AGREED** to accept the minutes with no redactions for the online version.
3. **Matters Arising:** as tabled on Agenda.
4. **Co-option of Trustees: PROPOSED PB/SECONDED SD** that 'newly appointed Boat Operations Manager, Graham Gardner, be co-opted onto Council' **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**  
SD mentioned that Trustees are covered by Director & Officers Liability Insurance. bar
5. **Reports**
  - a) **Financial** – Lisa King (Burdett King Accountancy) is finalising the 2022 Annual Accounts (for submission to at the end of September). PB will circulate a draft of the Trustee's Report for comments.
  - b) **Management**
    - i. **Dedham Focus Group** – RB had circulated an email after the online Dedham Focus meeting. The upcoming 'street meet' involves meeting and chatting to local residents and visitors about their use of the area and perceived/actual issues. A 'day of action' will follow to combat antisocial problems along the river but particularly focussed at Dedham. **ACTION:** RB and CB to represent RST at meeting.
    - ii. **S2C** – PB and CB had met with Seb Cailles (previous event organiser) and we have not yet opened for S2C entries due to Boxted Bridge closure. This has been closed to pedestrians and vehicles as well as the navigation underneath due to concerns that it will collapse. PB, residents of Boxted Mill, IWA and BCU are in discussion with the Environment Agency (EA) and Essex Highways (EH) as no alternative portage in place. An urgent meeting is being requested with EA and EH as Boxted Mill landowner refutes claims they will not permit a temporary alternative portage. In any case, there is no guarantee that an alternative portage will be in place in time for S2C (9-10 Sep).  
PB suggested we proceed as though the event is going ahead and accept financial losses if it must be cancelled. It was pointed out that reed and vegetation overgrowth had caused issues for participants last year (particularly Bures and Nayland). It was understood that some cutting had taken place at Nayland so it was hoped the EA had checked other problem areas. Communication between RST and EA had faltered although Katherine Briscoombe had responded to PB regarding the Boxted Mill issue.  
It was **AGREED** that funds raised from S2C 2023 are allocated towards the Dedham Lock Project.
  - c) **Membership** – No report.
  - d) **SBOC**
    - i. Lots of trips for private charters and scheduled weekend Henny Swan Lunch Cruises but shorter trips at The Granary on Sundays (and Wednesdays during August) are less well attended. It was felt that publicity would help and perhaps some pre-bookable trips might be worth trialling.
    - ii. The John Constable survey report is still awaited.
    - iii. The Mobiboat remains on a trailer at the VEC after her engine was used to replace the one stolen from FJ in May 2022 and a decision needs to be reached on its future. [Post meeting note: insurers did confirm settlement in Jun/Jul 2021 for FJ engine theft at £3,719.58 net of the £50 excess]. There had been a suggestion that she could be operated as an accessible boat on the lower river, but substantial work is required before this can happen. This includes making her passenger ready (seating and an engine!) as well as relocating her to a suitable operational location. There are plans to run boat trips

from Cattawade, but this requires the construction of a suitable jetty (to accommodate wheelchair users), an electricity supply and secure mooring location. **ACTION:** DVB to discuss.

**e) DVB**

- i. The weather had impacted on boat trip popularity but it was hoped the summer would improve.
- ii. The Boatyard had issued a VAT invoice for electricity consumption for charging the boats and AR to request a revised version including their VAT number. We have paid an electricity bill issued by the previous tenant and had established this was calculated using a separate meter. It was **NOTED** that only the flat rate was being charged and electricity is a vital part of our bating operations.
- iii. Jax Horswill (owner of Dedham Barn used for DVB boat storage) had recently made an unscheduled visit to her barn to find a new padlock for which she had not been given the code. This was resolved at the time and multiple contact details have since been shared.

**f) Dedham Lock**

- i. Kevin Taylor had a positive meeting with the potential new owner of Lock Cottage to explain the work of RST and the Dedham Lock project.
- ii. Piling options are being researched whilst the tree surgeon is costing works for tree removal. The depths around the island have been taken by MF and there has not been much difference from previous years.

**g) River Maintenance** – The group is currently on a break. It was reported that RB's personal engine motor had blown but it would be possible for branch clearing using MC instead. Annabelle Rose has been registered as an unpowered boat.

**6. Health & Safety**

- a) A section of MC's roof canopy had been lost during high winds as it is only a Velcro fixing but it was fortunately found and retrieved by the next day's boat crew.
- b) Rowboat collision dealt with by AR. Gentleman has a bruised back but he was not pursuing a claim but SD to prepare a formal report.
- c) CPD assessment DVB training sessions run by SD in addition to any training undertaken during general crewing duties. The entire sheet is worked through and seems to work very well for refresher purposes. SBOC has 4/5 senior skippers so assessing is taking place during crewing duties, but additional refresher sessions could also be arranged.  
It was pointed out that MOB procedure needs to be consistently followed by everyone i.e. actually throwing a life buoy or floatation aid during training.

**7. Environmental**

- a) A lot of vegetation around Flatford Lock that needs to be cleared.
- b) Clean Water Initiative – John Kemp is a proactive coordinator and has received a letter of support from MP James Cartlidge. Defra recently changed their submission guidelines, so an organised event was excluded from survey counts.

**8. Member Communications** – This seems to have stalled as no-one has taken over responsibility for coordinating a newsletter. CB has a list of possible topic ideas but would appreciate some willing collaboration. **ACTION:** Article suggestions and photos to be sent to CB, PB and MG.

**9. AOB**

- a) **Remuneration & Expenses Policy** – SD has received 5 survey responses with results predicted to be inconclusive, but important that volunteers are consulted before Council makes a final decision.
- b) **AGM** – A date in October and possibly in-person at The Granary.
- c) **Lifting strops** – current strops are 5 years old and need replacing as per HSE guidelines (approx. £30-£60).
- d) **Flatford box gas struts** – AR to provide specification to office who can arrange delivery direct to AR.

**10. Next meeting:** Tuesday 19 September 2023, 9:45am – via Zoom