

**River Stour Trust Council Meeting**  
**Tuesday 19 September 2023 at 9:45am**  
**[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]**

**Present - Trustees:** Richard Blay (RB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Steve Durham (SD), Maggie Gardner (MG), Graham Gardner (GG), Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR), S. Durham (SD)

**Others:** Catherine Burrows (CB)

1. **Apologies for absence:** Emrhys Barrell (EB),

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. **Preparation for AGM**

a) **Adoption of 2022 accounts** – Details of trustees (names and date of appointments and retirement) were verified. End of year bar and tearoom stocktakes to be confirmed as it was known there had been some wastage due to Covid.

LK presented the 2022 accounts starting on page 5 showing total 2022 income at £149k and 2022 expenses at £127k (2021 income of £116k and against 2021 expenses of £98k). This leaves a 2022 surplus of £21k (2021 surplus of £18k). The total 2022 funds carried forward are £877k as reflected on the balance sheet (page 6) and this is split between restricted and unrestricted, fixed tangible assets (boats and property), stock (bar, tearoom and sales stock), debtors (money owned to us), cash at bank and in hand (all accounts), creditors (money we owe, which is mainly bounce back loan). LK scrolled through compulsory notes and standard accounting policies (pages 7-9) to look at income from charitable and trading activities against expenditure split of staffing, support and governance costs (page 11) [SD joined meeting]. RB queried what the support and governance costs were. LK showed figures for the latter comprising depreciation of property/boats, bank loans/charges, accountancy fee, travel, etc whilst support costs comprise rents, utilities, etc. LK mentioned that governance costs would normally consist of professional fees, meeting costs, etc but a historical format for how these figures were pulled together had been adopted. It is an interpretation of what the charity chooses to include under this heading.

Some figures (note 8, page 12) were yet to be added after a final check on the system. The cost split on the fixed assets and a breakdown of debtors and pre-payments (note 14, page 14). The BBL was being repaid £500 per month with interest of which the latter had totalled £600 in 2022. It can be paid off at any time without penalty but as a cheap loan it is useful should funds be required.

No changes for the 2022 accounts but LK would like to investigate VAT figure to check submission linked to the VEC fire insurance claim. It was **AGREED** to formally adopt the accounts as presented, subject to the agreed changes. PB to sign the accounts ready for submission to Companies House and Charities Commission.

b) **Date and format of AGM** – Last held on 28<sup>th</sup> November and need 6 weeks' notice (for advance notice, nominations for Council and circulation of papers). It was suggested that returning to an in-person meeting would be preferable this year (online attendance also to be available). It was **AGREED** to hold the AGM at The Granary on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 7:30pm (bar to open afterwards).

c) **Retirement/re-election of trustees** – Trustees serve a three-year term with a third retiring to offer themselves for re-election each year. PB checked that all seven Trustees were happy to be re-elected should they fall within the third. It was thought that a couple more Trustees taking on specific roles would be beneficial.

5. **Reports**

a) **Financial** – CB explained that she had fallen behind with the accounts due to a busy summer. One of the issues was DVB takings (missing and incorrect sheets, unknown charters and associated cash/card/bank

payments). Individual login for each card reader had been set up to help with transaction allocation but it was possible to use the same login for two devices which may have occurred.

**b) Management**

- i. Correspondence from member, Hugh Turner** – CB had replied to Hugh Turner, and it was known that membership communication has not fully recovered after Covid. The introductory newsletter was meant to be issued on a quarterly basis, but no-one had taken this on following EB needing to step back for personal health reasons. JR and JL to meet and discuss collaborating on future newsletters; but RST office team to pull together something that can be circulated sooner. It was **AGREED** that a Trustee undertaking the role of Communications Officer was needed.  
Another topic raised was the state of the river. The River Maintenance Group was a welcome addition, but we also need to ensure that we are covering those stretches beyond our trip boat operation. RST needs to ensure effective communicating and working with the EA. **ACTION:** PB to reply to Hugh Turner on behalf of RST Council.
- ii. River level drop at Flatford, Tue 12<sup>th</sup> Sep** – AN EA Advisory Notice had not been issued and it is unclear whether permission was sought to open the sluices and effectively drained the river at Flatford and Dedham. CB had contacted National Trust and it seems permission from the EA was not sought. The incident has been logged via the EA Incident Line and photos have been sent to local EA contacts to be followed up.
- iii. Mini S2C 2023** – The event had 120 craft entries with 117 craft on the day. Proceeds of the event totalling approximately £3k to be allocated to the Dedham Lock Restoration. It was expected that the temporary portage at Boxted would be in place so next year's event could return to a 2-day paddle.
- iv. VEC flooring issue** – Cracked tiles and a section of the flooring had been identified as moving so a builder would need to investigate.
- v. Granary Fire Exit** – After the Structural Engineers' report, the project had faltered, and the best course of action and costings remained unknown until the various options were presented. It was known that the pilings had also not been checked. **ACTION:** CB to arrange another appointment with the Structural Engineer. The project had faltered due to having no-one specifically someone with a background and knowledge in building and construction to assist with assets management would be ideal.
- vi. Car Park Fees** – CB shared the surprising cash only totals raised by a couple of Long Melford car park fees (£300-400 per month, £4k annually)

**c) Membership** – No report.

**d) SBOC**

- i. John Constable insurance claim** – It has been confirmed that we are covered, and the surveyor has been appointed to oversee with required repair and/or renewal of components.

**e) DVB**

- i. Skipper assessment** – it was imperative that volunteers were trained and passed on all boats and operational stretches. More trainers were sought for the next season.
- ii. IWA visit** – GG has heard back from Andrew Phasey who suggested a November visit to the lower river, but this is outside our operational period so a visit at the start of season was to be arranged.
- iii. Training** – We have interpreted IWA guidance on "trainer and assessor" as two roles, but it might be one role. It is understood that a trainer cannot assess someone they themselves have trained.
- iv. Mobiboat** – This had not been discussed at the last meeting so no decision yet.

**f) Dedham Lock** – Enabling works started with applications sent for required tree clearance. Samples for island protection are being looked at.

**g) River Maintenance** – RB presented an overview of forthcoming works (costs as previously agreed): Wedding jetty and Flatford jetty extension (EA exemption required). The team will have working parties for

river clearance at Judas Gap (only 2ft wide section at the moment) and tree clearance at SSM. There is a proposal for additional equipment to manage vegetation clearance at Flatford, SSM and Cattawade. Further works at Cattawade include completion of fencing including a lockable gate to stop unauthorised parking of vehicles on the grassed area, widening of the walkway (accessible to pedestrians and small portable craft), removal of the condemned fishing pontoons (no immediate replacement subject to any covenants) and rebuilding of the canoe jetty.

- Expense approval of £600 for additional Makita equipment (already have batteries) – **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.**
- Expense approval of £1200 for Cattawade timber works – **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## 6. Health & Safety

- a) **Insurance renewal** – a lot more induction and training records required. Chainsaw 1998 exemption now ended and external recognised training and certification required. Chainsaw use seems to be an umbrella term as HSE guidance refers to petrol types but there is nothing relating specifically to battery types. A 2-day training course seems over the top for the equipment we use. **ACTION:** SD to write to HSE for advice as guidance notes are confusing.

## 7. Environmental – no report.

8. **Remuneration and subsistence policy** – SD suggested a separate meeting to talk through the survey responses and finalise the policy. **ACTION:** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> Sep at VEC in the afternoon (time TBC).

## 9. AOB

- a) **Boat Training Manuals** – These needed updating ahead of the 2024 season. **ACTION:** GG, SD, JL to work together on this.

## 10. Next meeting: Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 9:45am – via Zoom