

**RST Council Emergency Meeting**  
**21 December 2023 at 10am**  
[Virtual via Zoom – meeting was recorded]

**PRESENT**

**Trustees:** Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Steve Durham (SD), Maggie Gardner (MG), Graham Gardner (GG), Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR), Alan Ryan (AR)

**Others:** Kevin Taylor (KT), Catherine Burrows (CB)

The meeting's purpose related to Richard Blay's (RB) proposal to be appointed Dedham Lock Project Leader. RB has since withdrawn his proposal, but the meeting enables the project team to update on progress and plans.

KT's written report had been circulated to Trustees. In addition, SD is maintaining a GANTT chart that allocates tasks and timescales with amendments as and when identified.

The group have been working well together and recognise shortfalls in certain areas which they seek to address. Colin Daines has recently joined the team to help with compliance issues alongside Steve Durham and with Mike Finch's guidance.

Due to complications with reviewing the provided project documentation, the group had taken the pragmatic approach of 'starting from scratch'. The lock island piling phase was prioritised as the lease stipulates RST undertakes restoration works to the Mill Island Corner 'as soon as practicable following grant of the lease...within 24 months from the lease signing'. It was understood there were caveats to this clause, such as permissions and funding. The project team decided this phase was relatively low cost and demonstrates commitment to DMMCL.

The overall project budget is not finalised although Council has recently underwritten £70,000. The project team has been managing the technical aspects but made previous requests for a trustee to take on the financial and fundraising aspects.

It was considered unfeasible for every single expense, e.g. online planning applications, to be submitted for Council approval. However, committing RST to certain expenditure, such as the upcoming tree works quotation of £3,900, needed a formalised process agreed by the Council.

**PROPOSED JR/ SECONDED SD** to 'allocate the project a seed fund of £10,000 for preparatory works and obtaining permissions with copies of quotations to be circulated for information and ongoing liaison with RST Treasurer regarding potential expenses.' **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

DMMCL are aware of damage to their lock chamber that has been caused by the large cherry tree. The crack has not worsened over the past 7 years, but the tree has been identified as needing to be removed which will be undertaken by RST.

The intention was to complete the Dedham Lock project by the end of September 2024. Six potential main contractors have been identified and will be invited to tender.

A local company has been approached to manufacture the stop logs although the team will consider whether this should instead be undertaken by the main contractor.

The team have also been negotiating with the army regarding relocation of the gates so they can be submerged underwater on site. This followed criticism that the gates had not been kept sufficiently watered although recent advice was the gates would only need to be submerged a month or so before the project commenced. Therefore, the team will consider whether this activity is also carried out by the main contractor instead.

The penstock specification was outlined in updated quotations sent by email from EB to KT. It was pointed out that one of the suppliers no longer operates in the UK.

Fundraising – in principal, EB happy to fulfil this role to pursue external funding but it was NOTED that project cost and completion date is required for applications. PB offered to pursue internal funds from RST membership e.g. 'buy a brick' scheme and it was NOTED that this type of fundraiser generated a better response when a specific sum and date for achieving the project's completion was made clear.

#### **AOB**

GG suggested RST is not maximising its trip boat operations at either end of the river which would help to raise funds.

It was NOTED that EA dispensation applies to the operation of the two additional boats on the lower river.

SBOC recognised its short trips were less well attended and discussed social media promotion, town signage, online booking capability and special offers.

#### **END OF MEETING**