

River Stour Trust Council Meeting
Tuesday 9 January 2024 at 9:45am
 [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: Catherine Burrows (CB)

1. Apologies for absence: None.

2. Minutes of last meeting

It was **AGREED** to accept the 17.11.23 minutes with no redactions for the online version. The minutes of the 21.12.23 emergency meeting would be circulated presently.

3. Matters Arising: as tabled on Agenda.

4. Reports

a) Financial/management

The P&L report for November (with year to date) and income budget figures had been circulated. It was NOTED that operational budget income (boats, venues, etc) differs to grant income. The end of year figures being finalised with plans to revert the AGM to being held in June/July 2024. The up-to-date bank balances were shared as follows: Main £102k, Reserves £100k, Project £48k (includes main account recent expenditure of £14k towards annual insurance).

CB is overseeing new website creation, new boat trip booking software and new membership software. A redesign and print run of boat trip leaflets is required. Granary fire exit and VEC flooring projects are ongoing.

b) SBOC

- All boats now out and work party schedule has been set.
- A request for Council to support reprofiling of the riverbed in Gasworks Cut which was last carried out 10+ years ago. The excessive flooding seems to have shifted more silt and worsened the problem of the trip boats being able to approach the slipway jetty. Volunteer's attempts to resolve the issue have not significantly helped. **ACTION:** PB to obtain contractor quotes.
- It was **AGREED** to replace EL batteries that had been failing last season since batteries were borrowed from JC whilst she was out of service. **ACTION:** PB to liaise with EB for supply of new batteries. For the benefit of newer Trustees, it was **NOTED** that EB runs Thames Electric Company and can source items required for the boats for RST without financial gain with transaction recorded in the Annual Accounts.
- Santa Cruises ran for 4 days and raised almost £2k (after costs).
- PB will follow up with Sea Power regarding JC's repair as the last update was parts were awaited. The expectation is that JC will be ready for the start of the 2024 season.
- Training session, 13 Feb at VEC - invitation sent to all SBO and DVB skippers/crew.
- HSLC fares have been set with the charter fees aligning with HSLC adult fares (see below).

2024 CHARTER PRICES

	Rosette	Francis J Batten	Edwardian Lady	John Constable
OFF PEAK	£144	£144	£216	£240
PEAK (Jul/Aug)	£160	£160	£240	

2024 SCHEDULED TRIPS

	Adult (12yrs+)	Child (5-11yrs)	Infant (1-4yrs) & Babies (under 12mths)
HSLC OFF PEAK	£18	£9	No charge
HSLC PEAK	£20	£10	
SHORT TRIPS - ALL SEASON	£6	£3	No charge

c) DVB

- Trusty and MC are in the barn with Dave Jacketts coordinating maintenance tasks for the team.
- Kathleen is still in the water due to the flooding and will need a lot of work once she is out.
- There are concerns that the flooding has caused further damage to the Dedham Boatyard jetty.
- DVB volunteers have opened sluices on the gate and are liaising with NT who intend to convene a meeting between NT, RST, Guy Lennox (farmer) and FSC regarding sluice operation.
- Cattawade site is flooded.

d) Dedham Lock

It was hoped that project costs will be known within 6 weeks once tender bids are received from contractors. It was vital that project completion dates are adhered to because grant givers allocate their funding within these timeframes. The contractor documentation has been finalised and ready to be sent out with recommended amendments incorporated, including extending the tender deadline until 15th March. This leaves 14 days for the team to assess received bids before presenting its recommendations to Council. Sealed bids to be sent to RST office and will all be opened together.

The project team will develop construction phase plan with the chosen contractor. The fish spawning season (Mar/Apr) means 15 June is likely the earliest date for river works to commence.

Grants - Besides from the Enover grant for the lock gates manufacture, we also received £10k from Dedham Parish Council and £8,500 from the EA.

e) River Maintenance Group

Following conversations with GG, RB will remain a RST member and the RMG coordinator.

Stephen Bunting had sent a complimentary email (to PB, AR and RB) regarding SSM site and improvements e.g. deer fence, etc.

5. Health & Safety

Boat work parties and RMG are aware of the additional requirements of our insurer to hold a safety prep talk (per specific task as opposed to every session) and will continue to maintain an attendance sheet.

6. Environmental

Unprecedented flooding is still an issue along the entire length of the river.

7. AOB

a) Additional Trustees

JR suggested that KT being a Trustee could prove beneficial in terms of negotiations for the Dedham Lock project although it was expected that KT would decline this offer. **ACTION:** PB to invite KT nonetheless.

MG suggested an additional couple of Trustees would be preferable. It was pointed out that one of the more recent benefits to entice potential candidates is the meetings being held online rather than in person and a defined role not being necessary at this time. **ACTION:** PB to liaise with CB to prepare something to go out to the whole membership.

New boat operation trainers and assessors – Ian Whale has retired from DVB assessor role. Fortunately, there is some interest from existing Skippers (many also RYA qualified). SD and JL had always considered Trainer and Assessor as a combined role, on the understanding that assessors cannot assess their own trainees. GG will be following up with Andrew Phasey (IWA) to discuss RST's boat operations.

8. Next meeting: Thursday 15th February 2024, 10am – via Zoom