

River Stour Trust Council Meeting
Thursday 15 February 2024 at 10:00am
[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), Kevin Taylor (KT)

Others: Catherine Burrows (CB)

1. **Apologies for absence:** None.

2. **Co-option of Trustee**

PROPOSED PB, SECONDED JR that 'Kevin Taylor is co-opted as a Trustee' AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **Minutes of last meeting**

It was **AGREED** to accept the 21.12.23 minutes as a true record of that meeting.

It was **AGREED** that Trustees review the minutes to agree (by email) a redacted version for online publication.

It was **AGREED** to accept the 09.01.24 minutes with no redactions for the online version.

4. **Matters Arising:** as tabled on Agenda.

5. **Reports**

a) Financial/management

The P&L report for December 2023 (and 2023 to date) and income budget figures had been circulated. EB had added percentages and circulated this amended version to Trustees shortly before the meeting.

It was suggested that contributing factors for ongoing lapsed members could be lack of regular RST communication and/or personal finances. It was suggested that a two-tier membership might be an idea as this would accommodate those members not paying the updates subscription rate.

It was pointed out that the figure for 2023 DVB boat operation income was misleading because Talbooth charter booking income was not received until January 2024. Therefore, last year's income had actually exceeded the projected 2023 budget figure. It was important to share this information with our membership so needed to ensure we accounted for such abnormalities. Following a suggestion at the 2023 AGM, PB said the P&L report will be shared quarterly with SBOC and DVB.

RST member, Hilary Gallo (HG), has come forward offering to take on the role of Treasurer. He is a retired lawyer and newly qualified DVB Skipper with experience of being a Treasurer for Hadleigh choir. Meeting between HG, our Accountant, PB and CB to be arranged.

A couple of VEC flooring quotations had been received with a preferred contractor selected. The main room's existing tile flooring, defective plywood subfloor and waterproof membrane will be removed as well as timber joists strengthened. The flooring will be replaced with 18mm engineered oak boards instead of tiles which reduces labour costs and helps to mitigate sound and heat issues.

Website content is being reviewed and drafted. The proposed new boat trip booking software is not meeting expectations, but we can revert to previously used software.

Remuneration Policy is published on the website with claim forms available to download or online submission facility. All claims should be submitted as per the policy's stated time period.

b) SBOC

- Work party volunteers are on track to have boats ready for start of 2024 season at Easter weekend.
- A supper for SBOC, tearoom and VEC grounds maintenance volunteers took place at The Granary. It was catered by Shillingfords (who ran a successful pop-up restaurant at the venue during November). RST covered cost of drinks for the volunteers, as was the case for the DVB volunteer's meal.

- SBOC/DVB Training session, 13 Feb at VEC – Although JL could not run the session due to illness, this had still taken place thanks to Paul Brewerton, Ian Whale, Graham Gardner and Maggie Gardner. The completed CPD forms have been scanned and uploaded (printed versions will be returned to office for filing).

c) DVB

- David Jacketts is standing down from overseeing the DVB boat maintenance, but remains involved and able to offer advice, with Ian Connelly and Steve Waters jointing undertaking the role. It was **NOTED** that everyone expressed thanks to David Jacketts for the years he has devoted to this activity.
- Pre-season meeting to be held at Marlborough Inn on 21st March (PB and CB are invited to attend).
- There is a meeting this afternoon with National Trust (NT) to talk about potential future collaboration.
- Alan Chattell is creating a new electronic boat trip log recording system to be tested by a few volunteers ahead of potential implementation this season.

d) Dedham Lock

Colin Daines is preparing submission for the lock island protection special permission that will cost in the region of £1000. KT is liaising with Planning Officer Manager who check over our planning permission documentation. It was known that the piling method will not be clearly visible which is favourable for planning. KT is keeping DMMCL informed of progress. It was not known what the EA would be required.

In regard to the lock itself, KT has been advised no planning permission is required due to it being a 'like for like' replacement but CD and EB to liaise on EA permissions.

The ITT has been issued and it was known that a couple of the contractors have declined. Other contractors have had site visits and/or are considering their response. It was thought that there might be an opportunity for a couple of contractors to work together e.g. splitting civil engineering and woodwork elements of the project.

The tree removal works is due to take place 12-14 March. EB said 4 grant applications were in progress with further information expected in April/May 2024.

e) River Maintenance Group

GG said river flooding had postponed works. The Dedham jetty will need attention before being able to safely moor/operate the boats from the location. CB said the RMG schedule had been received so accompanying costings for approval have been requested.

6. Health & Safety

CPD assessments will be prioritised at the start of the season. Children's lifejackets were on the boats for an extended period due to the flooding so hoping the mould can be removed. EB said Baltic worth contacting directly as previously supplied at a favourable price due to our charity status and brand awareness. Throw rescue lines on all boats (except Trusty) also need replacing. **ACTION:** GG and SD to liaise.

7. Environmental – No report other than unprecedented flooding along the length of the river is ongoing.

8. AOB

a) Mobiboat

A decision on the future of the Mobiboat was still outstanding; whether it is feasible to make it operable for use on the lower river or instead sell it along with the trailer. It was clarified that TELCO had designed the boat to facilitate a wheelchair user (as either passenger or skipper) and it is certified for 10 passengers. The value of the boat, as new, would be circa £16k (hull £12k, trailer £4k) with its second-hand value circa £8k (with outboard motor). The seller halved the second-hand sale price to RST in the hope we would be able to operate another wheelchair friendly boat as well as enabling us to replace FJ's stolen engine. It is certainly an asset for the future so will be brought up during forthcoming meeting with NT.

There followed a discussion about the number of powered craft operated by RST on the lower river. The byelaws and restriction to powered craft are a topic that the RST should consider tackling once again.

9. Next meeting: Tuesday 19th March 2024, 10am – via Zoom