

River Stour Trust Council Meeting
Tuesday 25th February 2025 at 2:00pm
[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]

Present - Trustees: Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB – Chairman of Council), Steve Durham (SD), H. Gallo (HG - Treasurer), Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR), Alan Ryan (AR), Kevin Taylor (KT)

Others: Catherine Burrows (CB)

1. Apologies for absence: N/A

2. Minutes of last meeting

It was **AGREED** to accept the 21.01.25 Council minutes as a true record of that meeting.

CB had provided a link to the audio recording which would be redacted from the online version.

Item 7: paragraphs 2 and 3 to be redacted. [post meeting note - Item 8b: a couple of redactions]

It was **AGREED** to accept the online version, subject to aforementioned amendments/redactions.

3. Matters Arising: as tabled on Agenda.

4. Reports

a) Financial

[post meeting note: after the meeting, it was realised that the email with Profit & Loss report had not been sent]

- There were no queries put to HG or CB. A couple of substantial receipts were mentioned - £12,000 VAT reclaim from the Dedham Lock project and £3,000 gift aid reclaim.

i. Wage Review (PB had circulated a proposal)

This follows the requirement to increase minimum wage by 6.7% (CB left the meeting during the discussion).

Following discussion, an 8% increase was to apply from 1st April. **ACTION: PB to inform staff and accountant.**

b) Management [post meeting note: after the meeting, it was realised that email with Membership report had not been sent]

Granary Lift & Fire Escape – A recent meeting with the architect had taken place to discuss alternative schemes for the provision of a lift following Babergh Heritage team's negative comments towards the external location. The new plan to has the lift inside (in corner of entrance foyer rising up to occupy part of the bar area). The revised scheme should satisfy Heritage and will reduce costs by circa £20,000.

c) SBOC

- JC's new motors are now in the country being processed through Customs.
- Boats relaunched on 10th March after less maintenance required than expected.
- The desilting in Granary Basin is currently taking place and due to come in under budget with contribution from Sudbury Rowing Club and changes to silt disposal method.
- Tuesday 11th March, 10am at VEC – Classroom based training takes place for SBO and DVB boat volunteers. IWA's Andrew Phasey in attendance to assess all aspect of RST training and operations.

d) DVB

- 24th March pre-season meeting to take place at Marlborough Inn.
- Good Friday 17th April – DVB boats to be relaunched.
- Low temperature delaying repainting of Kathleen and there are more tasks e.g. replacing rotten floor.

- Mobiboat – NT Flatford were very supportive but decision ultimately made by the regional team. For numerous reasons, they are unable to proceed at this time. HG queried whether it was worthwhile to await the outcome of discussions between RST and RSPB in June 2025 regarding potential future management of the Flatford Wildlife Garden. DVNL had offered to extend their grant offer for a year and there are various grants for this type of project. EB clarified that the mobiboat's main hull will not deteriorate and it retains its value without any additional maintenance being required.

e) Dedham Lock Opening Ceremony, Saturday 24th May

DMMCL have permitted use of the lock island which triples useable area for the event. A few positive responses so far from some local Councillors, organisations, grant givers, etc. EB's invitation also makes sure to promote RST activities and projects. It was **AGREED** free boat trip vouchers are sent to those unable to attend the event.

Event budget needs to cover drinks but not food (supermarket sparkling wine and juice with free glass hire), disabled access portaloos, reserved parking in nearby car park (e.g. £150 to reserve 30 bays) and 2/3 gazebos (with mooring pins) will be required. **ACTION: Cat to obtain portaloos quotation from MTM Plant & Tool Hire.** CB said an event gazebo is already being looked into for events throughout the year. It was pointed out that a replacement gazebo is also required for Flatford boat operations.

DMMCL would like assurance of RST Insurance cover for event on their land. **ACTION: RST insurance details to be made available to EB and KT.**

f) Dedham Lock

There is a problem with 3 of the 4 penstocks which are very stiff to turn. Aquiko have been contacted and the guarantee period has been extended with a site visit to be arranged. **ACTION: KT**

g) River Maintenance Group

- Cattawade Jetty** - DVB had discussed this and this was now being progressed with grants being sought.
- RMG Schedule of Works** – DVB had also discussed and prioritised the works. Although, there is a need for prior knowledge of tasks that require additional pre-planning to assist as required e.g. applying for an EA W7 waste exemption before a bonfire.
- Purchase of plant equipment** – It was **AGREED** not to purchase plant equipment but instead hire this as required. Large machinery is used infrequently and incurs other costs (storage, maintenance and insurance) as well as depreciating in value and becoming out of date. Also, training costs and safety for volunteers needs to be a major consideration. It was also important to manage expectations of what should and could be undertaken by volunteers rather than contractors. It was clarified that equipment will be hired for a week to complete the piling works at Dedham. The project is also being assisted by the IWA Waterways Recovery Group who will also bring equipment. It was **AGREED** that it would be beneficial to have more willing volunteers undertake the chainsaw/polesaw training course.
ACTION: AR to advise Richard Blay (RB) accordingly.

It was understood that RB was currently negotiating with Suffolk County Council regarding funding for ongoing bank breach works; as well as continuing to contact the EA. It was important RST is not committed to works without Trustees having knowledge, awareness and input before negotiations and discussions are underway.

5. Health & Safety (policy revisions circulated)

- **First Aid Course** – 7th March, 9:30am-3pm - SD running first aid course at Dedham Sports Club and JR asked to attend.
- **Lifejacket servicing** – Graham Gardner had delivered all lifejackets for servicing. It was presumed that he was also arranging collection but this needed to be verified.
- SD is reviewing DVB risk assessments and operations manual.

6. Environmental – (policy revisions circulated) – N/A

7. Remuneration Policy

The policy was to be updated with the addition of a Hybrid meeting option that negates mileage claims but also extended meeting attendance to those that cannot usually attend. This would be a single account to be shared by various RST teams and Zoom was preferred over MS Teams. **ACTION: CB to research Zoom discounts for non-profits.**

8. AOB

- a) **Granary clear up** – JL will ensure any unserviceable gazebos are disposed of.
- b) **EA Meeting** – It was made clear that they are the ‘face’ but there are various departments that control decisions and funding. The river conditions (particularly between Cattawade and Flatford) were highlighted with a proposed recce to be undertaken by members of EA waterways team. Boxted Bridge is an ongoing issue and RST might need to highlight the impact on the navigation as this is excluded from media coverage. The River Stour Users Group (RSUG) will be resurrected with RST to manage guest list and provide the venue. Paul Lunan (River Inspector) is planning to be more visible this year so river users are aware of EA presence, which might be more effective than signage alone.
- c) **S2C** – As usual, this will be held over second weekend in September. It is likely the alternative portage provision installed last year will be required again at Boxted Bridge.

9. Next meeting: Tuesday 25th March 2025, 2pm – via Zoom