

**River Stour Trust Council Meeting**  
**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 2:00pm**  
[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]

**Present - Trustees:** Emrhys Barrell (EB) – *from item 5a*, Paul Brewerton (PB – Chairman of Council), Steve Durham (SD) – *from item 5f*, H. Gallo (HG - Treasurer), Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR), Alan Ryan (AR), Kevin Taylor (KT)

**Others:** Catherine Burrows (CB)

**1. Apologies for absence:**

**2. Minutes of last meeting**

It was **AGREED** to accept the 25.02.25 Council minutes as a true record of that meeting, without amendments and no redactions for the online version.

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

**4. Co-option of returning Trustee - Graham Simmons (GS)**

GS was interested in returning to the role in some capacity. PB relayed recent discussions and GS's past valued contribution as a Trustee. It was **AGREED** to co-opt GS.

**5. Reports**

- a) **Financial** (Jan/Feb P&L 2024 & 2025 comparison circulated) – it was queried whether there were any concerns from the presented figures, particularly from lack of wedding related income. However, the start of the year was generally quieter for this type of income and there was no cause for alarm.

[EB joined meeting]

b) **Management** (Management Report circulated)

- i. **Defibrillator at Henny Swan** – RST had been asked to contribute which was supported in principal but further research was to be recommended for possible funding sources. **ACTION: CB**
- ii. **Granary Fire Exit & Lift update** - Updated report and plan uploaded into shared online folder. A space for an internal lift has now been identified and submitted for approval. This is actually a cheaper option and more likely to be acceptable to the Heritage team. Estimates and funding are an important next step to consider. The wider veranda was a potential concern due to costs and load bearing on the building. It was queried whether a capacity for the balcony will be implemented.
- iii. **Upcoming events** - All require volunteers, promotional material and, ideally, at least one sturdy and easy to erect gazebo. In particular, the Crucial Crew week-long event is an open invitation to any member who feels they can assist with teaching children about water safety.
  - RST events - Social 24 April, Easter Noat Rides, Regal River Trips BH Mon 5 May, Teddy Bear Boat Rides BH Mon 26 May, Crucial Crew 19-23 May, Wild in the Stour Valley Fri 30 May.
  - Five Rivers Ultra, 10-11 May - A small portion from each entry fee will be donated to RST. Any RST banners or leaflets can be displayed on the day of the event at checkpoints. Volunteers were sought for Cattawade checkpoint from 8pm on Saturday through until 9:30am on Sunday. Unfortunately, this was unlikely to be an attractive proposition.
- iv. **Granary Maintenance** – necessary repairs have been identified and require specialist contractors for woodwork and brickwork. Coincidentally, the theme for this year's Heritage Open Days is Architecture and Listed Buildings so there might be access to possible funding sources. Contractor will be arranged to give estimates on the costs. A schedule of works is needed to prioritise works over

this and next year to also ensure that resources and costs are appropriately managed e.g. should scaffolding works be required then ensure works is grouped together.

c) **Membership** (report had been circulated) – all new members formally approved.

d) **SBOC** (11.03.25 minutes circulated)

- First school visit of the year with boat trips takes place tomorrow. Scheduled trips due to start 5 April.
- JC repairs are due to commence 8 & 9 April to remove the old motors. Cavitation plates need to be removed from the old motors so stainless-steel drilling capabilities are required. This will determine what is needed ahead of second visit to fit the new motors, which might not fit the existing brackets.

e) **DVB** (04.02.25 minutes circulated)

- Pre-season meeting took place yesterday with Kathleen to be returned to the water ready for Talbooth usage. There are fewer Talbooth weddings this year which was a possibly linked to Covid (which restricted opportunities for relationships to form/develop).
- The storage barn issue has not yet been resolved. JR offered trailer storage over summer.
- 12 potential new skippers with Tuesdays and Wednesdays set aside as training days for both boats.
- Dedham Boat Yard is now restricting RST cars parking on site to 2 maximum and we need to find elsewhere for our storage box. We have suggested a service akin to Henny Lunch Cruise but our trip boats are unfortunately perceived as direct competition to their rowboat operation.

[SD joined meeting]

f) **River Maintenance Group (RMG)** - Suffolk County Council have awarded £17k grant (£15k for Flatford bank breach works over a 3-year period with £2k for any other purpose RST chooses. RMG comprises a team with various skills and access to useful equipment. It will be kept under review whether equipment hire or purchase is the more sensible option as we proceed with works.

g) **Dedham Lock island** – Piling contractors are being approached for advice. **ACTION: EB to share experience/knowledge of piling works directly with Richard Blay.** Piling trial is due to take place around 20-23 June to clarify whether RMG can carry out the works and to reassure Lock Cottage owners that the works will not detrimentally impact their property. Dedham Mill residents will be informed that works will take place over weekends. Various services (electricity, water, etc) that run underground in the location are to be identified beforehand.

h) **Dedham Lock Opening Ceremony, Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May** - EB provided further update. A major step forward is KT's discussions with Colchester City Council confirming RST's sole use of the car park without charge (advance notices will be displayed and car park will be coned off). The Deputy Lieutenant of Essex is looking forward to attending in full attire. It was hoped that there will be some TV coverage. It was thought appropriate to have both non-alcoholic drinks and sparkling wine options (via supermarket deals and possible donation from Milsoms). Provision of glasses needed to be considered. KT and AR's wives had offered to make and serve canapes (RST to cover purchase of ingredients). Guests are allocated to specific people to share information about RST and its activities. It will need to be made clear that space is restricted and a ballot for attendance might be required depending on replies and allocation of roles. **ACTION: EB to draft 'meeters and greeters' information pack. Volunteers to be canvassed for assistance on the day. KT to prepare email (timings, roles, etc) to be circulated to both DVB (via KT) and SBO (via PB).**

[AR left meeting]

**6. Health & Safety** – nothing to report

**7. Environmental** – nothing to report

**8. AOB**

- a) **RMG thanks** – As Acting BOM, JL would like to formally acknowledge the contribution of the group.
- b) **Andrew Phasey visit** - A list of active DVB (and SBOC) skippers, including Senior Skippers, to be forwarded to IWA. The current list of trainers and assessors to also be included enabling AP to potentially approve these en bloc. **ACTION: JL.** Our procedures were outlined and AP would leave it to RST who we appoint as Assessors. It was a positive meeting and the impression was that we were an organisation he need not worry about. Thanks to JL, KT and SD.
- c) **Captain Ian Whale** – Having been a longstanding RST member, it was thought an acknowledgement such as Life membership would be appropriate. A commemorative item could be presented at the lock opening ceremony.
- d) **River Stour Users Group** – Date to be advised.

**9. Next meeting: Tuesday 22 April 2025, 2pm – via Zoom**