

River Stour Trust Council Meeting
Monday 14th October 2025 at 2:00pm
[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]

Present – Trustees: Emrhys Barrell (EB), Richard Blay (RB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Steve Durham (SD), Hilary Gallo (HG - Treasurer), Steve Giudici (SG – Chair), Jane Rogers (JR – Company Secretary), Alan Ryan (AR), Jim Lunn (JL), Kevin Taylor (KT)
Others: Catherine Burrows (CB)

1) Declarations of Interest:

- EB - Thames Electric Launch Company
- SG & PB –have personal storage at Yorley Farm Storage (where Sudbury boats/trailers are stored)

2) Apologies for absence: N/A

3) Minutes of last meeting: PROPOSED SD, SECONDED JR “to accept 16.09.25 Council minutes as a true record, subject to the amendments below; with redaction of Item 5 for the published online version’ **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

- a. Items 7c-iv, 7g-i and 7g-iv: references to Stour Valley Engineering to be replaced with Stour Engineering (also updating SVE abbreviation to SE).

4) Matters Arising – as below and as tabled on agenda.

- a. **Anglia Security Fire** – A reply to our email is awaited as we do not agree to the retrospective charge without there having been a contract in place. We are in discussion with an alternative company to maintain our security and fire systems. **ACTION: CB & HG**
- b. **Cattawade Car Parking Charges** - There are no restrictions on charges being applied as the covenants simply state the site is to be maintained as a public access picnic area with parking. Further research as well as completion of site works (jetty and path) is required.

5) Reports

- a. **Governance** - Pension re-enrolment and re-declaration is a legal requirement every three years. **ACTION: CB & JR**

b. Financial (P&L report circulated)

- The P&L report had been simplified to consolidate main sources of income/expense. For example, income for The Granary Venue pulls together weddings, general functions, hourly functions, regular hirers, bar income and craft storage which had all previously been split. It was still possible to drill down for more detail.
- SG queried Santa and Walk ‘n’ Water income that was listed under ‘Fundraising and Events’ rather than ‘Sudbury Boat Income’ but it was clarified it is not boat only income as opposed to Teddy Bear Boat Rides and Pirates on the Stour. Income from these activities (as well as weddings) will be allocated before the end of the year at the latest.
- SG also referred to the boat maintenance costs which didn’t split our costs per boat, but this contradicted the request for a simplified Council report. CB suggested that the boating groups are provided with reports that present a more detailed presentation of boating related finances.
- The ‘Other Income’ heading still shows total income from sales of EA craft registrations, keys and maps that are sold on behalf of the EA. A small proportion of this is retained as agent commission (10% from craft registration sales and £1 per key/map). The payment to EA (relating to 2024 sales)

is temporarily listed under the Suspense account because Xero requires a different process than had previously been used on Sage. **ACTION: CB**

c. Management

- i. **Website with IT Services at Community Action Suffolk** – The Beta version of the website requires copy and images. It is intended to possibly embed third party software i.e. Bookwhen booking software, Membermojo membership software. The new website will be published before the start of the new season.
- ii. **2026 Insurance Renewal** – The pre-renewal questionnaire has been received. **ACTION: CB & SD**
- iii. **RST office 2025 closure & 2026 reopening** – It was AGREED that last day of RST office will 19th Dec 2025 to re-open on 5th Jan 2026. It was NOTED that should a recent enquiry for a wedding ceremony on 23rd Dec be confirmed then CB is able to oversee this.

d. Membership (report circulated)

- The report will be adapted for the next meeting as it currently lists total subscriptions without number of actual members e.g. Couple is one subscription but comprises 2 members.
- The list of new members includes their reason for joining so it was important to verify if these had already been followed up.
- Membership subscriptions have increased (possibly due to late payers being followed up) but membership has decreased overall. There are currently 59 members identified as ‘expired’ (meaning their membership renewal date has passed).
- It was felt that the lack of prior regular contact from RST was part of the reason for the ‘expired’ memberships; whilst the introduction of MemberMojo and members becoming accustomed to this new system was also a factor. **ACTION: PB to visit the office and contact lapsed members**

e. SBOC

- i. **‘Near miss’ incident** – This involved RST trip boat and Sudbury Rowing Club (SRC) scullers so was followed up with SRC Safety Officer who advocates RST’s appropriate use of horn signals to indicate trip boat presence to ultimately avoid a collision.
- ii. **Cornard Lock** – Review being undertaken as there is visible degradation of lintels and brickwork.
- iii. **Rosette batteries** – Weed clearance from around the propellor seems to have resolved the issue.
- iv. **Granary maintenance** – repairs and painting to the external shutter doors, as previously agreed, was now postponed until milder weather and temperatures. Pricing would be sought to resolve gaps around doors and windows as well as replacement of fire exit doors and mechanisms.
- v. **VEC Solar** – lease agreed (West Suffolk Council will cover any increase in insurance premium). SG will research cost of storage batteries.

f. DVB

- i. **Boats out** – Scheduled for next Monday/Tuesday and boats to be removed from the field near the lock in preference to potential issues at Cattawade. The final trip boat usage is on 19th October.
- ii. **Boat Maintenance** - Canopy repairs and hull repainting as well as regular minor works.
- iii. **Flatford Lock** – maintenance required. Costings to be determined.
- iv. **Trees down** – This is from land owned by Langham Hall Estate and last wedding of the season will instead have the couple board at Dedham Lock.
- v. **Boat Vouchers** – It was **AGREED** to issue DVB with a batch of complimentary trip boat vouchers for distribution as and when required. **ACTION: 10 vouchers to be sent for the 2026 season**
- vi. **Storage Barn at Dedham** – [REDACTED]

[JL left]

- vii. **Dedham meeting** – KT gave brief feedback on follow up meeting that took place on 1st October.

- Dedham field owner and board hirer have been served with planning contravention notice due to exceeding permitted 28 days (includes land outside field entrance gate).
- KT was pleased to report that RST has met with the group's requirement for landowners to be responsible for providing sufficient health & safety precautions in place e.g. life-saving equipment, signage.

g. Dedham Lock

- There is anticipation that the lock will be brought into use next year, subject to the EA rectifying Dedham shallows, as promised.
- The final retention sum has been paid to Green Oak Carpentry.

h. RMG

i. Cattawade Update – Following discussion, some amendments have been made to the paperwork and scope.

- The riverbed reprofiling has been removed and instead a longer jetty to be constructed which reduces required permits and costs.
- RB is completing the numerous EA permits and accompanying documents for submission before his imminent holiday.
- The DVNL £4k Grant required expenditure before deadline of 12th March 2026 but in contact with DVNL and it is hoped purchase of required materials will suffice in lieu of the actual project being completed later in 2026.
- RB intends to apply for additional funding from Brantham Parish Council.

j. RSPB Flatford Wildlife Garden – [REDACTED]

k. River Health Group

- This group also comprises Sudbury Canoe Club and Sudbury Rowing Club who will be represented at a forthcoming meeting with the EA (Lee Cobbold, Paul Luna and Ian Watts) to confirm the intentions of the group, permissions required, 'rules of engagement' and how the EA will contribute. The Dedham channel shallows will also be discussed.

l. Granary Fire Escape & Balcony

- Both architectural and structural drawings are being prepared before going to tender.
- The planning amendments regarding piling will be submitted in December (retaining full balcony for dual fire exits) and then contractors can be approached no later than February.
- The internal lift is on a different timescale and not yet costed but its installation should be fairly straightforward.

6) Health & Safety

- SD is finalising Granary and VEC fire risk assessments.
- SD running a First Aid Course over winter as there are at least 6 new DVB skippers. The course will be open to all RST boating volunteers – new and those reaching their 3-year renewal date.
- Babergh H&S are happy with our Granary jetty, but Braintree H&S would like non-slip strips on Henny jetty.

7) Environmental – Nothing to report.

8) Any Other Business (AOB)

- a. **S2C** – finances as in P&L report.
- b. **Away Day** – we have a lot of major projects that would benefit from further discussion at dedicated meetings rather than Council meetings. **ACTION: SG**
- c. **Travel operator cross promotion** – AR had spoken to bus drivers who were keen to link up for days out with a boat trip. Office had not been approached as yet.
- d. **Committee Minutes** – We need to ensure that committee minutes or, in their absence, committee actions/decisions are being sent to office to be kept on RST record. **ACTION: AR - DVB**
- e. **Remuneration Policy clothing** – some volunteers are keen to purchase additional items of clothing in addition to the clothing provided free of charge. This facility had been removed from the website but can be restored.

9) **Date and time of next meeting:** Tuesday 11th November 2025, 2pm – online via Zoom.