

River Stour Trust Council Meeting  
Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 2:00pm  
[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]

**Present** – Trustees: Emrhys Barrell (EB), Richard Blay (RB), Paul Brewerton (PB – arrived end of item 5b), Steve Durham (SD), Hilary Gallo (HG - Treasurer), Steve Giudici (SG – Chair), Jane Rogers (JR – Company Secretary), Alan Ryan (AR – left after item 7), Jim Lunn (JL), Kevin Taylor (KT)  
Others: Catherine Burrows (CB - Manager)

**1) Declarations of Interest:**

- EB - Thames Electric Launch Company

**2) Apologies for absence: N/A**

**3) Minutes of last meeting: PROPOSED JR, SECONDED AR** “to retrospectively redact item 7f-iii from published online 11.08.25 Council minutes; and to accept 14.10.25 Council minutes as a true record, subject to the amendments below; with redaction as below for the published online version’ **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

- Amendments to minutes:
  - o Items 5f-vi and 5j – totally redacted for online published version.
  - o Item 5f-vii - last sentence redacted for online published version.

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

- a. Anglia Security Fire – RESOLVED (we are switching to an alternative company).
- b. Pension re-enrolment and re-declaration – TBA **ACTION: CB & JR**
- c. Insurance Renewal – RESOLVED
- d. EA sales financial reporting – IN PROGRESS (partially addressed - see item 5b).
- e. Lapsed Members – TBA **ACTION: PB**
- f. DVB vouchers – TBA **ACTION: CB to send AR vouchers before DVB Laying Up Lunch**
- g. Beth Chatto’s storage enquiry - TBA (HG felt this was not currently an appropriate action).
- h. Charity Mortgages – RESOLVED (document uploaded to online Council folder).
- i. Away Day/Strategy Day – TBA **ACTION: SG to suggest date.**
- j. Committee Minutes – RESOLVED (minutes sent to office and uploaded to online Council folder).

**5) Reports**

**a. Governance** – no report

**b. Financial** (P&L report circulated)

- The income from 2025 EA sales has been moved from the P&L onto the balance sheet as a current liability. The £14k payment to EA (for sale of 2024 craft registrations/maps) remains on P&L Suspense code due to Xero’s restrictions on a process that was possible on Sage. **ACTION: CB**
- HG has started the process for budgets and 5-year plan.
- VEC income dropped from Q3 due to loss of two regular hirers.
- Available funding for forthcoming projects still needs to be identified due to unknown confirmed status of restricted/designated funds.
- It was clarified that the Charity Commission had prompted the implementation for building reserves with £1k monthly deposit recommended by previous Treasurer, Graham Simmons. This has been ongoing and, given the current balance held in reserves, was overdue for review. In the absence of a written policy [post meeting note: there is a reserves statement on annual accounts], it was thought that our reserves should cover 6 months running costs. Therefore, potentially £75k

from reserves could be released for projects alongside money from other accounts. However, it is imperative to know project costings and to resolve the query regarding restricted/designated funds. It was thought that it was a 'tidying up' process on the accounts system as the core problem is a potential mismatch between how the grant income was initially recorded and how the project's expenditures were coded, leaving a balance of "unused" income in the accounts.

- The management reports have improved but are clouded by lack of information and knowledge on historic finances and accounting practises. It was **AGREED** to arrange a meeting with our Accountant to clarify these issues and roles/responsibilities. **ACTION: CB, HG and SG**
- DVB income was more than expected and increase from previous season so it will be verified income relates to current year. [post meeting note: confirmed as 2025 income]  
[PB arrived]
- It was **NOTED** that the P&L didn't reflect that £6619 SBO Special Projects expenditure (desilting Gasworks Cut) had been partially offset by Sudbury Rowing Club contribution of £2444.

#### c. RSPB Flatford Wildlife Garden [REDACTED]

#### d. DVB

- Boats out** – All went well with the boats now safely in the barn with particular thanks to 'Bob the Log' (Robert Barrell) for his assistance.
- Dedham Barn** [REDACTED]
- Flatford Lock maintenance** – Costings and requirements still to be worked out. In the meantime, AR has emailed East Bergholt Councillor following Facebook post about time limited grant offer.
- Dedham 2025 Laying Up Lunch** – This takes place at the Boatyard on 27<sup>th</sup> November.
- Boat Logbooks** – The abbreviated version was needed to be removed from the takings and passenger log sheet in order to comply with IWA requirement whilst ensuring uniformity and consistency for RST boat operations.  
SD had drafted a form similar in style to existing SBO boat checklists (printed per boat with completed documents filed at RST office whilst boat logbooks remain on each boat). Since DVB does not have an office base, it was preferable to have a pre-printed booklet as a more secure method for preserving completed documents for inspection. Five Star Printing quoted approx. £13 per 225 sheet booklet (adequately covers a boat for one season), but this is subject to a minimum order of 25 booklets. **ACTION: Other quotes to be obtained.**
- 2026 Fares** – Following recommendations from both DVB and SBOC committees, it was **AGREED** to increase half hour fares: Adult £8 (from £6), Child £4 (from £3), Infants/Babies Free (free - no change), Dogs £2 (from £1). Talbooth wedding charter pricing has not yet been discussed.  
There was feedback from customers regarding the adult age threshold (12 years+), which has been addressed on the online booking system with an additional fare category - 'Older Child (12-17 years)'. It was **AGREED** an adult fare from 14 years+ would be more acceptable to customers and volunteers alike.

#### e. SBOC

- 2026 Fares** – as discussed in item 5d-vi with no increase to Henny Lunch Cruise fares or charters.
- SBO Laying Up Lunch** – this will take place at Henny Swan on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November.
- Boats out** – JC remains in the water and EL will be taken out after Santa Boat Rides event.
- Training** – 5-year plan of SBO training updates completed and due to start second 5-year plan.

#### f. Granary Fire Escape & Balcony

- This will go out to tender imminently once structural engineer has finalised drawings this week.
- We need to clarify whether EA permit/s are required for the piling works as it had not been necessary when the desilting was undertaken.

- The timescale of the works is also an important consideration because the removal of the lower decking area will affect the tearoom operation.

#### g. Management

- i. **Granary hire** – All enquirers are advised of current restriction and we are only accepting bookings within 60-person capacity; subject to further clarity on timescale and impact of proposed works.

#### h. Membership (report circulated)

#### i. RMG

- i. **Cattawade Update** – EA identified five flood risk activities [post meeting note – see table below and application since accepted following additional information/minor amendments]. Works to be undertaken during Jun-Sep 2026 (to avoid Mar-Jun fish spawning but finishing ahead of S2C weekend). In lieu of project completion, the materials will need to be purchased before 12 March 2026 to satisfy deadline and conditions of £4k SDF grant from Dedham Vale National Landscapes.

Permit	Reason	Base	Adjusted	Notes
EPR 2016 FRA (a) - <i>erecting any structure (whether temporary or permanent) in, over or under a main river</i>	Installation of temporary scaffolding this activity covers the erection of temporary scaffolding over the river for approx. 10 days to support the installation of the new jetty	£479	£479	Charged at 100%
EPR 2016 FRA (a)	Installation of temporary floating structures (including pontoons and rafts) – this activity covers the temporary use of Versadock canoe portages within the river	£479	£119.75	Charged at 25%
EPR 2016 FRA (a)	Construction of jetties... - this activity covers the construction of the new jetty on the river	£479	£119.75	Charged at 25%
EPR 2016 FRA (g) – <i>any activity (other than an allowed activity) on a flood plain that is more than 8 metres from a non-tidal main river which is likely to divert or obstruct floodwaters, to damage any river control works or to affect drainage</i>	Creation of new or improved tracks or paths which require land profiling – this activity covers the construction of the new access path which requires land profiling within the floodplain of the river	£479	£119.75	Charged at 25%
EPR 2016 FRA (g)	Temporary storage in the floodplain – this activity covers the storage of soil, materials, and plant/machinery within the floodplain of the river	£479	£119.75	Charged at 25%
TOTAL		£2395	£958	

- ii. **Flatford bank repairs** – Permit applications are to be prepared for 4 or 5 breach areas upstream of the bridge for which repairs have received funding from Babergh District Council [post meeting note: £15,000 REPF grant received for 3-years improvement works to footpaths in Dedham Vale/Stour Valley project area]. The piling technique utilised for Dedham Lock Island will be used for the bank breaches.
- iii. **Dedham shallows** – SG had raised this issue with Lee Cobbold who clarified that sufficient funding was not currently available (only £10k designated towards Stour maintenance). It would help if costs could be lowered e.g. reducing the scope of the works to an acceptable minimum width and length. It was suggested that an onsite meeting would be beneficial.
- j. **River Health Group** - An official EA letter is awaited that will recognise the group as having EA authority to undertake work and liaise with landowners. An agreed procedure will also be formalised to satisfy H&S and legal requirements.

#### 6) Health & Safety

- i. **RST logo for safety signage** - Legal advice had led to a purchase of RST logo 'add on' signs for attaching to cheaper online safety and warning signs.
- ii. **Henny Swan Jetty** - anti-slip strips added as per recommendation from Braintree Council H&S.
- iii. **Accident on slipway** - A defective EA navigation bollard on Granary slipway is a recurrent hazard. Sudbury Canoe Club (SCC) had reported an incident to Paddle UK and RST following their evening

Halloween paddle which finished at 8pm. A parent of a younger paddler had tripped over the bollard coming to greet them and landed heavily on their elbow before passing out and appearing to fit so an ambulance was called. Fortunately, no breaks and it transpires that fainting in response to pain is a usual side effect for this individual.

We own the slipway but the EA have been reminded about their defective navigation bollard. A new padlock is required and photoluminescent paint was suggested to make it more visible.

**7) Environmental**

- 8)** Waste Exemption – Following a recent renewal for the Flatford area, CB enquired whether this was a requirement for the VEC area’s gardening activity. **ACTION: SD to advise.**

[AR left]

**9) Any Other Business (AOB)**

- 10) Date and time of next meeting:** Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025, 2pm – online via Zoom.