

57th Annual General Meeting of the River Stour Trust

Thursday 21st August 2025

Those present - in person

Trustees: P. Brewerton (Chairman of Council), H. H. Gallo, S. Giudici, J. Lunn, J. Rogers, A. Ryan

Members: 13 members in person and 4 online (inc. Trustee, S. Durham)

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the AGM and informed everyone that the meeting was being recorded.

Apologies I. Cane, R. Stoneham, A. Calrk, T. Clark, J. Kemp, L. Airey.

2. Minutes of the last AGM held on 15th August 2024

Attendance - Jim Lunn attended in person and not online

Item 4 - Annual report should refer to 2023 instead of 2022

Item 4 - typo in last sentence change "all out volunteers" to "all our volunteers"

PROPOSED HG, SECONDED JR 'the minutes offer as a true account of that meeting, subject to the amendments noted above' CARRIED

3. Matters arising from those Minutes

Other than those occurring later in the agenda, there were no matters arising from the Minutes.

4. Chairman's Annual Report for 2024

PB addressed the meeting briefly, to announce his intention to resign as chairman after this AGM. It had been an honour to serve since 2019, and he recalled notable times such as the aftermath of the fire at the VEC swiftly followed by COVID. There had been concerns the Trust wouldn't survive, but we continue to thrive. Along with various other trustees and members, there was finally success with negotiating the lease for Dedham Lock which led to the grand reopening earlier this year. H is intention was to continue volunteering whilst also serving as director and trustee should he be re-elected.

The written directors' report section of the annual report had been circulated and there were no questions from those present.

5. Treasurer's Report

HG reported good income, with overall loss due of the huge investment in restoring Dedham Lock. There were no questions from those present.

PROPOSED H. Gallo, SECONDED J. Rogers 'that the 2024 Annual Accounts are adopted.' CARRIED

6. Resolution/s for Adoption - None.

7. Re-appointment of Independent Examiner for the Accounts

PROPOSED PB, SECONDED JR 'to re-appoint Burdett King Accountancy as Independent Examiner for the coming year.' CARRIED

8. Election of Council Members

In accordance with our Articles, the following members of Council were retiring and offering themselves for re-election this year: P. Brewerton, J. Lunn and S. Durham.

J. Rogers, as Company Secretary, temporarily stood in as Chair. It was **AGREED** to take a single vote to cover all candidates. The votes from those in attendance, alongside the proxy votes, meant all Trustees were re-elected.

In accordance with our Articles, the following members have been co-opted and offered themselves for election: S. Giudici and R. Blay.

The votes from those in attendance, alongside the proxy votes, meant those standing for election were elected.

Resignation – Thanks to G. Simmons for his contribution whilst serving as a Trustee.

9. Open Forum

P. Brewerton introduced this item as a chance to raise for discussion matters such as the way the Trust runs, its activities and organisation.

a) Hugh Turner email – Correspondence from a member was read out in its entirety.

"I intimated that after well over half a century of membership I was considering resignation.

I am almost certainly your longest-serving member, going back to the days of Doreen Barret and Francis Batten. The Trust I remember from those days really worked to improve the navigation - we built landing stages, restored locks, cleared obstructions and much more.

My recent contacts about the appalling state of some sections of the river have led nowhere. As I said before, you seem to have degenerated into little more than a pleasure-boat business. You could be putting more pressure on the Environment Agency and the water companies; you could have pursued the opportunity of acquiring and restoring Swan Cut in Wormingford... So many opportunities missed.

So, sadly after all this time, I am not going to renew my membership.

As a concession to a very long-standing member please read this letter in full at the AGM and record any responses. Thank you.

With best wishes, Hugh."

P. Brewerton was disappointed that a member, particularly such a long-standing supporter, felt that they could no longer remain a member. He knew that volunteers and the trustees do all they can, as best they can. We are continually putting pressure on the Environment Agency to improve the condition of the river, but although sympathetic, a lack of funding is often cited.

K. Taylor commented on the opportunities taken to restore the locks at Flatford, Stratford St Mary and Dedham which takes a great deal of effort.

M. Mandry was aware, from looking through older editions of Lock Lintel, that Mr Turner had been actively involved in the 1970s when RST was significantly more paddler focussed.

There was further discussion about the work RST volunteers had been involved with to improve the navigation although it was known there has been a particular emphasis to maintain those stretches where the RST trip boats operate. S. Durham pointed out that sections of the lower river would be unusable if we hadn't stepped in, so we are not doing enough to publicise this activity.

S. Giudici said the newly formed River Health Group was looking to improve sections used by smaller craft. The intention was to move downstream from Sudbury concentrating on those neglected sections not visited by our trip boats.

It was highlighted that our trip boat operation is a major part of our aims, introducing a large number of people to the river who otherwise wouldn't be aware of it and raising valuable funds for river restoration and maintenance.

M. Finch referred to a recent visit from a long-standing member, Ivan Cane, who was impressed with what had been achieved.

It was **AGREED** that P. Brewerton would write to Mr Turner to extend an invitation to visit the areas where progress has or is being made in the hope that he might reinstate his membership.

b) Presentation to P. Brewerton – On behalf of the trustees, in recognition of his tenure and contribution as Chairman, P. Brewerton was thanked and presented with a framed photograph taken at the Dedham Lock Opening.

c) The late David Kirkman – His contribution over the years was noted and he would be missed by his friends at RST.

The Trust was grateful for the efforts and involvement of all its dedicated members and volunteers. Everyone was thanked for their attendance with the bar open for anyone wishing to stay on.

The meeting concluded at 19:55