

River Stour Trust Council Meeting
Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 2:00pm
[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]

Present – Trustees: Richard Blay (RB), Paul Brewerton (PB – Chair & Treasurer), Steve Durham (SD), Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR – Company Secretary), Alan Ryan (AR), Carol Shakespeare (CS), Kevin Taylor (KT) Catherine Burrows (CB – Manager)

1. **Declaration of Interest:** None
2. **Apologies for absence:** [post meeting: CB - due to unexpected visitor and technical issues]
3. **Minutes of last meeting held on 14.04.26: PROPOSED AR/ SECONDED KT** “to accept 14.04.26 Council minutes as a true record; with no redactions for the published online version’ **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**
4. **Matters Arising** – as tabled on agenda.
5. **Notification of Any Other Business**
 - a. **(RB) RMG expenses request:** refer to Item 6-h-vi
 - b. **(KT) Dedham Lock:** refer to items 6-g-ii and 6-g-iii

RB reported that he had been unable to upload his reports onto Dropbox. [post meeting note: RB files were in Dropbox Council meetings folder but there was a folder for the specific meeting which will have caused confusion].

6. Reports

a. Governance

- i. **Trustee Identity Verification** – CB asked whether Trustees had completed the process and could provide their unique code. This had initially been raised as Dec 2025 meeting with subsequent reminders and relevant links circulated, but only PB had responded. Without verified IDs, confirmation statements cannot be filed, and failure to comply may result in offences, penalties, or the company being listed as not compliant. **ACTION: CB to re-send relevant details and links to all (excluding PB). All Trustees to provide their unique 11-character Companies House personal code before 12 July.** PB advised that the process was easier with a driving license rather than passport.
- b. **Financial** (Document: “financial report part 1 April 2026”)
 - i. **New Treasurer** – PB and CB had met with CS who has agreed to undertake the role of Treasurer.
 - ii. **Profit & Loss, Qtr 1** – It was **NOTED** that insurance renewal payment had been processed in January rather than December as per the previous year.
 - iii. **Bank Balances** - PB reported current Lloyd’s bank balances, Main £62,663, Projects £25,221, Old Reserves £99,826.

c. Management

- i. **Lloyds Banking Review** – We have been submitting information to retain our Lloyds bank accounts, but additional details are required for security and legal compliance. The latest requirement is a formal letter from our solicitor or accountant that provides confirmation of our control structure, including members' liability amount, members' voting rights, and details of who the members are. If there are more than four members, the total number of members and who they are. It has been

presumed that 'members' relates to Trustees who have controlling interest. Their customer service team hasn't been able to clarify further. **ACTION: CB liaising with Lisa King to submit before 19th May deadline.**

- d. **Fire Alarm upgrade quotation** (*Documents x 2: "10583 Visitor Education Centre (VEC)" and "10584 The Granary"*) – Both venues require new fire alarm panel batteries and fire zone chart diagrams as BS5839 requirement. Additional fire detection is recommended for the Granary first floor. It was **AGREED** to proceed with the works for both venues costed as VEC £388.63 and Granary £991.75. **ACTION: CB**
- ii. **Granary Heating** – Alternatives to gas heating are also being researched and it could be that a grant could be sought to cover all or some of the costs. Quotes/estimates received so far: New commercial gas heaters £7,000+VAT, Infrared heaters £3,000 approx. (but planning permission also required), Air Conditioning £19,700 +VAT (excludes some electrical work). It was suggested that electrical heaters might be considered. In the meantime, temporary oil heaters are being used.
- iii. **Trip Boat Registrations** – the application was submitted on 6th May as the temporary BSS certificates were required. It can take 10 working days for the registrations to be issued.
- e. **Membership** (*Document: "Membership Report - May26"*)
- i. **New Members** - It was **AGREED** to approve all new members.
- ii. **Record Keeping** – CB asked for details of those due to commence training or already involved with RST activities, whether a member or not. This follows on from clarification that membership is not an insurance requirement. Trustees had previously decided that those receiving training (in house or third party) and operating RST boats are to be RST members. However, there are still insurance implications to consider for those volunteering on ad hoc basis without being a member, so records are crucial. **ACTION: RST needs a record of a) Those who will be undertaking boat training with DVB and/or SBOC and b) Those who will or are participating in voluntary groups e.g. RMG, RHG, Tea Room.**
- iii. **Lapsed Members** – Ongoing process to clear non-renewing members from the system after repeated reminders.
- f. **SBOC** (*Documents x 2: "sboc and granary reports 120526" and "SBOC minutes May 2026"*)
In addition to the circulated documents:
- i. **John Constable** - back in use and in great demand. A Facebook post about her being back on the water generated good engagement and a follow up from online radio station, Suffolk Sound. Chris Parsons (SBOC Chair) was on air for an hour during their 'Community Hour' section talking about RST and the river.
- ii. **Gainsborough House (GH) collaboration** – Chris Parsons is liaising with GH for an event tying in with John Constable 250 comprising GH talk as well as boat trip and cream tea.
- iii. **Chris Parsons (CP)** – it was **NOTED** that CP would like to serve a full season as SBOC Chair but there is no firm commitment to becoming a Trustee. In the meantime, he has arranged to meet with AR to share notes on the operation of the Upper and Lower river and to get a better understanding of their operation.
- g. **DVB** (*Document: "DVB Report May 2026"*)
In addition to the circulated documents:
- i. **Langham Barn Survey** – AR is following up with Barry Whymark about the survey.
- ii. **Dedham Lock penstocks** – The penstocks on the upstream gates are not working. Investigations suggest a stripped thread where the winding mechanism connects to the gate. It shouldn't be possible to turn both clockwise and anticlockwise. KT has spoken to the technical director of the penstock supplier, Aquiko, and they can advise on replacement parts, but divers will be required for the works. It was 2 years ago that they were fitted but the lock has not been used extensively so

are the penstocks fit for purpose? We need to identify the problem and whether there is an inherent design or material flaw.

- iii. **Dedham Lock pedestrian gate** – KT reported that DMMCL have now granted permission for a double-sided combination padlock to be fitted to the gate following ongoing problems with unauthorised visitors accessing the lock and Lock House areas that. This will cost circa £150 but an additional deterrent to the ‘Private - No Entry’ signs.
- iv. **Flatford Lock** – the lintel beams need to be replaced due to rotting as they are mounted and secured underwater. AR was planning to look at Cornard Lock lintel placement which is above water as a potentially suitable option for Flatford Lock.
- v. **Rotary Club working party** – SD reported that the local rotary club had once again completed a session to clear excess vegetation from RST owned Flatford path area. It was suggested that a free trip could be offered to the group.

h. RMG (Documents x 2: “Council Meeting 12th May_RMGM Report Richard Blay” and “RMG Required Equipment List Richard Blay”)

Highlights of the circulated documents:

- i. New pet memorial bench installed at Cattawade (courtesy of National Landscapes and Channel Five Yorkshire Vet)
- ii. Cattawade jetty & path works - construction of the soakaway channel will be undertaken on the 18th May followed by jetty and path work between the 8th and 23rd of June. The Waterways Restoration Group (WRG) will assist over the weekend of 20th and 21st June.
- iii. Flatford bank breach works ongoing with 3-year plan being formulated, subject to funding. In support of a bespoke permit application, Keith Seaman (RST member and qualified ecologist), is generously preparing the required ecology survey free of charge. A current challenge at Flatford is how to get a large quantity of clay into the field with weight limits on the bridge. Options to get around this are still under investigation.
- iv. There was further discussion regarding Cattawade and a potential problem as RB said the site being advertised on camper sites as an overnight stop. The site is rarely locked at night; there is no sign prohibiting overnight camping and there is no height restriction on vehicles that can enter the site. RST does not want to prevent use by river users who might have craft on top of vehicles.
ACTION: RB to provide website where this is advertised so RST contact to remove this incorrect information. Signage prohibiting overnight parking or camping to be installed as an introductory measure. AR to research solar powered ANPR parking management options.
- v. Cattawade site closures – River users can usually be accommodated but RB to install signage and provide dates to office so RST website and Facebook can post closure dates.
- vi. Refer to document “RMG Required Equipment List Richard Blay” – the scope and requirements of forthcoming projects had prompted the purchase request for these 5 items. Makita and De Walt items were selected as we can repurpose the batteries we already have. In addition, a table saw bench would also be useful and was estimated to be circa £500. CB suggested checking for better pricing from suppliers other than Amazon. There was also a reminder that an updated equipment inventory and confirmation of codes was also requested. It was **AGREED** to proceed with purchases, subject to doing relevant research on other suppliers to get the best value.

7. Granary Fire Escape & Balcony (Document: “sboc and granary reports 120526”)

Main points from the circulated document:

- Planning permission and listed building consent approved 17th April 2026.
- Building Control registration submitted with an earliest start date of 1st June 2026 although not necessarily the actual start date.
- Piling contractor quotation being checked by structural engineer.

- PB to meet with chosen contractor, Phillips Engineering, within the next two weeks to agree construction phase plan. **ACTION: CB & PB to verify that PE was provided with SD's pre-construction information document.**

8. Health & Safety

- **Cornard Weir incident** – Steve Waters had reported on a recent incident whereby a young person in an inflatable craft became stuck at the bottom of the weir. RST wanted to assist but could not access the best location due to requiring an EA NR5 key padlock to unlock the gate. Fortunately, no one was hurt or injured, but this has prompted a suggestion that RST might be given permission (and the necessary key) for basic rescue purposes.
- **Lifejacket policy** – Refer to document “Lifejackets policy review 2026” – After discussion, and given the policies for other boat operators, a policy amendment was put forward whereby lifejackets are on display with relevant signage that they are available for passengers. **ACTION: DVB and SBOC to discuss.**

9. Environmental – no report.

10. Any Other Business (AOB) – discussed under other items.

11. Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday 9th June 2026, 2pm – online via Zoom.

- *Paperwork to be uploaded into shared online folder – click on link to upload <https://www.dropbox.com/request/DlfgGglxlc6IT1SbpGsF>*
- *(or if problems with above then author to circulate to all regular meeting attendees).*