River Stour Trust Council Meeting

Tuesday 13th October 2026 at 2:30pm

[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]

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

Other attendees: Catherine Burrows (CB – Manager)

1. **Declaration of Interest:** None

2. **Apologies for absence:**

3. **Minutes of the last meeting**:

PROPOSED KT/ SECONDED AR "to accept 15.09.26 Council minutes as a true record; with inclusion of confidential discussion and action under item 9iii; with it being redacted for the online version of the minutes.'

4. **Matters Arising** – as tabled on agenda.

i. **RST policy on concession boat trip fares –** PB will prepare a draft policy ahead of the new 2027 season.

5. **Notification of Any Other Business –** none

i. JL – IWA annual submission (see item 9i)

6. **Reports**

A. **Governance** – no report

B. **Financial** *(document 'Carol Shakespeare - RST Treasurers Report September 2026')*

CS referred to the expected drop in income between November and March due to lack of boating income and Granary project expenditure. CS still gathering information for known or planned expenditure as well as potential projects to ascertain potential forecast costs for the rest of 2026 and next year.

The Granary lease remains an issue and a VEC revaluation could nullify the effect of removing the lease; as well as assisting with a potential mortgage loan application for Langham Barn. **ACTION: CB to proceed with VEC revaluation**

It was pointed out the annual accounts show restricted funds totalling £129,000 but this sum includes two of the trip boats (Maria Constable and John Constable) being historically identified as restricted assets (presumably linked to their respective grants). This will be changed going forward which will also put us in a better financial light. It was **AGREED** that a five-year rolling program for all activities would be very useful and enable better planning.

C. **Management 2026** *(Document: "Manager Report - Oct26")*

The report was accepted with further discussion on the following:

i. **AGM 2027 planning** – CB suggested it would be beneficial for the Trustees to proactively plan how next year's AGM will run and to create a presentation including displays of achievements and activities from the year as well as the RST's Strategy for the coming years.

ii. **Conflicts of Interest** – This is an outstanding action from June 2026. **ACTION: Trustees to review the Charity Commission guidance (click here) prior to consideration of a draft policy**

iii. **Insurance Renewal –** We now have the renewal documents and SD had offered to assist with this. There had been discussion last year about obtaining comparative quotes.

iv. **Changes to regulated activity with children** – We need to verify what does and does not apply to RST.

v. **EA Navigation Strategy survey** –CB queried whether RST would be submitting a response, alongside individuals submitting their own. **ACTION: Trustees invited to complete survey as individuals whilst PB will submit response on behalf of RST (survey link in report)**

vi. **Proposed cycleway between Flatford and Manningtree Station –** This would impact on RST owned land at Flatford. Cllr Sally Davies had asked for support, but at this stage we had requested further information on the scheme. AR plans to find out more by attending local parish meeting where this is being raised. **ACTION: AR**

vii. **Solar at VEC –** CB wanted to revisit installation of storage batteries since the VEC is fully electric and retrospective installation costs more than it being done at the same time as the solar panels. **ACTION: Check contract terms for use of solar generated energy**

viii. **Honk Media –** CB referred to Nikki's engaging social media content for Rushbanks Campsite. This could be a viable option for RST to become more active on its social media. She is local and very enthusiastic about the river and its history. She could also help us promote the Granary as a venue. **ACTION: CB**

There was also recent email correspondence for discussion in addition to items noted in the report:

ix. **Yorley Farm Storage (email 12.10.26 saved in online folder) –** CB read out the email. **ACTION: PB to contact Clive Johnson. CB to send acknowledgement of the email and that RST shall make further enquiries into the matter**

D. Membership *(Document: "Membership Report - Oct26")*

The report detailed new, lapsed and archived members (the latter excluded from software plan cost). It was **AGREED** to accept all new members.

There was an outstanding action for details of those involved with voluntary activities, such as RMG and RHG (name, contact, ICE). There are online submission forms (medical and ICE) which would mean the information is automatically saved on RST file. SD suggested a form for those joining as volunteers rather than members. **ACTION: RB to send RMG volunteers' information so it can be saved on RST file**

E. SBOC *(Document: 'SBOC minutes Sept 2026')*

The report was accepted requiring no additional debate, changes, or written follow-up, subject to following:

i. **Granary jetty replacement discussion** – this was in the early stages and follows ongoing repairs that are not resolving ongoing issues. The plan is to determine costs and approaches (potentially matching the spec of the Granary decking and veranda currently being installed). The design to encompass accessibility and grant funding to be sought.

F. DVB – *(report circulated by email only to Trustees and not saved on file)*

In addition to AR's emailed report to Trustees:

i. **Langham Barn** - Stanfords had been sent our 'licence to occupy' document to assist with the barn valuation.

ii. **Boat removal -** All DVB boats had been safely and successfully taken out of the water that morning.

iii. **Talbooth charters** - considerable increase from the previous year and we are to expect more potential boat customers from their accommodation expansion.

iv. **Dedham lock penstock repairs** – the volunteers had successfully carried out the repairs, and it was reassuring to know we have people with the experience and knowledge to undertake this type of project.

G. RMG – *(Document: 'Council Meeting 13th Oct 2026_RMG Report')*

The report included matters requiring Council approval:

i. Training

RB had booked RMG members, David Lewis and Peter Gibson, onto a January chainsaw course at a cost of £250 per person (ex VAT) and subsequently sought approval of this expense. RB had also offered a £300 donation on behalf of RST to the River Gipping Trust (RGT) for IWA approved dumper driver training on 19th October to enable three RMG volunteers (Steve Lawrence, David Lewis, and Nigel Tillett) to drive dumpers in support of the Flatford clay backfilling works starting in November.

Council had previously agreed (13.01.26 Council, item 5 – d – i) that "Membership was considered crucial for those crewing our boats, using RST equipment and undertaking training at RST expense" and this remained the

consensus. All RST training, whether inhouse or external, bears a cost but it was understood volunteer labour also has a value recognised by grant givers, and it is beneficial to have up to date training for those actively involved with assisting RST aims and objectives. **ACTION: £300 for RGT donation allocated from the Flatford Bank Breach grant. RB to ask Peter Gibson to join RST as a member (ref: chainsaw training)**

ii. Trailer

This would be useful for transporting equipment and items and Schofields Storage were able to store a trailer in their compound. RB was suggesting a second hand trailer. **ACTION: RMG subcommittee to review and discuss potential purchase**

iii. Middle river sections

Navigation is impeded at several points, particularly between Nayland to Boxted, by narrow river passage and blockages. RMG and RHG groups are restricted in what they can achieve due to limited access points and equipment that can be carried in canoes. It is impractical and time consuming to navigate the workboat through two locks so RB would like to locate a second maintenance boat at SSM (to assist in maintaining the Dedham to Boxted section. In addition, Steve Guidici is working on a proposal for the RHG to acquire a maintenance dinghy.

This would also need to be discussed with EA in terms of arranging dispensation for additional powered maintenance craft and possibly a monetary contribution. It would need to be pointed out that the navigation is their responsibility, but it is not being properly maintained i.e. S2C was curtailed to 1 day only due to navigation issues.

iv. Flatford Bank Works

The first stage commences in November, with 100 tonnes of clay and soil (to include the spoil heap at Cattawade) being relocated into the Flatford meadow and backfilling four areas along the riverbank. The second stage takes place in March/April 2027 and involves 200-300 tonnes of clay/soil. A license is being obtained for temporary storage of clay and topsoil in the National Trust Car part prior to and during the works.

H. Granary Fire Escape & Balcony *(Document 'Granary Veranda Report')*

PB had visited that morning and 4 of the 7 support beams were in place. The removal of the veranda would take place once a firm base was installed. PB awaited a response to the grant application for the lift.

I. Events

i. **Laying Up Lunches –** DVB and SBOC had these taking place on 12th November.
ii. **Winter Socials –** A series of events for members and friends at The Granary is being arranged. The first on takes place on 19th November with a talk on Mosquito aircraft.
iii. **Santa Boat Rides –** This annual event will again take place over the first two weekends in December.

7. Health & Safety *(Document 'Stephen Durham - HSE Report to RST Council October 2026')*

The report was accepted requiring no additional debate, changes, or written follow-up.

8. Environmental – no report

9. Any Other Business (AOB)

i. **Details of operational boating volunteers –** JL explained that it was an IWA annual requirement to submit details of operational boating volunteers. This is to include assessment certificates that should also be stored on central RST file.

10. Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday 10th November 2026, 2pm – online via Zoom.