

**River Stour Trust Council Meeting**  
**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 10:00am**  
**[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]**

**Present - Trustees:** Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Steve Durham (SD), Maggie Gardner (MG), Graham Gardner (GG), Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR), Alan Ryan (AR) – *present from item 4*, Kevin Taylor (KT)

**Others:** Catherine Burrows (CB)

1. **Apologies for absence:** None.

2. **Minutes of last meeting**

It was **AGREED** to accept the 15.02.24 minutes as a true record of that meeting.

It was **AGREED** to accept the 15.02.24 minutes with a redaction of individuals named in item 4 before online publication.

3. **Matters Arising:** as tabled on Agenda.

4. **Reports**

a) **Financial/management**

The P&L report for Jan & Feb 2024 had been circulated. Year to date not yet available as Sage needs to move into new financial year. PB noted that we at low point of income stream, but activities, such as boat operations, starting up from end of month. Current bank balances as follows: Main £85,240 – Reserves £102,929 – Special Projects £49,064. There has been £20,000 loss so far this year, but this is due to usual period of low income and high payouts e.g. £14,000 insurance renewal. Our accountant will be visiting the office to update Sage for 2014 and to meet potential new Treasurer, Hilary Gallo.

KT asked for source of income or expense for the following items on the P&L Report regarding the:

- Donations: usually comprises member donations and group donations from RST Talks.
- Grants: an award from Babergh District Councillor Laura Smith's from her Locality Budget to go towards repair costs of one of our Friars Meadow landing stages.
- River/Jetty Maintenance: this will cover all maintenance sites along the river – not only RMG areas on lower river.

i. **Granary Fire Escape** – Favourable onsite meeting with Babergh Heritage Team with Barry Whymark (architect) in attendance. In principle, a simple stainless-steel replacement is acceptable with Barry's design to consider future addition of a lift on building exterior at rear. The future replacement of the fire doors was also raised as these are no longer closing properly with noticeable gaps where heat is escaping. A like-for-like design is allowed with a thicker type of glass but not double glazed.

ii. **New card reader** – in regard to ongoing problem regarding poor mobile data signal at Flatford and Dedham, the GoodBox card reader could be a solution as it can process offline card payments. We would opt for the leasing option (£30 per month) rather than purchasing outright (£99 plus £7.50 per month for min. 12 months).

iii. **Boxted Bridge and Navigation closure** - A temporary portage has still not been finalised. Matt Yallop at EA has said he will follow up with Highways who are leading on arrangements with the landowner. Asides from affecting general river users, this also impacts on our S2C event in September, so we need to ensure this is followed up.

iv. **2024 boat registrations** - all RST trip boats, and Annabelle Rose have been registered (the discs have been sent by email which CB will print, laminate and circulate for display on the boats). It is hoped the renewal process will be easier next year as the EA are planning to implement a digital system. CB will request dispensation for Kathleen and Maria Constable to operate on the lower stretch alongside Trusty.

v. VEC flooring works is underway and making good progress to remove the saturated subflooring and floor tiles.

vi. Tea Room volunteers had met for pre-season meeting, and we are grateful that Margaret Cresswell will continue in the role of tearoom manager this season.

b) **SBOC**

- Boats are back in the water and FJ will be taken out to check river conditions. Some refresher training taking place before Easter Saturday.
- There is still some disquiet regarding travel expense rates although the survey response showed 85% of volunteers agreed with the suggested rate. It was always intended to review the implemented policy and it was agreed to do so after 6 months of it being in operation i.e. June/July. CB suggested that volunteers are reminded to be aware of all existing RST policies (post meeting note –available online at [www.riverstourtrust.org/about/rst-policies](http://www.riverstourtrust.org/about/rst-policies)).

### **c) DVB**

- Pre-season meeting taking place on Thursday =, which includes some new skippers. There has been some local advertising to encourage new volunteers.
- The Dedham Boatyard jetty is badly damaged follow the flooding and the Versadock.
- To ensure at least one boat for Easter, GG has Jonny Kemp on standby to help with towing and launching on Mon 25 March. Simon Page has also sent details of a charity that has drivers who can assist with this activity should Pat Corps be unavailable when his services would be needed. Alternatively, tow vehicles can be hired for circa £200.
- River levels are still causing problems.

### **d) Dedham Lock**

- The trees and vegetation clearance has been undertaken with thanks to the efforts of all the volunteers who braved the wet weather. Dedham Vale Tree Surgery £4850 invoice has been received which will be sent to KT and AR to doublecheck.
- Of the 4 contractors approached with ITT, 3 have responded and the Dedham Project Team has met to review these. There is no straightforward choice so more questions before a recommendation is presented to Council.
- EB has applied for £40,000 of grants which, if all 3 applications are successful, means £50,000 towards the project (includes the £10,000 Dedham Parish Council grant).
- The two Environment Agency Exemptions needed for dewatering the lock and replacing the gates have been granted and have no expiry date (carried over from 2018 when we originally applied). We have submitted a request for a Permission for the piling of the island.
- PB said fundraising within RST membership could now be established since we are overall costs are now known.

### **e) River Maintenance Group**

- River levels have postponed works but the urgency for Dedham Boatyard jetty works is understood. A check on the stretch ahead of the boats being launched is intended to ensure safe passage from Cattawade to Dedham/Flatford.
- There was no progress following request in January for RMG budget relating to the planned schedule. Furthermore, claims are being submitted without reference to the policy which states the Treasurer, or a Trustee should approve expenditure before it goes ahead.

## **5. Health & Safety – no report**

## **6. Environmental**

Our application for designated bathing water was reduced to the 400-foot stretch along Friar's Meadow (originally applied for as far as Cornard Lock) and the consultation process ended on 10<sup>th</sup> March. It could be another month before we know whether it has been successful. Our thanks to project coordinator, John Kemp, for all his efforts to achieve this.

## **7. AOB**

### **a) National Trust meeting, Friday 22 March**

The meeting purpose is currently unknown, but SD and AR will report back once it has taken place.

## **8. Next meeting: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024, 10am – via Zoom**