

**River Stour Trust Council Meeting**  
**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 10:00am**  
[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]

**Present - Trustees:** Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB), Steve Durham (SD), Maggie Gardner (MG), Kevin Taylor (KT)

**Others:** Catherine Burrows (CB)

1. **Apologies for absence:** Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR), Alan Ryan (AR), Hilary Gallo (HG)

2. **Minutes of last meeting**

It was **AGREED** to accept the 19.03.24 minutes as a true record of that meeting.

The additional Trustee meeting to discuss and select the contractor for the Dedham Lock project not yet available.

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

- a) **Membership Report** – this needs to be added back onto the agenda for future meetings. There are still plans to move over to MemberMojo for automating much of the administration and giving members access to their details.

4. **Appointment of Treasurer**

Hilary Gallo is still happy to take on the role of Treasurer following a meeting with PB, CB and Lisa Burdett-King.

**PROPOSED PB / SECONDED MG** 'that Hilary Gallo is co-opted onto Council and confirmed as Treasurer'  
**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. **Boat Operations Manager (BOM)**

As previously reported to Trustees, Graham Gardner (GG) had decided to step down from the role. It was **NOTED** that Council recorded thanks to GG for his undertakings whilst in the role. SD said the role description, as drawn up by a previous BOM, had overstated the BOM's direct responsibilities and made it more onerous than it should be. Some of the stated tasks were the remit of other volunteer roles, Council and the boating committees. Tasks for fulfilling the requirements of the Small Inland Waterway Boat Management Scheme were being handled and the BOM just needed oversight. **ACTION:** It was **AGREED** to redraft the BOM role description with reference to the IWA Small Passenger Boats scheme requirements before advertising it to the membership. Current JD to be circulated to Trustees.

6. **Reports**

a) **Financial/management**

- No specific report but bank balances are as follows: Main Account £67,000 - Reserves £104,000 - Special Projects £49,000.
- Barry Whymark (architect) had provided a fee quotation of £900 + VAT regarding his ongoing involvement to assist with the Granary fire exit replacement application.
- SSM Water Abstraction 2023 recently submitted but it had once again been difficult to obtain the data. It was discovered that this is not always being recorded at the time of lock usage and there seems to be a lack of communication regarding this requirement. There are paper records only available on Kathleen although the lock can be operated without a boat i.e. flushing through. As a potential solution to assist with accurate record keeping, CB has created an online [SSM lock usage form](#) and sent the link to DVB with a suggestion that a QR code/weblink to be made available on the site. The online form can also be found on the RST website by searching for 'SSM' or 'Roger'.

- A couple of companies had been in touch to offer matting for the damaged Cattawade landing stages. It was understood that Richard Blay was following this up.
- Preparations are underway for the first school visits of the season.

#### **b) SBOC**

- It had been a reasonably good start to the season for both the boats and the tearoom.
- Boat trailers are now stored in the same location as was used for winter boat storage which is on hardstanding and undercover.
- Refresher and CPD assessment sessions have taken place with further dates planned.

#### **c) DVB**

- It was not possible to remove Kathleen so maintenance was limited and she was cleaned in situ.
- Trusty has been returned to the water but unfortunately lost a side panel somewhere between Cattawade and Dedham, so a replacement is being arranged.
- MC has a propellor issue so is not currently operational.
- Weather and restricted boat availability is hampering CPD assessments.
- There are efforts to have Trusty available for trips at Flatford as much as possible with 3 volunteers on duty to allow for breaks.
- The GoodBox card reader (facilitating offline payments) was on a 6-month lease but was identified as less user friendly. However, the SumUp card reader was working without issue at the moment.
- KT has 9 new volunteers to train (some encouraged by current volunteers and other from local posters and articles). Another couple of trainers are required because Ian Whale is to step down from the Assessor role from June. KT and GG to be approved as Assessors by IWA. Multiple assessors required because an assessor cannot assess their own trainees.

#### **d) Dedham Lock**

- An application to the Environment Agency for piling protection of lock island led to questions about the lock works. We now need to reapply for the permits to dewater the lock and replace the gates due to the existing permits no longer being sufficient/valid. It seems there is a misunderstanding regarding advice provided by the EA on a national level which differs to the EA local team's stance. Colin Daines has been liaising with the EA local team and we have been advised that if all the required information is provided by the end of the month, then we should be able to maintain our project timescales.
- This situation has been relayed to our nominated contractors, Green Oak Carpentry, who are also being supportive and assisting with these EA permit applications. An alternative staged payment scheme has also been agreed (15% advance, 40% on commencement, 45% on completion, 2% retention).
- We had contacted the contractors with unsuccessful tenders to thank them for their bids. Stour Valley Engineering has sent a nice response indicating their willingness to collaborate with us in the future. SD suggested that we contact them regarding the Granary fire exit replacement and MC's propellor shaft (if it is bent).

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

- GG had been the nominated point of contact but in his absence, CB was able to update that Richard Blay (RB) had been in touch to seek warranty information following damage to the polesaw during use. CB was unable to help since any warranty documents would have been with the actual items delivered directly to RB and, in any case, would not cover accidental damage.
- RB was following up with the IWA Waterways Recovery Group for their assistance with works at Cattawade. A WRG member had identified the VEC as a suitable overnight location for which a provisional date had been booked.
- There was still no overall budget submitted for the RMG schedule of works that was already underway.
- RB has begun to attend the DVB meetings and Alan Ryan will be able to report on RMG activities.

## **2. Health & Safety**

- SD has reviewed DVB risk assessments and Colin Daines has sent these to volunteers along with the updated DVB operations manual.
- In the next few months, SD to visit Granary and VEC for review of fire risk assessments and safety inspections.

### 3. Environmental

- Flooding in fields worse than in previous years and banks are not being repaired. This is creating issues with maintaining the river level and unsuitable management of the sluices to try and counteract the problem.
- SD and AR had attended a meeting (as reported 19.03.24, item 4a) with the National Trust Flatford to discuss this issue. There had been request that RST keep the lock gates open which was not feasible. It was also explained that RST had been opening the penstocks, but this did little to alleviate the problem, Furthermore, it is not their intended use, and this type of usage can cause significant damage.
- We await the decision regarding designated bathing water status for the 400-foot stretch along Friar's Meadow following the end of the final consultation process on 10<sup>th</sup> March. EB queried how many sewage outlets there were along the river and suggested that RST create a map for river users to draw attention to these areas. [Post meeting note: Water companies have released new maps showing near real-time storm discharge activity. Anglian Water online map link: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/environment/storm-overflows/storm-overflow-map/>]

### 4. AOB

- National Trust meeting, Friday 22 March** – refer to item 3.
- National Trust meeting, February 2024** – NT are interested in the summer trials of the wheelchair accessible mobiboat. There are practical considerations to consider such as inspection of the boat and that a motor, transom, seating and skippers will be required! The issue is another boat requiring dispensation to operate on that stretch of river was discussed. It was **NOTED** that EA would recognise that NT were in support of this which strengthens RST's stance. TELC can loan a motor for the trial which could be carried out at Sudbury where powered craft can operate without obtaining dispensation.
- Petition for canal network as a National Park**
  - KT had circulated an article regarding a petition regarding designating the CRT canal network as a National Park to help maintain the system for enjoyment of future generations by providing funding which could preserve green spaces in cities along our canals, maintain wild spaces in the country, and provide adequate access to everyone to enjoy the canals. [post meeting note: sign/see status of petition: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/652357>]
  - This is similar to RST aims and objectives and could be of interest to our members. However, it was pointed out that the petition does not include all navigable inland waterways which are also struggling financially. **ACTION:** KT will put together a few words that can be included in an overdue newsletter to members.

### 5. Next meeting: JR had asked that meeting avoid the third Tuesday due to an ongoing commitment.

- Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 2pm – via Zoom**