

**River Stour Trust Council Meeting**  
**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 at 2:00pm**  
**[virtual via Zoom - meeting was recorded]**

**Present - Trustees:** Emrhys Barrell (EB), Paul Brewerton (PB – Chairman of Council), H. Gallo (HG - Treasurer), Jim Lunn (JL), Jane Rogers (JR), Kevin Taylor (KT)

**Others:** Catherine Burrows (CB), Sharon Quinn and N. Williamson

**1. Apologies for absence:** Steve Durham (SD), Alan Ryan (AR)

**2. Minutes of last meeting**

- Correction of accountant's surname (King not Burdett – business name is Burdett King Accountancy Ltd).
- Item 5d, Flatford Riverbank Breach - CB pointed out a potentially inflammatory sentence. There was a general reminder to be mindful of the wording of information that is circulated electronically.

It was **AGREED** to accept the 01.08.24 Council minutes as a true record of that meeting, subject to the correction and redaction for the online version.

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

**4. Appointment of officers for 2024/25**

- a) **Chair** – in the absence of any other nominations, it was **AGREED** that PB continue in the role for another year.
- b) **Company Secretary** – JR had accepted an invitation to undertake the role for a year and, in the absence of any other nominations, it was **AGREED** that JR is Company Secretary.
- c) **Treasurer** – HG was prepared to continue in the role.
- d) **Membership Secretary** – the new membership software package will automate many tasks making the role obsolete in its current guise. Going forward, CB can provide list of new members for Council approval.

**5. Reports**

**a) Financial/management**

- i. Second phased payment for Dedham Lock Project has been paid to Green Oak Carpentry.
- ii. Bank balances – Main £117,726 Reserves £109,484 Special Projects £23,464.
- iii. Comprehensive financial reports are anticipated with a new accounts package to be followed up.
- iv. Annual Accounts to be signed by PB tomorrow and these will be submitted by Lisa King.
- v. Granary Fire Exit – Our planning application has been submitted and a different Heritage Officer (differing from the person met at pre-application meeting) has responded to query the location of the lift and necessitating a flood risk assessment.

There were some concerns because a lift cannot be used in the event of a fire. it cannot be used but it was pointed out there was only provision for an external lift at this stage. funding can be sought from Babergh District Council.

- vi. Card Refunds – customers should be refunded via the same method of original payment. CB had also recommended that cash refunds have a paper trail to protect the volunteers and strengthen the audit trail.

The original system had been to notify the office of a required refund (figure and last 4 digits of payment card) but cash refunds were nonetheless being favoured. The user profiles for the card readers had been recently adjusted to facilitate card payment refunds via the card reader. Unfortunately, it transpires that this generates a sales history log showing transactions across all RST activities for that day i.e. boating and tearoom income. The sales history log had previously been a useful end of day check of card takings total.

It was pointed out that the intermittent mobile data strength makes card refunds impractical. A possible solution to boost the mobile data signal could be to purchase a DVB mobile to facilitate mobile data tethering. This technique had been successful for some volunteers who used their personal mobile phone as mobile 'hot spot'. Although, this would mean another device to be charged, and its usage understood. However, reverting to cash method for all refunds can potentially result in not having sufficient cash for all refunds or even to maintain the float for the next day of operation.

**b) Membership** – no report. There had been a misunderstanding when MG was standing down.

**c) S2C** – With 2 weeks to go, more volunteers are still required. Temporary alternative portage for the event has been agreed with the landowner and approved by the EA. We advise riparian owners (who have a portage route) of the event, and we have been informed that Major Grahame (Daws Hall Trust) passed away last year. Event attendance is down since heyday when we had a waiting list (perhaps due to Covid and 1-day event last year) so promotion of the event is required for 2025. It was **NOTED** that S2C promotional posters (featuring QR codes) could be located at significant points along the river e.g. the popular river access and portage points.

**d) SBOC**

- Pirates event had been well attended bringing in good income for the boats and tearoom.
- No update regarding Gasworks Cut dredging/re-profiling works.
- SBOC Chair – David Kirkman is awaiting heart valve operation at Papworth Hospital.
- John Constable - still out of action as repairs have not been successful with difficulties getting the contractor back to resolve these issues. **ACTION:** PB to talk with EB outside of the meeting.

**e) DVB**

- Water levels are currently good, and the sluice is not being inappropriately operated. The bank breach works have been completed but have required interim repairs due to being incorrectly used as an access point by walkers. The footpath is officially closed until 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025.
- Trusty's new charger is working well with thanks to SD and EB for resolving this problem.
- Trusty's canopy has been assessed as end of life by Sail & Cover (S&C) – new canopy circa £2,500. Kathleen's canopy has not been assessed but is in a worse state. PB commented that S&C are good at repairing wherever possible.
- Rosette and MC swap –this is not required as some of the issue has been resolved by the improvement to water level.
- Boat Yard parking – £60 fine for unregistered cars (purchases made in Boat Yard counteract this). All DVB volunteers have their license plates registered.
- Andrew Phasey (AP) visit – assessing KT for assessor role, but AP asked a lot about our general operations. It might be that the process to become an assessor has changed. Further guidance/feedback from AP is awaited.

**f) Dedham Lock**

- Day 5 of the contractors being on site and the new gates are in place. The old gates have been removed with the metalwork preserved. The lock will be fully drained tomorrow and will check condition of the metalwork, etc. Stour Valley Engineering will work on bands on top of the lock gates as the one bought along need modifying.
- Stoplogs - EB enquired what would happen to the wooden stop logs upon completion of the project and it was confirmed that DMMCL consent to these being stacked and stored onsite. It was **NOTED** that there was not a full set of stop logs for Dedham lock, so metal stoplogs from SSM are being used since GOC had approved the strength and suitability of these. The contract sum has been adjusted accordingly.
- Flooding – JR asked about this, and it was clarified that, during the period of the contact, this is being monitored and DMMCL's sluices will be used as form of level control. KT worries about risk of Northumbrian Water releasing water at SSM since there have been several failed attempts to meet and discuss this.
- Facebook posts – it was thought desirable to have photos of the restoration progress if these could be provided to the office.

## g) River Maintenance Group

### 6. Health & Safety

- There have been discussions about non-boating tasks not being properly risk assessed and toolbox talk given, as previously agreed. PB understood that Richard Blay had completed the briefing at Cattawade before heading onto Boxted.
- Scaffolding – there had been discussion about a ticket being required since this was to be in use by the public. It was clarified that this specifically related to the Boxted temporary portage for S2C. There is no working at height not scaffolding erected at height and PB has looked into online scaffolding ticketing course that will provide necessary qualification for him to inspect the completed works.
- First aid kits – new catering kits required for next year, boating kits to be checked. **ACTION:** JL to re-order all required kits, upon clarification of DVB requirements.

### 7. Environmental – no report

### 8. AOB

- a) John Constable – the meter has capacity to provide more information than simply the amps usage so JL to ‘interrogate’ and report back. PB said manual was in the shed, but EB recognised the device from the description and is familiar with this device. **ACTION:** JL to liaise with EB
- b) Dedham Lock Island Erosion Works – the planning permission response was expected today. RMG might undertake the works. **ACTION:** EB to liaise with Richard Blay regarding the step-by-step process.

### 9. Next meeting: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024, 2pm – via Zoom