

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at the office at Paper Mill Lock at 12.05 p.m. on Wednesday 10th June 2009, following a visit to Hoe Mill.

Present: Roy Chandler (chairman), Colin Davis, Neil Edwards, Jim Jenkins and John Pomfret.

In Attendance: Colin Edmond.

Apologies for Absence

1. None – all board members were present.

Minutes of Meetings

2. (a) The minutes of the board meetings held on 13th March 2009 and 16th May 2009, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, were approved as a true record of that meeting. The minutes of the AGM were also noted.

(b) Neil Edwards reported that the Annual Report and Financial Statements had been signed by the auditors and submitted to Companies House. Copies of the signed document would be circulated to directors.

(c) In answer to a question, Neil Edwards explained that following the board discussion in March it had been ascertained that the ‘budget to date’ income and expenditure reports could be adjusted to allow for those items where income or expenditure occurs unevenly through the year, but that at present, the amount of work to achieve this was disproportionate to the benefit. It would, however, remain a wish to achieve this when work on the accounts package permitted.

Health and Safety

3. (a) Colin Edmond and Roy Chandler reported that there had been some vandalism from a group of youths at Stoneham’s Lock, in which a can of solignum wood protection paint had been emptied into the lock. Fortunately, the youths had been disturbed by one of the residential berth holders who was acting as night watchman, and no further damage was done. The incident had resulted in some minor environmental pollution, which had been dealt with, and there had been some adverse effect on the hired-in pump, and consequently half a day’s work had been lost at the site.

(b) Roy Chandler had identified a possible source of financial assistance, via Essex County Council, for installing ramps to ease passage across the Sea Lock at Heybridge. The next step would be to put some drawings together of the planned works. Listed building consent would be needed as the Sea Lock is a listed structure. A potential volunteer to progress this work had also been identified.

(c) Colin Edmond reported that further signs had been made, including canoe portage signs. There was a need to check that all the necessary signs were in place. New signs had been installed at Springfield and Barnes in line with local police advice. Signs were shortly to be installed at Sandford and Stoneham’s Lock. Maldon Angling Club would be reminded to install signs that had been made and supplied to the Club.

- (d) Colin Edmond and Roy Chandler had met with an officer of Essex Fire Brigade and inspected the navigation to review fire safety. A written report was expected but had not yet been received. Useful oral advice had been received during the visit, and the greatest concern was access to the yacht storage huts at Heybridge. There was concern about the potential risks if the huts were used for residential purposes, (which is forbidden in the current rental agreements). [Confidential items]

Staffing and Management Arrangements

4. (a) [Confidential item]
- (b) Neil Edwards had circulated a paper explaining that the Association's trustees had recommended that, as a matter of good practice, all appointments at national level, including the Association's subsidiary companies, should be for fixed terms. The intention of this system was ensure succession planning and so that people did not feel trapped in roles forever. Usual practice within the Association at national level was for appointments of three year terms, with reappointment possible on completion of the term. Directors agreed that although all the present directors had served for about three years, for purposes of continuity, it would be beneficial if the appointments did not all come up for retirement / reappointment at the same time. After a short discussion, it was agreed to recommend to the Association's trustees that the following director reappointments be sought from IWA trustees at their July 2009 meeting:

Neil Edwards	to serve to July 2010
Roy Chandler	to serve to July 2011
Colin Davis	to serve to July 2011
John Pomfret	to serve to July 2012
Jim Jenkins	to serve to July 2012

All the above appointees would be eligible for further reappointment if the Association's trustees saw fit. The board reiterated that any future appointments to the board should be based on a skills audit, followed by candidates with appropriate skills then being sought and advertised for, with a planned recruitment and selection process, and noted that this had been endorsed by the Association's trustees.

- (c) At their March 2009 meeting, IWA's trustees had recommended that subsidiary companies should consider publishing edited copies of minutes of meetings, as is now the practice for the minutes of the Association's trustee and other national committee meetings. Directors noted that there were advantages of this practice, for the sake of openness and accountability, but that board meetings of Essex Waterways Ltd tended to discuss a higher proportion of matters that would be subject to commercial confidence than other parts of the Association. The board agreed to publish an edited version of the minutes of its board meetings subject to the removal of all personal references. Edited minutes would be subject to approval by the board before publication.
- (d) [Confidential item]

Finance

5. (a) A report on income and expenditure to date had been circulated prior to the meeting. Income to date was holding up well and was generally in line with budget. Expenditure was mostly as expected, with some minor variations for unforeseeable expense and repairs, but overall costs were well under control and the net result was better than budgeted. Business rates had been higher than expected, though reduced after a challenge to Chelmsford Borough Council. Work

at Stoneham's Lock appeared to be within budget at the moment. On a point of detail, the balance shown as the budget for dredging looked to be too high and would be checked.

- (b) Directors noted that electricity bills at Heybridge had exceeded budget by a considerable margin, and that this was due partly to a past error in meter reading by the electricity suppliers. There remained concern however, that electricity costs at the facilities block were higher than might be strictly necessary. Colin Edmond would ask Martin Maudsley to look at current usage with a view to seeing whether some capital expenditure on insulation and / or more efficient equipment could reduce running costs within a reasonable period.
- (c) A cash flow report had been prepared and was tabled. [Confidential discussion]
- (d) There was no report on mooring agreements and other documentation missing from boat owners, but it was understood there were few problems at the moment other than [a] vessel moored at Heybridge. Neil Edwards would ask Christine Walsh to confirm that this was the case, and for the £50 administration fee to be levied each quarter where boat owners were failing to remedy missing documentation, and thus causing extra work.
- (f) [Commercial contractual item]
- (g) Roy Chandler had prepared and tabled a list of known leases, all of which were earning little more than peppercorn rent at present. Some of the leases to utility companies had expired and needed to be renewed. Others required further investigation. [Commercial contractual item]
- (h) [Commercial contractual item]
- (i) [Commercial contractual item].
- (j) [Commercial contractual item].
- (k) The revision of the licence agreements for the stores at Heybridge had been completed by our solicitors, and Hugh Turner had sent out new licences to those occupying the stores which tied in with the expiry of the current agreements at 30th June.
- (l) [Commercial contractual item].
- (m) [Confidential item].
- (n) Roy Chandler reported that he had tried to progress grant applications with four potential funders in respect of [a project], but without success so far. Roy Chandler and Colin Edmond would review the projected work programme after Stoneham's Lock had been completed to see what work could be practicably completed before the year-end and for what there was known finance available.

Report from the Navigation Manager

- 6 (a) Colin Edmond reported that refurbishment work at Stoneham's Lock was progressing but had been delayed by additional repairs needed and [other factors]. [Commercial contractual item]
- (b) Brickwork repairs to the west wall of the bothy at Paper Mill Lock had been completed and internal redecoration was being undertaken by Wendy Hodgkinson, a volunteer from IWA Chelmsford Branch. A competitive quote (an amount) had been received from [a contractor] in respect of [a project]. [Commercial contractual item]

- (c) [Commercial contractual item]
- (d) The development at Smiths Yard was still on hold owing to the economic climate. Chelmsford Borough Council had still to dredge the feeder stream, but was believed to be intending to do it shortly. The Environment Agency was also being chased to fit a grille at the entrance to the feeder to reduce siltation.
- (e) The Essex & Suffolk Water financed repairs required at Beeleigh Lock were due to take place later this year when disruption to boaters was likely to be least.
- (f) One quotation (an amount) for works proposed at Heybridge Mill had been received and another was awaited. The necessary Environment Agency permissions had been received.
- (g) The need and urgency of various bank repairs would be assessed once the work at Stoneham's Lock was complete. Prior to the meeting, the board had viewed the navigation at Hoe Mill, including the eroded bank below the road bridge. [Commercial contractual item]
- (h) Planning permission had been received for proposed repairs to Hall Bridge at Heybridge. [Commercial contractual item]

Update on Issues Discussed at Previous Meetings

- 7. (a) [Commercial contractual item].
- (b) Roy Chandler reported that the owners of the development land at Heybridge were to appeal against the latest refusal of planning permission. [Commercial contractual item]
- (c) [Commercial contractual item]
- (d) A specification for survey work for the proposed vegetation management plan was in progress.
- (e) Roy Chandler reported that Chelmer Canal Trust plans to run a seminar on 20th November at Essex Record Office to discuss the various issues that pertain to the way the natural and built environment on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation is managed. Roy Chandler had provided some guidance and assistance. John Pomfret would attend and offer to make a presentation at the event.
- (f) Roy Chandler reported that discussion with Thos Bates & Son Ltd to remedy the boundary discrepancies at the Heybridge gravel pits were ongoing.
- (g) John Pomfret reported that he had commenced a draft response to the Environment Agency's consultation on its River Basin Management Plan for Anglia. He had identified some errors in definition of the Long Pond and combining waterways into single units that had very different management regimes.
- (h) [Commercial contractual item]
- (i) Earlier in the day, the board had viewed the information panel and other signage at Hoe Mill. The board asked that additional panels covering the work of Essex Waterways Ltd be added to existing notice-boards along the waterway to explain current management of the Navigation. Head Office would put together a leaflet for handing out to navigation users.

Other Business

8. There was no other business to be discussed.

Future Meetings

9. (a) The next meeting would be held at about 12.30 p.m. on Thursday 10th September at Paper Mill, preceded by a visit to Sandford Lock.

(b) The following meeting would take place on Tuesday 8th December.

No other business was transacted and the meeting closed at 4.10 p.m.