

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

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. The minutes of the board meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, including the edited minutes for publication, were approved as a true record of that meeting.

### **Health and Safety**

3. (a) Colin Edmond reported that a large willow branch had recently fallen across the Navigation, which was quickly cleared, and that there were potentially damaging trees that needed to be cleared at Baddow Mill; permission had been sought from Chelmsford Borough Council's tree officer and was awaited.
- (b) The vessel that had sunk at Heybridge in the summer, and was then considered unsafe, had been partially repaired but remained on the Navigation. There was still the residue of this work on the bank to be cleared. Colin Edmond would further discuss with Martin Maudsley to try to find a way to resolve these issues with the boat-owner.
- (c) Manhole covers at mooring sites had been checked for safety, and any necessary remedial work to ensure safety had been undertaken.
- (d) Following identification in September of a number of elderly vessels at Heybridge, each of which was feared to have the potential to sink at its moorings and cause considerable expense and inconvenience to refloat, directors had asked that the board's concerns should be notified to the relevant boat owners, and that they should be asked what actions were in hand to ensure the safety of their vessels and others at Heybridge, and that the responsibilities of maintaining vessels in good order should be emphasised to the owners. Neil Edwards had drafted a letter for Colin Edmond to send out. The board asked that the letters be sent out as soon as possible.
- (e) The risk register for vessels on the Navigation that were a cause of concern had yet to be set up. The board asked that this be combined with a reviewed version of the risk register for the Navigation as whole, prepared by John Pomfret in 2005. J
- (f) Further quotes for the ramps to the lock gates at Heybridge had yet to be obtained.
- (g) The board noted that the 'no swimming' and other signs recessed into lock beams were proving robust and less prone to vandalism than other methods. Colin Edmond would arrange for volunteer work parties to attend to the remaining signs and cill markers.

- (h) Colin Edmond reported that he had not yet found a source to purchase hanging buckets with convex undersides that could be filled with sand for fire equipment.
- (i) The board asked that a formal system of tree inspections along the navigation, for benefit of public safety, be instituted. The main challenge was likely to be trees on neighbouring properties that could have an impact on the Navigation, in which case it might be necessary to liaise with tree officers of the relevant local authorities. This issue would be included on the risk register. Two suitable contractors for tree work had been identified.

### **Staffing and Management Arrangements**

4. [Confidential items deleted]

### **Finance**

- 5. (a) A report on income and expenditure to the end of November had been circulated prior to the meeting. Moorings income was generally above budget. There had been some items of unplanned expenditure, but these had been offset by savings on other budgeted areas, and the overall position was considered satisfactory.
- (b) An updated cash flow report had been circulated prior to the meeting, and showed there to be just sufficient funds to enable the purchase of a new crane for Heybridge, which had been considered at the previous meeting. The income and expenditure forecast also showed sufficient funds and the business case for purchase had already been approved. The board therefore agreed that Roy Chandler and Colin Edmond should proceed with the purchase, for [an amount], before the year end if the machine identified, and means of accessing it to the site at Heybridge, were found to be satisfactory.

The board noted that cash flow would be assisted if [a] payment due from arrived before the end of February. Neil Edwards would ask Helen Elliott-Adams to invoice for payment in early January.

- (c) The position on outstanding debts, mooring agreements, insurance and BSS compliance was reviewed and considered satisfactory. The board recorded its gratitude to Christine Walsh and Hugh Turner for continued efficient work in this area. A newsletter would be prepared and dispatched to boat-owners before Christmas, advising details of the January stoppages at Heybridge Mill and Beeleigh.
  - (d) The board noted that the Terms and Conditions for the mooring contracts had been updated, as requested at the September meeting. These would be sent out with January invoices, which would be dispatched at the end of December with the newsletter.
- (e/f/g) [Confidential items]
- (h) Roy Chandler reported that the purchase of moorings rights at Freshwater Crescent had been completed, but that a draft sale agreement for [a property] had yet to be received although it was being chased.
  - (i) Roy Chandler had discussed the issue of business rates with the leader of Chelmsford Borough Council, and there was some hope that the matter might be reviewed in our favour.
  - (j) Roy Chandler reported that an application had been made to the Community Action Fund to assist with financing new landing stages. The outcome was unknown. There were no other likely grants on the horizon.

- (k) The proposed budget for 2010 had been prepared by Roy Chandler and Colin Edmond and had been circulated to the board in advance of the meeting. This was formally approved.
- (l) The board noted and endorsed the standing resolution for any surplus funds at the year-end to be passed across to The Inland Waterways Association to be held in a restricted fund for benefit of the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation.

### **Report from the Navigation Manager**

- 6 (a) [Confidential commercial item]
- (b) Colin Edmond reported that piling work at Beeleigh had been completed, new landing stages installed and the old ones removed. A new set of steps was needed. The board noted and recorded its pleasure that Essex & Suffolk Water had met the costs for this work. It had not been possible to install dams at the lock to enable the lock ladder to be fitted, and work undertaken on the lock gates, owing to high water levels. This work would now be postponed until after Christmas, to coincide with the stoppage at Heybridge Mill.
  - (c) The proposed work on the weirs and smaller island at Paper Mill were awaiting designs from [a contractor]. Roy Chandler would chase these and see if alternative contractors could be sought if there was further delay. Slipway works at Paper Mill might be progressed in February if weather conditions were suitable and designs completed in time.
  - (d) A check would be made to ensure that Environment Agency consents for dredging, etc, needed to be renewed.
  - (c) Quotations for the works required at Heybridge North Quay had not progressed further, but it was noted that Essex County Council had taken over responsibility for surface water drainage from Anglian Water, and this might enable some grant opportunities.
  - (d) Roy Chandler reported that there was unlikely to be any progress on the development at Smith's Yard in Chelmsford in the current economic climate, and that this could be taken off the agenda for the moment. Chelmsford Borough Council had still not cleared the feeder stream, and the Environment Agency had yet to fit the promised grille. Both would be chased again.
  - (e) Meetings were due to take place with the Environment Agency on 10<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December to progress the works on the chunker at Heybridge Mill, which was now timed to commence on 11<sup>th</sup> January.
  - (f) The board noted that with the completion of the bank repairs in the vicinity of Stonhams Lock, there were no urgent requirements for any major bank repair work.

### **Update on Issues Discussed at Previous Meetings**

7. (a) Roy Chandler reported that plans for Sandford Mill had made little progress since the last meeting. He would chase up with relevant parties.
- (b) Roy Chandler reported that there had been no progress with the development land at Heybridge, with the Environment Agency against any development in the flood area.
  - (c) John Pomfret and Roy Chandler had made a presentation at the seminar organised by Chelmer Canal Trust, and Jim Jenkins had attended. The presentation had been well received, and

organisations present had been supportive. Contacts had been established that could lead to future grant opportunities. John Pomfret would follow up with Essex Wildlife Trust. The board agreed that there should be co-operation with the Trust to assist trapping of mink, and plans progressed for wildlife surveys.

- (d) Roy Chandler reported that the boundary amendments at the Heybridge gravel pits had been agreed with Thos Bates & Son Ltd, and relevant documentation sent off to the Land Registry.
- (e) Roy Chandler reported that there was likely to be a meeting with the Environment Agency shortly to seek its support for leisure development proposals at Langford.
- (f) Technical approval had been sought from Essex County Council for the proposed refurbishment of Hall Bridge. Provided that approval is given in time, the work may be done during February, with demolition of the existing bridge as part of a WRG Canal Camp.

### **Other Business**

- 8. (a) Neil Edwards reported that the Inland Waterways Advisory Council was due to hold one of its quarterly meetings in the area on 10<sup>th</sup> March, and wished to visit the Navigation on the preceding day, 9<sup>th</sup> March. The board welcomed this and asked this to be conveyed to the Council.
- (b) A confidential consultation on [a subject] had been received from the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities. John Pomfret would formulate a response for the board's consideration.
- (c) The board noted an incidence of graffiti at Bundock's Bridge at Sandford Mill, which Chelmsford Borough Council had been unable to deal with owing to difficult access. There was also some graffiti at Elms Farm Park and Chapman's Bridge in the Maldon area. The board agreed that these incidences needed to be dealt with promptly, and asked Colin Edmond to arrange for the work to be done, authorising necessary expenditure. John Pomfret would assist with checking the suitability of any required chemicals with the Environment Agency if necessary.
- (d) Colin Edmond and Roy Chandler reported that an increased number of WRG visits had already been arranged for 2010, including three one-week Canal Camps. This was warmly welcomed by the board.

### **Future Meetings**

- 9. (a) The next meeting would be held at about 11.30 a.m. on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March at the office at Paper Mill, following a visit to Sandford Mill at 10.45 a.m.
- (b) The following dates were set for further meetings in 2010:
  - Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June
  - Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September
  - Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December

No other business was transacted and the meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.