

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at The Meeting Room, Paper Mill Lock, Little Baddow, at 10.45 a.m. on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

Present: Roy Chandler (chairman), Neil Edwards and John Pomfret.

In Attendance: Colin Edmond and Nick Parker.

### **Introductory Announcements and Apologies for Absence**

1. (a) Roy Chandler welcomed Nick Parker, a member of IWA's Finance Committee, to the meeting.
- (b) Apologies for absence had been offered from Jim Jenkins.

### **Minutes of Meetings**

2. The minutes of the board meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010, 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 there had been severe flooding over the winter, and on one occasion this had resulted in an ingress of water to the engine of the Y-registration Land Rover, causing the engine to seize. Insurers had decided to write the vehicle off and offered satisfactory compensation. There were no occasions in the flooding that had given rise to any personal danger.
- (b) Colin Edmond reported that there had been a suicide attempt at Heybridge Sea Lock on 5<sup>th</sup> March. Once again, emergency services had failed to notify Essex Waterways personnel notwithstanding agreed Emergency Procedures.
- (c) Roy Chandler expressed concern that some of the boards on the locks were becoming slippery, particularly at Hoe Mill. The board asked that non-slip tape or other appropriate remedies be applied as soon as possible.
- (d) Colin Edmond reported that accident books were now in place at both Heybridge and Paper Mill.
- (e) [Confidential item]
- (f) [Confidential item].
- (g) An updated schedule of certification held at Head Office had been circulated. An updated public liability insurance for [a firm] was now to hand. [items omitted]

### **Finance**

4. (a) A report of income and expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> December had been circulated to directors in advance, along with a commentary on the figures. The outcome for the year was considered satisfactory, with relatively good adherence to the budget in most areas. Income from

Sandford moorings and from visitors at Heybridge was a little lower than expected, but for good reasons, and compensated elsewhere.

- (b) A first draft of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2010 had been circulated with the agenda papers. Further work on these was required, and there were likely to be some updates once the audit commenced later in the month. A further draft would be circulated when available.
- (c) A cash flow statement had been circulated with the agenda papers. Income from willow sales had been delayed by wet weather, but the position was satisfactory.
- (d) Nick Parker and Neil Edwards briefed the board on discussions at recent meetings of IWA's Finance Committee and trustees, and with auditors, particular concerning the best way to finance Essex Waterways' fixed assets. The issue had been clouded by disallowable capital items purchased in 2009, including Freshwater Crescent mooring rights, which had been masked by tax allowances resulting from purchase of the crane. Corporation Tax would eventually have to be paid relating to disallowable capital purchases, but this could be deferred so long as allowances from new capital items became available. [item omitted]. IWA's trustees had approved the financing of fixed assets by fixed term loans to match the depreciation amounts of each fixed asset, with a fixed and floating charge over the Company's assets, to be registered at Companies House. The board endorsed these arrangements and decided to take up the loans offered. Neil Edwards would ask Helen Elliott-Adams to draw up the necessary documentation once the audit was cleared. Thanks were expressed to Nick Parker for his work in researching the tax position.
- (e) The board endorsed its decision by e-mail to purchase a new Land Rover Defender and have it sign written, following demise of the Y-registration vehicle in the floods and subsequent payout by insurers. The board also endorsed the purchase of a second-hand Vauxhall Combi car-based van as a trial measure, which had been agreed by e-mail. Premiums for this are still the subject of negotiation with insurers. The board had previously noted that the older S-registration Land Rover was becoming uneconomical to maintain, and the board asked that it be sold by tender. The board agreed that a proposal for a service plan for the vehicles should be declined and existing arrangements maintained. The board discussed the possibility of introducing log books for the vehicles, but decided against doing so on advice from Colin Edmond that the drivers of each vehicle at any time were always known.
- (f) Schedules showing outstanding debts and boats without up-to-date mooring agreements, insurance certificates or Boat Safety Scheme certificates were tabled. The lists of boats in these categories were relatively small and all were being addressed. The board recorded its appreciation of work by Christine Walsh and Hugh Turner for their continuing vigilance in this area. One of the residential berth holders at Heybridge had complained at the current level of fees, but the board agreed that fees were reasonable, justified and less expensive than elsewhere in the area.
- (g) [Confidential item]
- (h) Roy Chandler reported that he had passed on all details of the leases schedule to Hugh Turner, who would chase up and report to the board.
- (i) [Discussion on boundary incursions omitted] The board asked Colin Edmond to ensure that fences were moved back to the correct lines.
- (j) Colin Edmond reported that some Company land had been fenced in near Ricketts Lock. The circumstances did not make it desirable to have the fencing re-done, but there were markers in

place. The board asked for a formal agreement to be put in place with the neighbouring landowner with an annual small payment of about £10.

- (k) Roy Chandler reported that relevant paperwork for conclusion of the Creditors Voluntary Arrangement for the Navigation Company was now to hand, and the matter closed.
- (l) [Discussion on Business Council Tax omitted]
- (m) Roy Chandler reported that the development land at Heybridge was being offered for sale [discussion omitted].

### **Future Income and Grant Applications**

- 5. (a) Funds from the Essex Life Raft Trust had been received, and the required applications made with Essex Tourism.
- (b) Essex County Council had indicated that funds would again be available in 2011 for towpath mowing. They were likely to be paid from the Headlands Scheme this year. A proposal to upgrade the towing path in the Sandford area to a cycleway, which we had objected to, had been dropped. The board noted and commended recent towpath improvement, as well as the car park resurfacing, at Paper Mill, undertaken during the February Canal Camp.
- (c) Path improvements in the Hall Bridge area had been completed, and the bridge formally reopened in a ceremony with local authorities officials the previous weekend. The works continued to attract good publicity. A further [amount of] funding was due from Essex County Council to cover this.
- (d) Work on the grant-funded lock landings project was progressing well, albeit a little over budget owing to additional unforeseen work requirements.

### **Staffing and Management Arrangements**

- 6. (a) Roy Chandler reported that the proposed planning applications for two new residential mooring spaces at Heybridge were underway.
- (b) [Confidential item]
- (c) [Confidential item]
- (d) The board noted that WRG the Canal Camp scheduled for the end of June had been cancelled, owing to lack of accommodation. The two nearby suitable accommodations are only available during school holidays, and WRG had scheduled the Camp outside this period.
- (e) [Confidential item].
- (f) [Confidential item].

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

- 7. (a) Roy Chandler reported that he had held a meeting with Land and Water to progress works to the North Quay, but that a quote had yet to be received.
- (b) Roy Chandler reported that permissions had yet to be obtained to progress improvements to toilet facilities at Paper Mill.

- (c) Colin Edmond reported that new landing stages continued to be installed at each of the mooring areas, and this work was now near a conclusion. The lock landings project had also progressed reasonably well over the winter.
- (d) Roy Chandler reported that there had been no further communication from the Environment Agency on the legal documentation for the Heybridge Mill chunker. During recent wet weather, flood water had backed up in the chunker owing to the inadequate and partially blocked pipe beneath the access bridge on the Heybridge Mill property. The Mill owners and the Environment Agency had been made aware.
- (e) Colin Edmond reported that Chelmsford Borough Council had still to clear out Springfield Feeder, and the Environment Agency had still to fit the promised grille. Roy Chandler would chase up both parties once more.
- (f) The board noted that weed clearance had not worked as well as had been hoped in 2010 and that improved arrangements were required. The blades on the Company owned weed-cutting boat would be repaired, and a meeting had been arranged with a potential contractor.
- (g) Colin Edmond reported that there had not been any progress with the proposed ramps to lock gates at Heybridge. An approach would be made to Essex County Council to fund.
- (h) An inspection by boat was required to review future needs for weir signage.

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

8. (a) Roy Chandler reported that there had been no progress on proposals for the Sandford Mill site.
- (b) John Pomfret had yet to progress the vegetation management plan specifications, but would try to do so shortly.
- (c) Colin Edmond reported that arrangements were in hand with Essex Wildlife Trust to undertake a wildlife survey, principally looking for Mink.
- (d) Roy Chandler reported that there had been no progress on the Langford Leisure Park proposals, but that Maldon District Council was maintaining its interest.
- (e) Colin Edmond reported that the graffiti at Bundocks Bridge still needed to be attended to, but otherwise no new graffiti had appeared.
- (f) Roy Chandler reported that although he had been contacted by a new project manager, nothing further had occurred about the Chelmer Viaduct replacement.
- (g) Roy Chandler reported that nothing further had been heard on the ownership and access arrangements along the track at Ulting gauging station.
- (h) Neil Edwards reported that the invitation to offer IWA membership to boat owners on the Navigation was planned to be mailed out in April.
- (i) Neil Edwards had circulated the updated Long Term Plan document following the December meeting.

- (j) The next newsletter for boaters was due to be mailed out at the end of March. Mention would be made of possible short navigation closures, and the request included for boaters to keep their vessels clean and smart, as agreed at the December meeting.

### **Other Business**

- 9. (a) [Confidential item]
- (b) [Confidential item].
- (c) [Confidential item]
- (d) Neil Edwards had circulated a copy of a paper discussed at the February meeting of IWA's Finance Committee concerning a duty of care for those driving on behalf of the Association and recommendations from insurers to check driving licences, MOT and insurance certificates, including from those using their own vehicles, and also covering possible on-line risk profiling by insurers. The board noted the Finance Committee discussion and likely implications for Essex Waterways.

### **Future Meetings**

- 10. (a) The next meeting would be held at 10.45 am on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June at Paper Mill. The Company's Annual General Meeting would also be held on that day. This was a change of date from that previously agreed, so that these meetings could take place prior to the IWA trustees meeting which was planned to approved IWA's Annual Report and Financial Statements.
- (b) Subsequent meetings would be held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September and Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December.

No other business was transacted and the meeting closed at 2.45 p.m.