

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at Paper Mill Lock, Little Baddow, at 10.45 a.m. on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012.

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

In Attendance: Graham Brown and Colin Edmond

There were no apologies for absence. Graham Brown was welcomed to his first meeting.

### **Minutes of Meetings**

1. The minutes of the board meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012, 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**

2. (a) The board noted the following incidents since the previous meeting:
  - (i) There had been a fatality at Hoe Mill Lock in June when a lady aged about 80 had fallen down the ladder access to the underside of the road bridge. The Health & Safety Executive had been notified. Roy Chandler and Colin Edmond had reviewed the site for any possible safety improvements. The ladder access currently has railings around the edge, and a further barrier is not practical owing to proximity of the lock beam. The present arrangement was believed to have been constructed by the Highways Authority when the road bridge was rebuilt in the 1930s. There were believed to have been no other serious incidents since this time. Chains across the ladder access would also create a greater safety risk for boaters. A further review of the wider site had identified that it would assist canoeists if a new, lower level, landing stage could be installed for them above the lock; this will be added when piling work is undertaken over the winter. [Confidential detail omitted]
  - (ii) When excavating some shallow trenches at Heybridge in April, an unknown non-armoured electricity cable had been struck and severed. UK Power Networks had attended and fixed the cable and their inspector had admitted fault as the cable had been buried (by them) only eight inches below the ground, unmarked and unprotected. However, in August, UK Power Networks had sent us a bill for the repairs. This had been passed to insurers and was being contested. [Confidential detail omitted]
  - (iii) Roy Chandler reported that there had been a number of minor incidents during the summer's WRG Canal Camps. [Confidential detail omitted] The board felt there was a careful balance between volunteers receiving adequate supervision and instruction and being allowed to 'get on with the job', but that volunteers did need to understand the implications and risks of what they were doing. Procedures with WRG Canal Camp leaders would be reviewed, along with all relevant risk assessments. Neil Edwards would mention the issue to WRG.
  - (iv) A note had been received from the Environment Agency in respect of manhole that had been installed at Heybridge. Roy Chandler had responded that the Agency's consent for the works had been assumed as part of the North Quay works. The Agency had accepted

this, but the board noted that care was needed to always ensure that all relevant consents were in place.

- (v) [Confidential item]
  
- (b) Colin Edmond reported that further work on installing non-slip surfaces on lock boards had not progressed owing to continued unsuitable weather conditions. A review of the trial installation at Hoe Mill had revealed a problem with the painted surface adhering properly. Possible alternatives, including non-slip paint arrangements, felt and wire would be looked at again. The board felt it essential that progress was made, as it was a known safety issue.
  
- (c) Colin Edmond reported that other than for vessels in poor condition, the risk register had yet to be updated. A complete review of all the risk assessments for general work on the Navigation was also needed. This would be passed to Graham Brown to action. The weekly checks along the navigation also needed to be documented.
  
- (d) Colin Edmond had circulated notes on four vessels that were giving cause for concern:  
[Personal detail omitted]
  
- (e) Colin Edmond had prepared a draft formal flood management plan, which had been circulated with the agenda. Roy Chandler would review the document with Colin to elaborate on reasons for various actions and otherwise tidy up. Neil Edwards would circulate the plan as an MS Word document, and other directors and Graham Brown were asked to review the Plan for any possible additions or revisions.
  
- (f) An updated schedule of certification held at Head Office had been circulated. The following points were noted:  
[Personal detail omitted]
  
- (g) [Confidential item]
  
- (h) [Confidential item]
  
- (i) The board noted IWA's revised Health & Safety Policy and the schedule of responsibilities and asked that a near identical policy statement be prepared for Essex Waterways Ltd, for consideration at the December meeting.

### **Staffing and Management Arrangements**

- 3. (a) The reappointment, by IWA's trustees, of Jim Jenkins and John Pomfret to the board, each for further terms of three years, was noted.
  
- (b) The commencement of duties of Graham Brown (Navigation Manager), Sam Hobden and James Coles (Assistant Lengthsmen) was noted. The creation of the two new assistant lengthsmen posts might produce additional pressures on vehicle use; Graham Brown would report back if any action needed to be taken. Colin Edmond would hand over use of the Vauxhall Combi on 28<sup>th</sup> September.
  
- (c) The board noted that Colin Edmond would move to 3-days per week from the end of September and fully retire at the end of November. His final date at work would be in mid-November to allow for remaining leave to be taken, and thus he would have fully retired before the board next met. The board recorded its considerable thanks for all Colin's work during his

employment with both Essex Waterways and with the Navigation Company, a total of about 26 years.

- (d) Neil Edwards proposed that a system of formal annual appraisals and target setting for all employees should be instituted. Graham Brown spoke of the benefits of this in his previous employment. The board agreed that this was desirable and asked Graham to progress this. Graham reported that he was drafting a staff structure chart and would circulate this to directors shortly. The board agreed to discuss a review of staff salaries for 2013 by e-mail, with a view to formal approval at the December meeting.
- (e) Neil Edwards advised the board that IWA was in the process of updating all Contracts of Employment with IWA employees to take account of recent legislative changes [detail omitted] The board agreed that contracts of employment for other employees should be updated to coincide with the review of 2013 salaries.
- (f) [Confidential item]
- (g) [Confidential item]
- (h) [Confidential item]
- (i) Roy Chandler reported on the two summer Canal Camps that had successfully taken place in August, undertaking repairs at Rushes Weir. Bob Crow, leader for the first week and local volunteer, had returned at the end of both Camps to complete the brickwork that the Camps had not finished. The board asked that a letter of thanks be sent to Bob Crow.
- (j) Neil Edwards reported that WRG was planning its schedule of Canal Camps for 2013 and had sought expressions of interest from prospective hosts. He had discussed this with Roy Chandler prior to the meeting, and an initial expression of interest for three weeks (one each in the February and Autumn half term weeks and one during the summer school holidays) had been submitted to WRG. Exact works and accommodation would need to be considered further, but there was a potential wall repairs task at Paper Mill that could span all three weeks. Subject to availability the Haybay or Plume School could be used as accommodation again, though the former was proving increasingly expensive and other options ought to be considered. Roy Chandler and Graham Brown would progress this.
- (j) Confidential item]

## **Finance**

- 4. (a) Income and expenditure reports for the eight and a half months to mid September had been circulated with the agenda. The board noted the reports, and in particular that:
  - Income was largely as budgeted for;
  - Commercial moorings was down against the budget;
  - Income from Helmsman Training was well above budget;
  - Sale of willows was well ahead of budget, but this was largely as a consequence of felling extra trees because of disease, and there would be additional costs for replanting over the winter, which would probably not show until the 2013 accounts.
- (b) A cash flow statement had been circulated with the agenda. Capital expenditure had not been included in the statement, but the position continued to be satisfactory, with funds available for capital works.

- (c) Schedules showing outstanding debts and boats without up-to-date mooring agreements, insurance certificates or Boat Safety Scheme certificates were tabled. The following points were noted: [detail omitted]  
The board was concerned that the number of boaters who had not submitted up-to-date insurance certificates seemed unusually high, and consideration would be given to adding an administration charge where these had to be excessively chased up.
- (d) A draft for a proposed revised Mooring Agreement had been prepared and circulated with the agenda by Neil Edwards. The board recognised that the current arrangements were not as good as they could be, and felt that the proposed new Agreement was the right approach. Neil Edwards would circulate a version of the document in MSWord for board members to comment on. [detail omitted] An update of the draft Agreement would be reviewed at the December meeting with a view to consultation with boaters during 2013 and introduction in the autumn, with the first year to be covered by the new agreements being 2014.
- (e) The board considered prices for moorings and various licences and fees for 2013, and noted that various measures of inflation were mostly between 2.5% and 3%. The board agreed that all mooring fees, licences, crane and other fees should rise by 3.0% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013, other than canoe licences and camp site fees, which would remain the same, as they were convenient round sums of £5.00. [detail omitted] Notice of the fees increase would be given in the October newsletter to boaters.
- (f) The board noted that a final budget for 2013 needed to be approved at the 3<sup>rd</sup> December board meeting, ahead of the meetings of IWA's Finance Committee and trustees on 8<sup>th</sup> December. Roy Chandler would discuss this with Graham Brown with a view to circulating an initial draft to directors before the end of October.
- (g) Neil Edwards had prepared and circulated a schedule of known leases with the agenda. There were still a number of gaps in our knowledge of this, and an on-the-ground inspection needed to be made along the Navigation for all utility crossings, potential water abstractions and drainage outlets, as well as possible property incursions and occupations. [detail omitted]
- (h) Roy Chandler reminded the meeting that both Chelmsford City Council and Maldon District Council had given notice that their discretionary reliefs on Commercial Rates were being reviewed, which would require resubmission of applications. Roy had submitted a new application to Maldon, and was expecting Chelmsford to contact us shortly to invite an application. Rate relief had also been sought from Maldon for the two yacht stores that had been taken in hand for the residential caretakers.
- (i) [Confidential item]
- (j) There had been no progress with the installation of further electricity remote meter readers as the change of suppliers during this month needed to take place first. Neil Edwards would check with Paula Smith what needed to be done to get the process moving again, with the new suppliers, British Gas.
- (k) [Confidential item]
- (l) [Confidential item]

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

5. (a) John Pomfret reported that recent grants given elsewhere in the country under the Water Framework Directive grant arrangements had all been for ecological improvements, which was

more difficult for us to fit under. It appeared that a grant for the Chelmer headwaters, led by Essex Wildlife Trust, may have been successful, and that we might gain a small amount of funding from this for some bank repairs near Little Baddow. Future funds were likely to be targeted at fish-passes, habitat diversity and structure removal. Roy Chandler would make enquiries with Essex Wildlife Trust.

- (b) The final payment for 2012 under the Headland Management Scheme was due shortly, and the scheme was expected to continue in 2013.
- (c) The potential for the re-grading of moorings at Sandford Lock (off-side, not towpath-side) once new toilets had been built there, and also on the north bank moorings at Paper Mill once the new toilet facility was available there, would be kept on the agenda for future review.
- (d) Substantial works were needed to strengthen the towpath bank below the weir at Paper Mill, which would probably require a full length of deep piling from the lock to the road bridge. An application could be made to [a funder] to support funding

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

- 6. (a) There still remained some landscape works at Heybridge North Quay, and to bring this to a quick conclusion the lengthsmen would concentrate on this for the three weeks from 1<sup>st</sup> October or until complete..
- (b) The repairs to Rushes Weir had been completed following two weeks of Canal Camps and some subsequent work by Bob Crow, one of the leaders [see item 3(i)].
- (c) The silage tank for the new toilet block at Paper Mill had been delivered, but had been found to be to the wrong specification (supplier's fault). The correct item was expected shortly and would be installed by John Greave, a local volunteer with appropriate equipment, during October.
- (d) Roy Chandler reported that building regulations approval was needed for the proposed new facilities block at Sandford, and confirmation would be sought that no EA consent was required. Helical piles were being considered for foundations. Building work was likely to commence in the New Year.
- (e) The refurbishment of the Gents-side of the boaters' facilities at Heybridge had been undertaken. This work had been brought forward as the works were found to be more urgent than originally thought, and once started more extensive work than expected was needed. The increased scope of the work had led to delays whilst materials were on delivery, which had been unfortunate for the busy period of August. The Ladies-side of the facilities block would be tackled in October or November.
- (f) Roy Chandler reported that the Environment Agency had fitted the long-promised grille to the feeder stream at Springfield. The board agreed that Essex Waterways Ltd should undertake to maintain the grille and keep it clear. Roy Chandler would advise the Agency.
- (g) Colin Edmond reported that there had been some weed cutting on the Navigation this year, but the problem had not been as bad as might have been anticipated. The cutting machinery had not broken down, but a look-out needed to be kept up for a replacement machine. The board also agreed that a cover should be obtained for the existing vessel and equipment to try to keep it better maintained.

- (h) Colin Edmond reported that the proposed ramps and chains at Heybridge Sea Lock had not progressed, but safety chains had been installed.
- (i) Colin Edmond reported that the review of weir signage had yet to be undertaken.
- (j) Colin Edmond reported that a substantial amount of willow planting was needed following the high number of trees taken out. This was particularly noticeable at Sandford. Newly planted trees seemed to have done better this year, following the wet summer. The smaller trees planted also seem to have done better, and trees planted where diseased ones have been taken out had not suffered disease so far. Planting was next likely to take place in January.
- (k) The forthcoming October Canal Camp, and hopefully the February one, were planned to continue further vegetation control, including continuing work in the Beeleigh to Heybridge area. Permission had been received to prune lower branches from a large tree at Paper Mill, and also the roadside trees by the car park. This was likely to be work for a tree surgeon, possibly from a platform from the road. Permission had been agreed to prune the large Walnut tree at Sandford, which has also a tree surgeon task. Blanket permission for towpath tree works would be sought from Chelmsford Borough Council.
- (l) Further brickwork repairs at Baddow Mill were due to start in the next few days, subject to provision of evidence of third-party insurance from [the contractor].
- (m) Problems with the paddles in the lock gates at Barnes and Rushes locks had been resolved by volunteer diving instructors from Witham Sub Aqua Club. A donation to RNLI had been made in lieu of their expenses in respect of the work at Barnes and Colin Edmond would enquire about a further donation in connection with the work at Rushes. The repairs at Barnes had identified a need for work on the lock sill there, and other sill work was needed at Paper Mill and Little Baddow locks. A meeting with [a contractor] to progress quotes for these works would be arranged.
- (n) The proposed survey of the electrical arrangements at Paper Mill had not yet been arranged as the volunteer who would undertake the work, had been busy completing the works at Heybridge, including the facilities block.
- (o) Permissions for proposed repositioning of the gate at the entrance to the car park at Paper Mill Lock had not yet been sought owing to other pressures. Some minor vegetation control had taken place and more substantial hedge trimming was needed to maintain sight lines.
- (p) Quotations would be sought from [two contractors] to undertake piling work identified at Paper Mill and Hoe Mill respectively.
- (p) A programme of works was being put together for the forthcoming winter. In addition to the jobs listed above, gates at other locks needed to be checked, a lock ladder needed to be installed at Rushes Lock and a replacement caisson gate on the Sea Lock was becoming urgent. Jim Jenkins would pursue the latter within Essex & Suffolk Water, and would also pursue reports that the Essex & Suffolk Water owned weir gate at Hoe Mill was sticking.

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

- 7. (a) Roy Chandler reported that there had been no further progress on proposals for the Sandford Mill site.

- (b) John Pomfret had yet to progress the vegetation management plan specifications. The previously reported patches of Himalayan Balsam had not been found, but a useful work party with IWA's Chelmsford Branch had tackled other vegetation work.
- (c) Roy Chandler reported that there had been no further progress with the Langford Leisure Park, but that the landowner had put forward some possible schemes to Maldon District Council.
- (d) A small amount of graffiti had been spotted at Barnes Lock. This would be dealt with quickly.
- (e) Roy Chandler reported that nothing further had been heard about the planned A138 Chelmer Viaduct replacement.
- (f) Bookings for the campsites at Heybridge and Hoe Mill had been quite low owing to the poor summer weather. Enquiries would be made of Martin Maudsley and June Meads about the levels of enquiries and work resulting, to see levels of advertising were appropriate.
- (g) Roy Chandler reported that redevelopment of the Travis Perkins site at Springfield Basin had commenced, with most of the demolition work done. The contractors were being cooperative.
- (h) Hugh Turner had submitted a report, circulated with the agenda, on the Helmsman's Training Courses activity. The report was noted.
- (i) The board discussed the suitability of large cruisers moored long-term at Heybridge Basin and concluded that they were not an appropriate vessel, partly owing to safety considerations for boarding vessels moored adjacent to them. A letter would be sent to [boat owners] advising the board's policy decision and that [their] mooring contract could not be renewed when the present one expired at the end of the year.
- (j) The board noted that the Houseboat *Marinella*, allowed in at Heybridge, had been sold and had now left the Navigation.
- (k) Jim Jenkins reported that he had chaired the Advisory Group meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June, and would circulate notes of the meeting to other directors.
- (l) Roy Chandler reported that the Church Commissioners had acceded to our representations over the mineral rights boundary question. Roy Chandler was congratulated on the successful outcome.

### **Other Business**

- 8. (a) Roy Chandler reported that the development land at Heybridge was in the process of being sold. A 'profits on development' agreement with the Navigation Company would need to be renewed with the new owners, and in the process of correspondence with solicitors concerning this, it had come to light that developers were claiming a much wider access right than we believed was correct. Representations had been made.
- (b) Concern was expressed [about] maintenance agreements for memorial benches and trees, and the board agreed that these should be avoided in the future.
- (c) A letter had been received from Trinity House advising that the traffic light system on the Sea Lock did not meet the current international standards. Enquiries would be made as to what needed to be done to remedy this situation.

- (d) Reports of heavy usage of the washing machines in the Heybridge facilities block had led to suggestions that “all the village was using them” as a free resource. Graham Brown would discuss the situation with Martin Maudsley.
- (e) A date needed to be set, and venue booked, for the next Users Meeting. The board agreed that this should take place towards the end of January to allow for sufficient notice in the December newsletter.
- (f) Jim Jenkins reported that construction of the replacement Chelmsford effluent pipeline was proceeding, and that it would need to cross the Navigation somewhere in the Beeleigh area. No formal notices had yet been received

### **Future Meetings**

- 9. (a) The next meeting would be held at 10.00 am on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at Chesham.
- (b) Neil Edwards would circulate a list of proposed dates for 2013 meetings with the December agenda.

No other business was transacted and the meeting closed at 5.15 p.m.