

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, at 10.30 a.m. on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012.

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

In Attendance: Graham Brown

There were no apologies for absence. Colin Edmond was welcomed to his first meeting as a director.

### **Minutes of Meetings**

1. The minutes of the board meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 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 that there had been one incident since the previous meeting, in which a boater had tripped over the low retaining wall by the facilities block in the dark one evening. Both bulbs in the lights at the block had simultaneously failed that day, which had not been realised. A review of the site had led to a decision to install railings on the low level walls either side of the entrance to the block. A reminder to regularly check that all outdoor lights are working would be issued to staff at each site.
- (b) Neil Edwards reported [in respect of an] insurance claim.
- (c) Graham Brown reported that new boards were on order for the walkways at the Sea Lock, but that trials were still on-going for non-slip surfaces elsewhere.
- (d) 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 had been started, but there was considerable work to do. John Pomfret would send a copy of the original risk register to Graham Brown.
- (e) The board reviewed progress on the four vessels that were giving cause for concern.
- (e) Colin Edmond had updated the draft formal flood management plan, which had been circulated with the agenda. The board asked that it should be circulated to other staff and interested parties for comment. Graham Brown would put together a circulation list and arrange circulation. Once finalised, the plan should be reviewed every five years. The arrangements with the Environment Agency for shutting the flood gates at Heybridge appeared uncertain, and needed to be clarified with the Agency, with the presumption being that it ought to be the Agency's responsibility unless there was a good reason for it being otherwise.
- (f) An updated schedule of certification held at Head Office had been circulated. The following points were noted:
  - (i) [Confidential].

- (ii) Service dates for the vehicles would be added to the schedule, based on an annual service or 10,000 miles, whichever came first. If the former, the next dates would be Feb 2013 (Land Rover), October (Combo van) and November (Vauxhall Vivaro).
- (iii) Hugh Turner would be asked to undertake Helmsman training for the three lengthsman at some point during the winter.
- (g) Graham Brown reported that First Aid training courses had been booked for all full-time employees other than himself. Graham already has an in-date qualification.
- (h) [Confidential]
- (i) The board approved a revised Health & Safety Policy that was circulated with the agenda. Graham Brown would prepare a schedule of responsibilities. The updated policy and schedule would be published on the web site.

### **Staffing and Management Arrangements**

3. (a) Graham Brown reported that the two new assistant lengthsman had settled into their duties well and had formed a good team with the Senior Lengthsman. The purchase of an additional vehicle (Vauxhall Vivaro) was noted.
- (b) [Confidential]
- (c) The board confirmed that a formal appraisal system should be introduced, with initial target setting in the New Year. This would tie with in with completion of probation periods.
- (d) [Confidential]
- (e) [Confidential]
- (f) [Confidential]
- (g) [Confidential]
- (h) The board noted that three Canal Camps had been agreed with WRG for 2013, to take place in February, August and October. Accommodation for the August camp would be on the Haybay, but an alternative would be needed for the other two weeks.
- (i) Roy Chandler reported that two recent weekend work parties from Essex WRG had been attended by low numbers, but one of the weekends had been combined with an IWA Chelmsford Branch work party, which had been most successful.
- (j) The board agreed to offer two weeks of Paternity Leave at full pay as a future policy. This would be of benefit to both Graham Brown and Martin Maudsley early in the New Year.

### **Finance**

4. (a) Income and expenditure reports for the nine months to the end of September had been circulated with the agenda. The board noted the reports, and that income was largely to budget, as expenditure other than that a number of capital projects had not yet commenced and would not now start until 2013. There had been no drawings on the restricted fund, and willow sales were well above budget.

- (b) The board noted that the cash flow position remained satisfactory, and there was likely to be a substantial balance to pass to the restricted fund at year end.
- (c) Schedules showing outstanding debts and boats without up-to-date mooring agreements, insurance certificates or Boat Safety Scheme certificates were tabled. [Detail omitted]
- (d) [Confidential]
- (e) Hugh Turner had circulated a note concerning proposed registration of dinghies and other small vessels. The board agreed there was a need to maintain a register of such vessels to check that fees were being paid and to avoid abandonment and debris on the banks. The board agreed that Hugh would be asked to progress this.
- (f) Neil Edwards reported that he had not yet reviewed and updated the proposed revised mooring contract, but would do so before the next meeting.
- (g) A draft budget had been circulated with the agenda. This showing considerable excess of expenditure over income because of the number of capital projects carried forward. These would be funded from the restricted fund. The budget was approved.
- (h) [Confidential]
- (i) The alder tree that required attention as a safety matter adjacent to Black Bridge at Heybridge, had yet to be attended to.
- (j) There had been no progress with the installation of further electricity remote meter readers. Paula Smith was chasing this up with the new electricity suppliers, British Gas. Colin Edmond had provided information for a map showing electricity supply lines at Heybridge and a copy of the map was left at Head Office.
- (k) [Confidential]
- (l) Roy Chandler reported that he had been informed that the jetty to the barge at Springfield Basin had been repaired.

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

- 5. (a) Roy Chandler reported that a meeting with Essex Wildlife Trust was planned to discuss bank repairs near Little Baddow to be funded from the grant for Chelmer headwaters, obtained by the Wildlife Trust. It may be possible to tie this in with the August Canal Camp, but additional funds may be needed.
- (b) The Headland Management Scheme was still expected to continue in 2013.
- (c) The potential re-grading of moorings at Sandford Lock (off-side, not towpath-side) would be reviewed 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, and would be kept on the agenda..
- (d) Quotes were being progressed for works to strengthen the towpath bank below the weir at Paper Mill. [Detail omitted]

## **Report from the Navigation Manager**

6. (a) Graham Brown had circulated a paper with the agenda, providing an update on various projects along the Navigation. The board commented that this was particularly helpful and the report was noted. The following points were raised from this report:
  - (i) The UK Power Networks connection for a power supply was still needed at North Quay, Heybridge, but this was being progressed as rapidly as possible.
  - (ii) Building regulations consent was still needed for the facilities block at Sandford, but otherwise the project was ready to commence.
  - (iii) The brickwork repairs at Baddow Mill have now been completed.
- (b) The board considered the possibility of installing a new slipway at Hoe Mill, on the towpath side opposite the moorings. Michael Cole would be asked to assess the viability of the site by taking the Land Rover and trailer there and checking the turning area needed.
- (c) Graham Brown reported that the refurbishment of the facilities block at Heybridge was likely to be complete by Christmas. A check would be made on the sewage tank and drainage to ensure the most efficient arrangements.
- (d) Graham Brown reported that a new gate and fence had been built and put in place to keep visitors away from the crane area, as a matter of Health & Safety.
- (e) Jim Jenkins reported that Essex & Suffolk Water had approved a feasibility study for replacement of the caisson gate at the Sea Lock. [A contractor] was likely to be the preferred contractor, and Jim would advise when they were likely to wish to visit to view the work.

## **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 briefed the meeting on progress made so far with specifying the vegetation management report. He would send a draft of the report to Roy Chandler and Graham Brown prior to the planned meeting with Essex Wildlife Trust.
- (c) Roy Chandler reported that there had been no further progress with the Langford Leisure Park proposals.
- (d) Graham Brown reported that there was no graffiti outstanding to be dealt with.
- (e) Roy Chandler reported that nothing further had been heard about the planned A138 Chelmer Viaduct replacement.
- (f) The board agreed that the existence of campsite at Heybridge should not be advertised further, and reference to it would be taken off the web site. Where the site was listed on commercial website, we would try to get the listing changed to Hoe Mill.
- (g) Roy Chandler reported that redevelopment of the Travis Perkins site at Springfield Basin, to the Indigo Wharf housing development was proceeding well. There was likely to be a further development at Springfield Basin, for which Roy Chandler was liaising with planners.

- (h) Hugh Turner had submitted a report on the Helmsman's Training Courses activity, which had been quiet lately. The report was noted.
- (i) [Confidential]
- (j) Roy Chandler reported that a minor dispute with the owners of the development land at Heybridge over access rights had been settled in our favour. An agreed map showing the access and its width had been produced.
- (k) Colin Edmond reported that he had identified an LED lighting arrangement that would satisfy Trinity House requirements for the traffic light system at Heybridge Sea Lock. He would arrange for this to be put in place.
- (l) Graham Brown reported that meters had now been fitted to the washing machines in the Heybridge facilities block. The level of use had not diminished, but the income from the meters would assist the cost of replacements when required.
- (m) Roy Chandler reported that the Environment Agency was planning to give up the lease on the measuring station at Rushes, but would pay for a further year to allow removal of the small building that housed equipment. Roy would inspect the structure to see if there was merit in us retaining it for any reason before it was taken down.
- (n) Roy Chandler reported that the Power Networks lease at Ricketts was slowly progressing. The lease schedule had been missed off the agenda. Neil Edwards would arrange for it to be updated and circulated.

### **Other Business**

- 8. Roy Chandler reported that the next users meeting would be at 7.30 pm on 30<sup>th</sup> January at Langford Village Hall. Notice would be given in the January newsletter.

### **Future Meetings**

- 9. (a) The next meeting would be held at 10.00 am on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March at Paper Mill.
- (b) Dates for other 2013 meetings were agreed as Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June (Paper Mill, including AGM), Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September (Paper Mill) and Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December (Chesham).

No other business was transacted and the meeting closed at 3.15 p.m.