

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at the Navigation Office, Paper Mill Lock, at 10.00 a.m. on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2013.

Present: Roy Chandler (chairman), Colin Edmond, Neil Edwards, Jim Jenkins and John Pomfret (until 12.05 p.m.)

In Attendance: Graham Brown

There were no apologies for absence.

### **Minutes of Meetings**

1. The minutes of the board meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013, 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) There had been an incident with a dog belonging to [a boat owner – detail omitted]
- (b) There was understood to have been an incident [involving a visitor at the] Sea Lock at Heybridge. The incident was not reported to us and no further details were known. The incident had just been reported as hearsay, and further enquiries had not revealed any information.
- (c) There had been an incident in which a boater had fallen into the canal basin at Heybridge, at about 1.30 a.m. one morning. Martin Maudsley's family had alerted him, and with their assistance he had managed to get the boater out of the water and taken to hospital. Since the incident, two safety ladders had been ordered for installation at Heybridge. The board also agreed to ask boat owners at Heybridge who have vessels with boarding ladders to leave them out, as part of the general information for arrivals. Graham Brown would discuss this with Martin Maudsley.
- (d) John Pomfret had circulated an updated version of the Flood Management Plan the previous day. This was generally agreed to be fine, but with some possible additional wording needed to cover the clearance of rubbish screens on the chunker at Heybridge Mill, and additional emergency telephone numbers. The Flood Management Plan was to be read in conjunction with the Essex Waterways Ltd Emergency Procedures, and the board asked that this latter document be reviewed. There were some questions to be resolved with the Environment Agency over the operation of equipment owned or installed by the Agency, especially in the event of anything going wrong. Directors were asked to send any further comments to John Pomfret by the end of the week.
- (e) Graham Brown reported that he had yet to resolve the exact sources of outfalls into the Navigation in the Heybridge area and to ascertain the exact extent to which they were still in use, and thus determine whether new agreements needed to be made with the business owners, with the structures cleaned up and boxed off, and if not, the old piping needed to be removed or closed off. The towpath in this area had now been surfaced by Essex County Council.
- (f) There had been no progress with installing non-slip surfaces on lock gates, partly owing to weather conditions, and partly because [of a further issue].

- (g) The fencing on the low walls outside the Heybridge facilities block had yet to be installed, as this work was awaiting delivery of materials. This would be chased up.
- (h) The Risk Register had yet to be updated.
- (i) The board reviewed progress on the four vessels that had been giving cause for concern, and one further vessel that had been identified: [Confidential detail omitted]
- (j) The board agreed to ask Hugh Turner to add a column to his mooring reports to note any vessels that were falling into a poor state of repairs and might become 'boats at risk'. A standard letter for boat owners where there was a potential wreck or pollution risk was necessary to express our concern.
- (k) An updated schedule of certification held at Head Office had been circulated with the agenda. The following points were noted:
  - (i) [A contractor] would be reminded to supply evidence of up-to-date public liability insurance before he undertook further work on the Navigation.
  - (ii) An up-to-date MOT was held for the Vauxhall Combo, and the schedule needed to be updated for this. The Vauxhall Vivaro was due to be tested within a few days.
  - (iii) A First Aid course had now been undertaken by [an employee], so all [full-time] staff [had undertaken recent courses].
- (l) Graham Brown reported that training on use of the crane for [an employee] had continued, and he was now proficient to use the equipment.

### **Staffing and Management Arrangements**

3. (a) Roy Chandler reported that a new caretaker for Heybridge, Alastair Sims, had been appointed and had commenced duties on 1<sup>st</sup> June. His boat would be located at the far end of the moorings. A portrait photo was needed for the website.
- (b) The summer WRG Canal Camp was near fully booked up. Sam Hobden would look after the Camp; work was likely to be at Ricketts Lock, to lower grassed area levels as a safety matter, add concrete quadrants under lock gates to eliminate trip hazards, and dispose of soil in an area where flooding had caused erosion. Chris Byrne, leader for the Camp, was due to make a site visit shortly.
- (c) There were planned visits from Essex WRG (6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> July, possibly combined with IWA Chelmsford Branch), and possibly workers from Fords. Work for these visits was to be arranged; possibly footpath work if road-plannings were available from Chelmsford City Council, or metalwork painting.
- (d) The draft Leave of Absence policy was noted, but was deferred until the next meeting until trustees had considered a policy for the Association, which was due to happen at trustees meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June.
- (e) Roy Chandler reported that assistant lengthsmen James Cole had resigned, his last day as an employee was on 31<sup>st</sup> May. The vacant post had been advertised with a closing date of 10<sup>th</sup> June. Applications would be circulated to Roy Chandler, Jim Jenkins, Graham Brown, Neil

Edwards and Colin Edmond for short-listing, with an interview panel comprising Roy Chandler, Graham Brown and Michael Cole.

- (f) The board asked that 'staff matters' be added as a general heading next agenda.
- (g) The board reaffirmed that it wished to appoint Peter Martin as a director and that it wished to ask David Carrington to become a director, subject to approval by IWA trustees. The board wished to record that both new directors were being recruited for their skills and what they could contribute to the board.

## **Finance**

- 4. (a) The directors approved a Letter of Representation to the auditors, the draft of which had been circulated with the agenda. Roy Chandler was authorised to sign the letter.
- (b) The board reviewed and approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the company for the period ending 31st December 2012, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The board recommended submission of the Annual Report and Financial Statements to the company's Annual General Meeting later that day.
- (c) Income and expenditure reports for the three months to the end of March 2013 had been circulated with the agenda, along with reports to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013. Income was largely up to budget, and expenditure mostly within budget. Expenditure on Barnes Lock had been greater than budget owing to the need for additional works, including repairing the bottom of one gate and repainting.
- (d) The board noted that the cash flow position remained satisfactory and that restricted funds balances had not changed since the March meeting.
- (e) Schedules showing outstanding debts and those boats without up-to-date mooring agreements, insurance certificates or Boat Safety Scheme certificates were tabled. There were no particular issues not covered elsewhere.
- (f) Neil Edwards reported that there had been three responses so far to the consultation on new mooring contracts; these had been on relatively minor points. The consultation had until 30<sup>th</sup> June to run, and a report after this would be circulated to the board, with a view to finalising the new contract at the September meeting, for mailing out in October.
- (g) An updated Leases Schedule had been circulated with the agenda. Arrangements to conclude or renew the expired Environment Agency leases at Heybridge, Rushes and Ulting were being chased up.
- (h) Roy Chandler reported that there had been no further developments on business rates from either Chelmsford City Council or Maldon District Council.
- (i) There had been no progress with the installation of further electricity remote meter readers, and there remained problems with remote meter readers not working. Neil Edwards would ask Paula Smith to assess the situation once the new electricity suppliers were in place.

## **Future Income and Grant Applications**

- 5. (a) Roy Chandler reported that he had chased Essex Wildlife Trust over arrangements for the proposed works above Little Baddow Lock for which grant funding was available.

- (b) The Headland Management Scheme continued for 2013. A tractor and flail hired from Chelmsford City Council, with driver, had worked well and was thought likely to be a more efficient way to proceed with towpath maintenance. The board asked Graham Brown and Roy Chandler to investigate possible acquisition, preferably a new John Deere tractor with attachments, to be funded from the IWA loan.
- (c) The potential re-grading of moorings at Sandford Lock (off-side, not towpath-side) remained to be reviewed once new facilities block had been built there, and also on the north bank moorings at Paper Mill once the new facilities block was available there.
- (d) Roy Chandler reported on the possible formation of an East Anglian Rivers Trust, which might prove a possible source of potential funding.
- (e) A £2,500 grant had been received from Chelmsford City Council at the end of last financial year, which had paid for plant for towpath work at Sandford. Essex County Council had also provided free road plannings.

### **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 noted this and thanked Graham for the report.
- (b) Jim Jenkins reported that quotes from Land and Marine for the replacement caisson gate at Heybridge had come in a just under [an amount], which was within what Essex & Suffolk Water had expected to contribute. Work would likely take place in the financial year 2014/5, which was when Essex & Suffolk Water would have funds in the appropriate budget. The caisson gate was being kept out of use, in so far as was practicable, in the meantime to try to ensure that its sliding mechanism did not fail before the replacement was installed.
- (c) The new surface to the car park at North Quay, Heybridge, had been the subject of comment from a small number of boaters. Dust from the new surface was proving a nuisance on dry windy days, but this was expected to settle down with use. The surface was as stipulated by Maldon District Council in the Conservation Area approval for the works, and was widely used at other similar places.
- (d) The construction of ramps to the lock gates at Heybridge had not yet been progressed.
- (e) Refurbishment of the Heybridge facilities block was now complete, and this need not appear on future agendas.
- (f) Repairs to the cills at Barnes Lock were now complete, along with some dredging work below Barnes weir, repainting and repairs to the lock gates. Similar work at Rushes and Little Baddow locks was scheduled for later in the year.
- (g) The board confirmed its agreement by e-mail correspondence in May for the contract for the piling work at Paper Mill to be awarded to Land and Water. Work was due to start later in June and be complete before the school summer holidays. Elliot Cox had kindly agreed to diversion of the towing path on his land, and use of his tea-room car park, during the works.
- (h) The silage tank had been installed for the new toilet block at Paper Mill north bank. This had taken a lot of concrete, but the base now ready for construction. Sam Hobden would commence work on this shortly.

- (i) A survey of the electrics on Paper Mill had been undertaken and a schematic diagram drawn up. There had been a discussion with Elliott Cox, who had agreed to reconnect the two street lights at Paper Mill; a private meter would need to be installed so that we reimbursed Elliott for electricity costs used by the street lights.
- (j) Works to commence moving the car gate at Paper Mill would follow immediately after the piling work so as to avoid two sets of disruption.
- (k) Roy Chandler reported that he planned to submit for building regulations approval for the Sandford toilet block once the silage tank was installed, as this initial work would not require building regulations permission.
- (l) Graham Brown reported that weir signage had been purchased and installed except for two arrows (in the canoe store); one for the bridge at Hoe Mill, and one further upstream. This item need not appear on future agendas.
- (m) Graham Brown reported that new plantings of willow would need rubbing soon. There had been a modest number of losses, including at Sandford. Watermark Disease was still an issue, but not too bad. Checks would be made that new trees were in good health.
- (n) Graham Brown reported that with the dredging work at Barnes was completed, no further issues of navigable depth had been raised. The situation had been helped with greater number of boat movements in the warmer weather. A small amount of dredging had also been carried out around some of the moorings at Paper Mill.
- (o) A further review had been undertaken of the ladders from the bridge underpass at Hoe Mill. The ladder on the towpath side would be re-installed at a right-angle to the bridge to enable a small compound above the ladder to be closed off with an outward-only opening gate.

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

- 7. (a) Roy Chandler and Jim Jenkins reported that they had met with Chelmsford City Council, [about a possible] development at Sandford Mill. [Commercial detail omitted]
- (b) [Commercial item omitted]
- (c) [This item taken out of order prior to John Pomfret's departure]. John Pomfret reported that he had undertaken some further work to the draft of the vegetation management policy, including adding notes and photos that Roy Chandler had supplied. John Pomfret would aim to circulate an updated draft for board members to comment on within about two weeks.
- (d) Roy Chandler reported that the planned A138 Chelmer Viaduct replacement had become a live issue again following government funding for major works on the Army & Navy roundabout in Chelmsford. Highways Agency's consultants seemed to have little understanding of the situation on the ground, and Roy Chandler had needed to explain the need to keep the Navigation open during the proposed works.
- (e) Roy Chandler reported that rebuilding of the basin wall in Springfield Basin had accidentally be omitted from the Section 106 agreement by Chelmsford City Council [detail omitted] and this had led to delays in getting the work underway.
- (f) Roy Chandler reported on proposed developments at Waterfront Place[Commercial detail omitted]

- (g) Hugh Turner had submitted a report on the Helmsman's Training Courses activity.
- (h) [Confidential item]
- (i) Colin Edmond reported that Trinity House was now content with the existing traffic light system at Heybridge Sea Lock. This item need not appear on future agendas.

### **Other Business**

- 8. (a) Roy Chandler reported that a Deed of Rectification had been agreed in respect of the access road to the Development Land to our satisfaction. This was now due to be signed.
- (b) Roy Chandler reported that a planning application had been submitting to use the lakes at Heybridge (ex Bates) for angling, rather than their current use as a nature reserve. There had been many local objections.
- (c) Roy Chandler reported that he had attended a consultation on planning proposals for the former Heybridge timber yard, which had been derelict for many years. The site was on lower ground than the development land. The proposals would give large area as public open space, which could connect to the towpath.
- (d) [Commercial item omitted]
- (e) [Commercial item omitted]

### **Future Meetings**

- 9. (a) The next meeting would be held at 10.00 am (earlier time) on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at Paper Mill.
- (b) The other 2013 meeting would be held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December (Chesham).

No other business was transacted and the meeting closed at 3.25 p.m.