

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at the Navigation Office, Paper Mill Lock, at 10.00 a.m. on Monday 23rd September 2013.

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

In Attendance: Graham Brown.

The chairman welcomed David Carrington and Peter Martin to their first board meetings. There were no apologies for absence.

Minutes of Meetings

1. The minutes of the board meeting held on 3rd June 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) Graham Brown reported that there had been an incident with the crane at Heybridge Basin, where the senior lengthsman and two assistants had been lifting a boat out of the water when one of the strops broke causing the boat to fall about 3 feet back into the water. [Detail omitted]
- (b) Roy Chandler reported that there had been a theft of some mowing equipment from the store at Sandford. The loss had been promptly settled by insurers.
- (c) Roy Chandler reported that there had been a water leak at Hoe Mill[detail omitted].
- (d) Graham Brown reported there had been no progress in identifying the source of the outfall at Heybridge that had given rise to the purported third-party cyclist injury (reported at previous meetings). The board asked that the outfall be blocked off. The board also asked that [a company] be approached concerning the outfall from their yard into the Navigation, which had been constructed without authority.
- (e) [Confidential item]
- (f) The proposed handrail along the tops of the low walls outside the Heybridge facilities block is now to be metal and a contractor had been instructed.
- (g) [Confidential item].
- (h) The board reviewed progress on the five vessels that had been giving cause for concern:

[Detail of individual vessels omitted]

- (i) Hugh Turner had added 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 would be sent.
- (j) John Pomfret reported that he had updated the Flood Management Plan to take account of minor suggested changes from Neil Edwards and Colin Edmond. Graham Brown would

circulate the updated document for comment to the relevant local authorities and the Environment Agency. The Emergency Procedures still needed to be updated. Colin Edmond would circulate this latter document to the board for comment. Once completed, Graham Brown would circulate this to correct department within Essex Police and other relevant bodies.

- (k) An updated schedule of certification held at Head Office had been circulated with the agenda. The following points were noted:
 - (i) Updated certificates of public liability were required for two contractors.
 - (ii) Graham Brown reported that the next inspection for the crane had been booked. The cracked glass in crane cab had been replaced.
 - (iii) [Confidential item]
 - (iv) Driving licence copies would be brought to the December meeting.
- (l) Graham Brown reported that Sam Hobden was now fully trained on use of the crane.

Staffing and Management Arrangements

- 3. (a) Roy Chandler reported that Eve Sullivan had been appointed as an assistant lengthsman [Confidential items omitted]
- (b) [Confidential item]
- (c) Chris Byrne, the leader for the October WRG Canal Camp, had requested a site visit. Roy Chandler would look after this. Eve Sullivan would run the week's work. For future camps there was an issue with the cost of accommodation. The board agreed not to ask for any Camps in 2014, and would review the position next year in respect of 2015. Neil Edwards would let WRG know.
- (d) Roy Chandler reported that Essex WRG weekends had been combined with IWA Chelmsford Branch work parties so as to boost numbers attending. Work for the December visit had yet to be arranged. The board asked that an indicative planning proposal be submitted to Maldon District Council to seek the Council's views on converting the buildings known as 'The Studio' into volunteer accommodation; Ray Chandler agreed to progress this. A replacement outboard motor was needed for the raider work boat at Sandford.
- (e) The board agreed to leave the tabled Leave of Absence policy as guidance rather than to formalise it into a firm policy.

Finance

- 4. (a) Income and expenditure reports for the three months to the end of June 2013 had been circulated with the agenda. Income was largely up to budget, and expenditure mostly within budget. There were timing issues on a number of items, and most capital expenditure projects were running later than planned.
- (b) The board noted that the cash flow position remained satisfactory. Some funds had been drawn from the restricted funds.

- (c) Roy Chandler reported that [a contractor] had withdrawn from undertaking major contractor work at short notice, so some of the works planned for 2013 would need to be deferred. The board discussed contractors who should be approached to undertake works planned. The board was concerned at the public relations issues caused by works having to be delayed and agreed to try to keep everyone informed of the circumstances by the regular newsletter and electronic mailers, which could be sent more frequently.
- (d) The budget for 2014 had not yet been started, but would be substantially impacted on by the delays caused by [the contractor's] withdrawal from major works. David Carrington suggested that the routine budgetary items should be worked on as soon as possible, with the capital items left until later in the year when the position was clearer. The board agreed and this would be actioned.
- (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. The board asked that the £50 administration charges should be promptly levied to give incentive to keeping documentation up to date. Neil Edwards would convey this to Christine Walsh.
- (f) Neil Edwards reported that the new mooring contracts would be ready to go out in October. This would be mentioned in the next newsletter.
- (g) An updated Leases Schedule had been circulated with the agenda papers. Arrangements to conclude or renew the expired Environment Agency leases at Heybridge, Rushes and Ulting would again be 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. Suppliers had been changed to British Gas, under a two-year contract, at the end of August.
- (j) [Confidential item]
- (k) The board agreed to increase all mooring fees and charges by 2.5% (slightly below the rate of inflation) with effect from 1st January 2014. Class 4 licence [£5 rate] charges would remain unchanged. The board also agreed that Sandford moorings (other than towpath) should rise to the 'standard' rate in view of the additional facilities now provided. The moorings at Heybridge with power supplies currently at the 'standard' rate would also increase to 'premium' rate to achieve consistency. This would be covered in the next newsletter to boaters.

Future Income and Grant Applications

5. (a) Roy Chandler reported that Essex Wildlife Trust had gained a further £11,000 grant and that contractors were being tendered for the proposed works above Little Baddow Lock.
- (b) The Headland Management Scheme continued. A quote had been obtained from [a supplier] for a tractor, flail and other attachments, but was rather more expensive than anticipated. [Detail omitted]
- (c) Roy Chandler and Peter Martin suggested that applications for financial support could be made to Essex Community Initiative Fund and Essex Environment Trust. Roy Chandler would investigate further.

- (d) [Confidential item]
- (e) The board received a note from June Mead outlining income from the campsite, along with the pro and cons of caravans and tents. Generally tent customers were more demanding than those in caravans, but the latter trade could be much improved by the provision of electric hook-ups. The board agreed that the toilet facilities at Hoe Mill should be improved and expanded and electric hook-ups provided in 2014.

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) [Confidential item]
- (c) The board agreed not to pursue the construction of ramps to the lock gates at Heybridge for the time being, as there were minimal safety implications and more important and pressing projects. This could come off the agenda.
- (d) The delays to work at Rushes and Little Baddow locks had been discussed earlier in the meeting (item 4(c)).
- (e) Roy Chandler reported that Land and Water had completed the piling work at Paper Mill. Some additional work had been required, which had increased costs by [an amount].
- (f) Work was progressing on the new toilet block at Paper Mill north bank, led by Sam Hobden.
- (g) Roy Chandler reported that further electrical work at Paper Mill would be necessary once the new facilities block was in place.
- (h) Works to move the car gate at Paper Mill would commence once other projects currently being worked on were complete.
- (i) The silage tank for the Sandford toilet block was now installed and work on the rest of the block would start when the block at Paper Mill was complete.
- (j) Graham Brown reported on a number of areas where willows would be harvested over the winter. There was a programme of new plantings for the winter. Wrights were removing trees with Watermark disease, but there would be no payment for these.
- (k) Plans for other works to be undertaken in 2014 would need to be finalised soon. There was likely to be a need for new gates at Springfield. There had been few comments on the trialled winding gear at Sandford, with no plans to extend installation of the new gear elsewhere. The top gates at Heybridge would require renovation work or replacement shortly.

Update on Issues Discussed at Previous Meetings

- 7. (a) [Confidential item]
- (b) [Confidential item].
- (c) [Confidential item]

- (d) [Confidential item]
- (e) Roy Chandler updated the board on a proposed development in Heybridge Basin that would include some amenity land adjacent to the Navigation [not owned by the Navigation Company]. [Detail omitted]
- (f) John Pomfret reported that he had completed a draft of the vegetation management policy, which he would circulate to the board. There were still some questions, which could be circulated to Essex Wildlife Trust and others as part of the consultation process.
- (g) Roy Chandler reported there had been a further enquiry from consultants concerning water levels re the A138 viaduct replacement. No documentation had been received. [Detail omitted]
- (h) Roy Chandler reported that there had been little progress on Springfield Basin developments. [Detail omitted]
- (j) There was no news to report on the Helmsman's Training Courses activity.
- (k) [Confidential item]

Other Business

- 8. None

Future Meetings

- 9. (a) The next meeting would be held at 10.00 am on Thursday 5th December at Head Office, Island House, Chesham. (Note revised date).
- (b) Proposed dates for 2014 meetings would accompany the agenda for the next meeting.

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