

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at 84 Hopping Jacks Lane, Danbury at 10.00 a.m. on Friday 23rd March 2018.

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

In Attendance: David Smart

Apologies for absence: Craig Holliday and John Pomfret

Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

1. (a) The minutes of the board meeting held on 29th November 2017, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, including the edited minutes for publication, were approved as a true record of that meeting.
- (b) The board asked whether all the funds raised via IWA had been transferred to Essex Waterways Ltd yet. Neil Edwards explained that some funds were still held with IWA.
- (c) The board asked whether a recommendation had been reached with respect to capitalising the new engine and hydraulic gear for *Dredger*. Neil Edwards advised that it was intended to capitalise the purchase, but as to whether the cost would be included under the long term loan from IWA was under consideration by the auditors and their response awaited.

Health and Safety

2. (a) Roy Chandler reported that he had heard that a pedestrian had fallen and broken a leg on the towpath at Paper Mill and the emergency services called. The incident had not been notified to Essex Waterways, and was only reported second-hand.
- (b) [Confidential item]
- (c) [Confidential item].

Finance

3. (a) Income and expenditure reports for the twelve months to the end of December 2017 and other financial information had been circulated with the agenda. The board noted the figures but felt these had been overtaken with the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements. Income and expenditure reports for the first months of 2018 were not yet available as the 2017 had not yet been closed down following the auditors' visit.
- (b) The board considered the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements, which had been circulated with the agenda, and noted a number of areas where further work was required. Neil Edwards explained that the document circulated was just a first draft, and the fully complete document was awaited from the auditors. In particular, the board asked for a full reconciliation between the balance of grants received under 'income' and the list of donations received in the board's report, which would highlight any grants still held with IWA and not yet paid across to Essex Waterways Ltd. The board also asked for a full explanation of the increased creditors and debtors balances; Neil Edwards explained that creditors included [an amount] relating to the Springfield Lock gates order to Hargreaves and [an amount] accrued income in respect of

the grant for the purchase of the trip boat *Victoria*, and that debtors included the two grants due for the work at Springfield Lock, but would ask for a full list to be circulated to the board.

- (c) The board noted that the budget 2018 had been approved electronically by directors since the previous meeting, and reaffirmed that the budget was not to be changed subsequent to this approval notwithstanding changing circumstances, although there might be good reasons for income and expenditure to vary from the budget.
- (d) [Confidential item]

Staff, Volunteer and Management Arrangements

- 4. (a) Roy Chandler reported that Dan Wilkie had tendered his resignation as a residential caretaker at Heybridge as he was moving to a house. A successor needed to be recruited and Dan's boat, which was being sold, would need to be moved to a different (non-residential) mooring. The post would be advertised, including on the web site, when David Smart returned from holiday in mid-April. The job description needed to be re-visited before advertising.
- (b) The administrative assistant post had been advertised and a large number of applications had been received. Tracy Higgin and Christine Walsh, at Chesham, had short-listed a top 15 candidates and David Smart would select a smaller number for interviews, which would take place on 18th April.
- (c) The board asked that the new apprentice lengthsmen post be advertised soon; David Smart would attend to this towards the end of April, after had returned from holiday.

Little Baddow Sluices

- 5. Roy Chandler reported that there had been a slippage at the Little Baddow sluices as a consequence of a void forming under a wing wall. Roy Sutton, IWA Hon Consultant Engineer, had visited the site immediately the situation had come to light and a plan of action for remedial works had been devised. The work would be handled internally using *Dredger*, and a detailed plan was being drawn up by Roy Sutton. The water level in the pound above Little Baddow had been lowered by two feet to take pressure off the sluices and walls. The area had been inspected for further voids and decay, some had been found and this would be addressed at the same time. The cost would be additional unbudgeted expenditure, which would be taken from reserves, but this was what the general reserve was intended for. The total cost was not yet clear, but was estimated to be about [an amount] and well within existing reserves. Notwithstanding the temporary closure of Little Baddow Lock, Ron Abbot had been helped to get his trip boat back to Sandford,

Heybridge Sea Lock

- 6. (a) David Smart reported that a great deal of work had been achieved by Essex & Suffolk Water and their contractors, and the new caisson gate was now operational. Final handover was likely to be 10th April. The opportunity had been taken to re-point nearly all the lock's brickwork. The new lower mitre gates had been installed by Hargreaves, and these were working well, although there was some leakage. Reinstatement of the road was still uncertain. Grant was receiving training on the operation of the caisson gate. The permanent power supply for the caisson gate was not yet operational, but was being worked on. The lock would be operational over Easter, and support had been arranged for Grant to enable this. Most of the site had been demobilised. Timber from the old gates had been stored for salvage where appropriate.

- (b) Colin Edmond had taken some photos of cracks in the concrete supporting the Environment Agency's flood gates at Heybridge. These had been drawn to the attention of the Agency, along with the poor state of some of the woodwork.
- (c) [Confidential item].

Beeleigh Lock

- 7. (a) The replacement of locks at Beeleigh had been postponed owing to a delay in supply of timber to Hargreaves for the new gates. The work would now take place later in the Spring, which would require a short stoppage (up to two weeks). Hargreaves were not yet in a position to advise exact dates, but would manufacture and fit the gates as soon as they could. The delay in this work did, however, have the benefit of freeing up resources to undertake the work at Little Baddow sluices.
- (b) A quote had been received for both sets of new gates at Rushes Lock from Hargreaves. The board agreed to proceed with the order, which had been budgeted for. If resources were available to make applications in time, grants would be sought.

Victoria Trip Boat

- 8. (a) David Carrington had circulated a report on a review of operation of *Victoria*. Following review of the finances, David Carrington had concluded that the net profit for 2018 would be lower than budget. This was partly due to higher staff costs (extra time getting the boat ready and closing down afterwards), and lower forecast surplus on catering. There was still some considerable degree of estimate and guesswork in the updated figures as sufficient data was not yet available. David Carrington had prepared a form to collect data on each trip to enable more accurate understanding and forecasting for future years. The board reiterated that 2018 would be the first full year of operating as intended, so it was still a learning curve, and there may be a need to review prices charged in the light of better understanding of costs and prices that people will be willing to pay.
- (b) David Smart reported that the new kitchen and booking office were near to completion, but there was still some work to do, such as plumbing in the new sinks. David had undertaken a considerable amount of work in completing Maritime & Coastguard Agency's paperwork; the MCA had been particularly strict in its requirements, and despite confirming that the vessel did not require an out-of-water inspection, the Agency had decided at the last minute that it did. The inspection was due to take place on 28th March, and the boat was on its way to the slipway at Maldon at the time of this meeting. The boat would be inspected to see whether the hull needed to be blacked, and the opportunity might be taken to do this. Arrangements for painting above the water were in hand, but that required dry weather. Internal redecoration were still required, although the old dishwasher has been taken out. Some work would be undertaken before the boat's first charter of the season.
- (c) [Confidential item].

Commercial Operations at Heybridge

- 9 (a) Mark Coverly had sold his trip boat, *the Elver*, to Le Bouchon Hotel, which intended to operate the vessel from its mooring stage outside the hotel. .
- (b) [Confidential item].
- (c) [Confidential item].

Proposed Blackwater Park Development

10. (a) Roy Chandler reported that the name of the Blackwater Park development had been changed to Langford Waterside. An office had been established in Maypole Road. A PowerPoint presentation was being put together with a view to having a planning application meeting with Maldon District Council. Roy Chandler would undertake the part of the presentation covering the proposed moorings and marina. [Detail omitted]
- (b) The Environment Agency had rejected the flood defence scheme proposed for the North Heybridge Garden Suburb, which was the major housing development on Ted Watson's land. It was thought that this might impact on the Section 106 agreement that was due to fund the new flood gates on the Navigation, but the necessity for them might also disappear with a revised flood defence scheme.

Springfield Basin

11. (a) Roy Chandler reported that he had resubmitted the planning application for the residential boats on the Springfield Barge pontoons.
- (b) [Confidential item]
- (c) [Confidential item].

Matters of Report

12. A comprehensive report on works and other management issues along the Navigation had been provided as part of the Navigation Management Report that was attached to the agenda. Reports on aged debtors, boaters' compliance, boat movements, fundraising and certification held were also circulated. The following were amongst the points noted:
 - (a) .[Confidential item]
 - (b) David Smart reported on current negotiations with a new parking enforcement company for the quayside parking arrangements at Heybridge.
 - (c) Roy Chandler reported that efforts to find the drainage outfall at Heron Print's former yard at not yet been successful. Colin Edmond would investigate further next time there was substantial rainfall.
 - (d) [Confidential item].
 - (e) David Smart reported that clearance work had been undertaken around the water intake at Ulting for Essex & Suffolk Water and Paula Smith had been asked to invoice the water company.
 - (f) Roy Chandler reported further research on possible options for a canopy for *Victoria* passengers to shelter under. Whilst desirable this was not a priority at the moment.
 - (g) [Confidential item].
 - (h) [Confidential item].

- (i) Colin Edmond reported progress on *Dredger's* refurbishment. Roy Chandler would speak to the Chelmsford Museums about a home for the old Fordson Harbourmaster engine, which in the meantime would need to be stored temporarily somewhere at Heybridge.
- (j) John Pomfret had attended the AINA meeting in 22nd March and had sent a written report in time for this meeting. [Detail omitted].
- (k) [Confidential item].
- (l) David Smart reported that Michael Cole had undertaken some work on the asset register, which would help inform the Long Term Management Plan. It would be desirable to have this updated before the next budget period.
- (m) [Confidential item].
- (n) [Confidential item].
- (o) David Smart noted that the winch on the Avant needed to be tested and would attend to this.

Other Business

- 13 (a) A group of local residents has expressed interest in organising some celebrations for the 225th anniversary of Heybridge Basin. [Detail omitted].
- (b) The next meeting of Southern Canals Association would be held on Sunday 24th June at Paper Mill Lock on board *Victoria*. *Victoria* would attend the Chelmsford Rivers Day on Sunday 1st July, and would offer cream teas on the day.

Future Meetings

- 14. The next meeting (including the deferred AGM) would be held at 2.00 pm on Friday 13th April and other meeting dates in 2018 were confirmed as 30th May, 6th September and 30th November, all at Paper Mill, if *Victoria* was available.

No other business was transacted and the meeting closed at 3.30 p.m.