

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at Sandon Valley House, Canon Barns Road, South Hanningfield, CM3 8BD at 10.20 a.m. on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

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

In Attendance: David Smart

Apologies for absence: David Carrington

### **Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

1. (a) The minutes of the board meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2018, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, including the edited minutes for publication, were approved as a true record of that meeting.
- (b) Neil Edwards reported that the £500 grant from London Region had been transferred to Essex Waterways subsequent to the April meeting.
- (b) David Smart reported that he had spoken to a number of nearby colleges to see if they were able to place an apprentice with Essex Waterways, but the requirements for the colleges did not accord with the apprentice role that the board had envisaged. The board agreed that the post should be advertised locally and with environmental job websites, as soon as possible so as to catch students now completing courses.
- (d) [Confidential item].

### **Health and Safety**

2. David Smart reported that there had been no incidents affecting safety since the previous board meeting.

### **Finance**

3. (a) The board noted the income and expenditure report for the five months to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018, which had been circulated with the agenda. The board noted that a small number of larger vessels had departed from Heybridge Basin which had led to a reduction in mooring income for the first two quarters. This was partly due to the works at the Sea Lock over the past two months and partly natural turnover. Grant had produced a list of boats that had left the basin over the past year or so, and that seemed to be a correct reflection of the income drop.
- (b) The passenger vessel Victoria was trading well and had experienced busy months of May and June. Booking levels over the rest of the summer were a little lower. It was difficult to draw any conclusions on catering income, as only one month's figures were included in the end of May financial report, but the board thought the figures were encouraging. Roy Chandler asked for a breakdown of refurbishment and legal fees and running / maintenance costs. Neil Edwards would ask Paula Smith to run a report from the accounts and send to Roy Chandler and David Smart.
- (d) David Smart reported that he expected the total costs associated with the repairs at Baddow Weir to be about [an amount]. Neil Edwards would ask the finance team for an analysis of

costs so far to be sent to Roy Chandler and David Smart, and for costs to be shown under 'Weir Repair Costs' in future financial reports.

- (e) The board noted that there was a substantial cash balance in the bank at present and decided to postpone raising any long term loan to finance the purchase of the vessel 'Shropshire Lad' until the cash was likely to be needed later in the year, or even next year.
- (f) Neil Edwards reported that Andrew Overy had made enquiries with the auditors about the VAT treatment of expenditure related to the Section 106 grant for Cressy Quay, but that a resolution had not yet been reached. He would chase that up.
- (g) The board noted that Hargreaves had submitted an invoice in respect of the lock gates for Beeleigh albeit that it was not intended to install them until the autumn. The board agreed that the invoice could be paid on provision of a certificate of ownership and a photograph affixed to the gates that stated Essex Waterways Ltd ownership.

### **Staff, Volunteer and Management Arrangements**

- 4. (a) David Smart reported that Sarah Phillips had commenced duties on 29<sup>th</sup> May and was settling in well. Sarah had taken on a wide range of duties and David had introduced her to different parts of the Navigation.
- (b) David Smart reported that there had been difficulties with the broadband at Paper Mill. After lengthy protests to Class Communications, our telephone and broadband provider, BT, as network owner, had visited and appeared to have resolved the issue.
- (c) The board was saddened to hear that Lee Rowley, residential caretaker at Paper Mill had died at the end of May following a short illness. Dan and Natalie Wilkie (residential caretaker and cleaner at Heybridge respectively) had moved away. A new cleaner, Kate Millner, had been appointed, but there were now vacancies for residential caretakers at Paper Mill and Heybridge and these were being advertised. David Smart had identified some potential candidates for the posts, and would follow these up.
- (d) [Confidential item]
- (e) [Confidential item]

### **Little Baddow Sluices**

- 5. (a) David Smart reported that work at Little Baddow Sluice was largely complete. Since the April meeting, further wet weather had caused failure of the central pier and further damage to the weir, which had necessitated the complete replacement of the weir apron and sluices. Roy Sutton had visited on a number of occasions at short notice to draw up plans for the work, which was considerably more extensive than originally envisaged. Piling equipment had been hired from Avon Navigation Trust and new piling put in place with a large excavator mounted on a floating pontoon. There were some minor works to complete, but the Navigation was now fully open and the majority of works complete. Board members expressed their appreciation to Roy Sutton and to the staff for the expertise, determination and efficiency at achieving the substantial works at modest cost.
- (b) The board noted the importance of adherence to CDM regulations and the requirements of notification. The scope of Baddow Mill projected had changed with the additional work being identified mid-project. David Smart reported that all the required method statements and risk assessments, etc, had been completed, but there was a need for improved project planning.

Neil Edwards recommended that Mikk Bradley be asked to visit for forthcoming works, including planned work at Beeleigh and Rushes Lock, to prepare Project Plans, etc. Mikk had already visited and drawn up work plans for the forthcoming Canal Camp.

- (c) The failure of the wing wall and apron at Little Baddow sluices had reinforced the need for a thorough inspection of all the other weirs on the Navigation. The bank [at a location] also required inspection. The board suggested that a piling head and stock of piles be acquired if located as a sensible price.

### **Heybridge Sea Lock**

- 6. (a) David Smart reported that all the works at the Sea Lock were now complete. The caisson gate was now under a 28-day testing period. [Detail omitted].
- (b) David Smart reported that he had not yet invoiced Essex & Suffolk Water for their contractor (IWS) use of our crane. The board asked for this to be submitted as soon as possible.

### **Beeleigh and Rushes Lock Gate Replacements**

- 7. (a) The replacement of Beeleigh Lock gates would be delayed until October so as to avoid a stoppage during the peak summer season, but the new gates were ready in case they happened to fail before October and required urgent installation.
- (b) Craig Holliday reported that Essex & Suffolk Water had now programmed for an inspection of Beeleigh Weir to take place shortly. David Smart and Grant Everiss had been invited to visit Langford Intake works to view the arrangements for water abstraction; this would be taken up.
- (c) Rushes Lock gates and lock ladder would be ordered shortly, for fitting during the winter. This was the last major works identified so far.

### **Victoria Trip Boat**

- 8. (a) *Victoria* had been to Chelmsford for the River Festival on 1<sup>st</sup> July. About 10 IWA members had been on the trip from Little Baddow to Chelmsford. Cream teas had been served on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July with modest takings. The journey back had been used for a trip for Chelmsford councillors including the mayor and the deputy mayor, which had been particularly useful for promoting Essex Waterways' aspirations for the Sandford Mill area. Roy Chandler would follow this up with a written briefing to the relevant councillors.
- (b) Current bookings for the year were up to [an amount of] charters, with further bookings regularly coming in. An enquiry for a wedding reception had been received as a consequence of the trip to Chelmsford. Catering arrangements were working well and the adapted building at Paper Mill was near complete.
- (c) Plans were progressing for a new toilet block for boaters and *Victoria's* passengers; this was a priority.
- (d) The wet weather in the early season and more recent hot weather had highlighted the limitations of the tea room car parking, as there had been parked cars for long stretches along North Hill.
- (e) David Smart reported that all the Maritime & Coastguard Agency paperwork was up to date, and would last through to March 2019. The board asked that any out-of-the water inspections be flagged up early and planned to take place well before the deadline date.

## **Trip Boat and other Trading at Heybridge**

9. (a) The vessel *Shropshire Lad* had been purchased for a reduced price of [an amount] following survey and the vessel had been re-plated at [a] further cost.
- (b) The boat was due to be delivered by road on 5<sup>th</sup> July to Springfield Basin. Permission from Cadent to drive over the gas pipes at Springfield had been obtained. The vessel would be renamed '*Albert*'.
- (c) David Smart had included an appeal for volunteers to run the operation in the most recent Boaters' newsletter, and further advertising for volunteers would be arranged.
- (d) [Confidential item].
- (e) A commercial vessel agreement was required in respect of the *Elver*, which had been purchased, and was being operated, by the Le Bouchon Hotel. Neil Edwards would ask Christine Walsh to attend to this.

## **Springfield Basin**

10. (a) Roy Chandler reported that Chelmsford City Council had granted planning permission for three residential moorings on the Springfield Barges pontoon. David Smart reported that he had received some enquiries from people already interested in taking up a residential mooring in Springfield Basin. There were some planning conditions to be complied with before the moorings could be let.
- (b) Roy Chandler reported that Aquila had submitted its planning application for ten residential moorings with our support. The Environment Agency had placed an initial objection based on wildlife concerns.
- (c) Neil Edwards updated directors on correspondence between solicitors concerning the various management fees and ground rents due between ourselves and Vertex Management Company in respect of the building on the Public Wharf.

## **Matters of Report**

11. 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) David Smart reported that he had received a number of complaints about dust from the road at Heybridge Basin. Quotes would be obtained to see what it would cost to raise the standard of the road with various surfaces.
  - (b) Roy Chandler reported that there was likely to be a public consultation on flood relief options for the North Heybridge Garden Suburb. Roy would circulate copies of the consultation and any meeting invitations to Jim Jenkins, Colin Edmond, David Smart and Grant Everiss, with a view to attending such meeting(s).
  - (c) David Smart reported that he had arranged with Essex County Council for delivery of road plannings, and a grant of £1,600 to assist with delivery, for the towpath works near Tesco in Heybridge.

- (d) Roy Chandler reported that [a riparian land owner] had applied for a pre- (planning) application meeting with Maldon District Council in respect of Langford Waterside.
- (e) Neil Edwards had checked the Land Registry and found that [a] property at [a location] had not yet been registered.
- (f) Roy Chandler reported that the clearance of Springfield feeder was working well in terms of improved water supply to Springfield Basin, but Chelmsford Council was only now willing to pay for the clearance in alternate years.
- (g) [Confidential item].
- (h) [Confidential item]
- (i) The vessel *Dredger* has a few minor works outstanding that can be done when the vessel is next not being used and can conveniently be returned to Heybridge. The board expressed its gratitude to Colin Edmond for co-ordinating an enormous amount of work on the vessel over recent months. The old Harbourmaster engine was stored neatly at Heybridge pending finding a new home.
- (j) David Smart reported that he would progress the abstraction permit in respect of Springfield feeder later this year.
- (k) [Confidential item].
- (l) David Smart reported that the recent good weather had brought the ‘silly season’ with some boat owners ignoring or overlooking provisions of their mooring agreements, and increased enquiries for buying and selling vessels.
- (m) David Smart reminded the board that dredging work on the long pond remained a priority, and that he was looking at various options including an excavator mounted on a pontoon, as had been used for the work at Little Baddow sluices. It was suggested that it might be a useful investment for Essex Waterways to purchase its own pontoon should one come on the market at a good price.

### **Other Business**

- 9. (a) Neil Edwards introduced a Policy Paper for Employees on Data Protection duties, which had been brought into use within IWA. The board endorsed the policy and asked that training be made available to relevant Essex Waterways employees.
- (b) [Confidential item]
- (c) [Confidential item]
- (d) Maldon District Council had enquired about ownership of the alleyway between the development land and Basin Road. Colin Edmond advised that so far as he recalled the drains along the path had been cleared in the past by the neighbouring householders. Neil Edwards would respond to the Council accordingly.
- (e) The board agreed that the 2019 Budget and Long Term Plan would be updated at the next meeting. Neil Edwards would add the subject to agenda.

(f) The board expressed its thanks to Craig Holliday for arrangements for this meeting.

**Future Meetings**

10. The dates for the next two meetings would be reviewed by e-mail subsequent to this meeting.

No other business was transacted and the meeting closed at 3.20 p.m.