

Minutes of the meeting of the board of directors held at Paper Mill Lock, Little Baddow, Chelmsford, CM3 4BS at 10.00 a.m. on Monday 1st October 2018.

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

In Attendance: David Smart

Apologies for absence: Jim Jenkins

Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

1. The minutes of the board meeting held on 4th July 2018, 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) David Smart reported that [a] residential caretaker had a minor injury to his leg from a stone thrown up from a strimmer.
- (b) David Smart reported that Joanne Russell had fallen off the vessel owned by the tea room (Cafell), where she also worked part-time, and was unlikely to be available to crew Victoria for the rest of the season.
- (c) [Confidential item].
- (d) Roy Chandler reported that a boater had suffered a break in at his boat at Sandford Mill. The board suggested that a note be added in the next newsletter to warn other boat owners to be careful to keep their boats secure.

Finance

3. (a) The board noted the income and expenditure report for the seven months to 31st July 2018, which had been circulated with the agenda. Andrew Overy had apologised that figures to 31st August were not yet available. Income was largely to budget, and expenditure was a little below budget. There were no significant items requiring the board's attention, other than that the gates for Beeleigh had been paid for, and reimbursement had been received from Essex & Suffolk Water. David Carrington reported that Essex Waterways had achieved its reserves target, and that generally the finances were encouraging.
- (b) A more detailed schedule showing income and expenditure to 31st August for Victoria trip boat had been circulated with the agenda. The target number of trips for the year would not quite be met, and catering income was below budget, but the customer reaction had been very good to date, and the operation was showing a fair revenue profit. The board suggested that more ticket trips and 'turn-up and go' trips might be run in 2019 where there were no charter bookings on weekend days in the summer. Craig Holliday offered to help draw up a more detailed business plan, in conjunction with David Smart, for the operation for next year and going forward.

- (c) The schedule of fees and charges for 2018 had been circulated with the agenda with a proposal to raise mooring fees by 2.5% with effect from 1st January 2019. This was agreed. As they were unused the separate annual and three-monthly licence rates for trail boats would be discontinued. The one-day canoe licence would remain at £5 but other charges in this category would rise by 2.5%. Each of the Heybridge visitor rates would be increased by £1.00 per vessel per day. The crane charges would remain unchanged, but simplified to £20 per metre regardless of size of vessel. The annual canoe storage rate would rise to £80 per annum. The camping charges should be added to the schedule, and increased subject to David Smart consulting Laura Ellis, the Hoe Mill caretaker. The board considered whether the various visitor rates were too complex, and it was agreed that these needed to be reviewed outside the meeting and tidied up to make them more professionally presented and user-friendly.
- (d) The board agreed to hold a separate meeting to discuss the budget for 2019, including salaries. Fees for Victoria would also be considered at that meeting, and in preparation David Smart and Craig Holliday would review figures as part of the business plan. Bookings for trips in 2019 would be honoured at 2018 rates where bookings were made before 1st December 2018.
- (e) Neil Edwards informed the board that Barclays Bank had given notice that bank charges would be levied on IWA's accounts from November.

Staff, Volunteer and Management Arrangements

- 4. (a) David Smart reported that he had interviewed three candidates for the trainee lengthsmen post, and had one more candidate to interview on 2nd October. The board authorised David Smart to make an appointment and to get the new post holder in place as soon as possible.
- (b) Christine Walsh had given notice that she wished to retire on 31st December. David Smart and Sarah Phillips had visited Head Office at Chesham to gain a better understanding of the work currently undertaken there, and considered that it would be advantageous if some of the work currently undertaken by Christine could be migrated to be undertaken at Paper Mill, but that bulk mail-outs, invoicing and finance work would need to remain at Chesham. Sarah Phillips would be prepared to work an extra day to absorb some of the work. One area of concern was whether the broadband connection was adequate to do the work at Paper Mill. There was also a need to ensure there was sufficient staff capacity at Paper Mill. The board agreed that all mooring agreements, licences and similar documents needed to be held in electronic format so that they were accessible to staff on the Navigation as well as from Chesham.
- (c) [Confidential discussion] The board suggested that a seasonal assistant lockkeeper for Heybridge ought to be considered and authorised David Smart to recruit someone to this role if he identified a suitable candidate. The board delegated to David Smart to consider filling the [residential lockkeeper] vacancies at Paper Mill and Heybridge if suitable post holders could be identified, or otherwise to consider alternatives provided the planning conditions could be adhered to.

Heybridge Sea Lock

- 5. David Smart reported that he and Grant Everiss had been operating the caisson gate at Heybridge Sea Lock during the reliability-testing phase. This would be followed by a twelve month period where Essex & Suffolk Water's contractors, IWS, would have maintenance obligations. There had been some teething issues and it had taken a while to get to understand the software as the controls were quite complex. [Detail omitted] Craig Holliday had arranged for a draft Memorandum of Understanding to be provided by Essex & Suffolk Water, and this was being reviewed so that it could be finalised.

Beeleigh and Rushes Lock Gate Replacements

6. (a) David Smart reported that Beeleigh Lock was becoming difficult to operate as the cill was thought to have developed a leak. The new gates had been built, invoiced for, paid and reimbursement received from Essex & Suffolk Water. Hargreaves had been asked to fit the gates as soon as possible, but had not yet given a date to doing so owing to staff shortages. Craig Holliday explained there was some urgency to fit the new gates for purposes of water retention, which the board accepted. David Smart would press Hargreaves for early advice of when they could attend, and if necessary consider installing the gates with Essex Waterways staff under supervision from Hargreaves' manager. The board asked David Smart to keep a close watch on Beeleigh Lock, and to close it if the lock were to deteriorate to a situation that might become unsafe.
- (b) David Smart reported that Rushes Lock was still operating satisfactorily, although there was concern at the delay in installing new gates, as Hargreaves had yet to visit to measure up so that building the gates could commence.
- (c) Roy Chandler reported that the replacement of the Beeleigh Flood Gate was now unlikely to take place as part of the flood relief scheme for the North Heybridge Garden Suburb development.

Trip Boat and other Trading at Heybridge

7. (a) The vessel *Albert* was on the hard-standing at Heybridge, but required some welding work to raise the gas locker opening before being lifted back in the water. Re-painting work would be undertaken when the boat was back in the water.
- (b) David Smart reported that Mark Coverly has ceased his operation at the end of September, and agreement had been reached [detail omitted]. A business plan for a proposed operation of *Albert*, sale of tickers and any catering and visitor provision needed to be considered. Roy Chandler briefed the board on the piecemeal process by which planning applications had been gained for the site.

Springfield Basin

8. (a) [Confidential item]
- (b) Neil Edwards reported that an initial payment of [an amount] had been received from Vertex Point (Springfield Basin) Ltd in respect of ground rents due, and that further payments were being collected by the property management company from lease holders.
- (c) Roy Chandler reported that Crown Build was due to start work on the wharf walls at Springfield Basin in November. The board agreed that works would need to be undertaken within the funding available.

Yacht Stores

9. (a) Neil Edwards had circulated with the agenda a paper outlining a proposed policy for managing the yacht stores. The policy was agreed.
- (b) [Confidential item].

- (c) The board agreed that fees for the yacht store licences would increase by 25% with effect from 1st January 2019 for those sheds with a footprint greater than 12.5 m² but that the licence fees for smaller yacht stores would remain unchanged from 2018 rates. Neil Edwards would arrange with Christine Walsh for notice to be given.

Matters of Report

- 10. 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 and certification held were also circulated. The following were amongst the points noted:
 - (a) Roy Chandler reported that he had attended a meeting with the owners of Lockside Marina, who wished to undertake maintenance refurbishment of the pontoons and woodwork within the marina and the landing stage above Springfield Lock. The board agreed that Essex Waterways Ltd should undertake the repairs to the lock landing stage.
 - (b) David Smart reported a discussion with Essex River Trust who had some grant funding for urban waterway improvements. He had proposed a possible application for funding to assist dredging, and a recycled vessel and rubbish collection operation, and would follow this up.
 - (c) David Smart reported that Chelmer Canal Trust and Essex Waterways Ltd had made an application to Essex & Suffolk Water's Branch Out funding for [an amount] for costs towards Pennywort removal costs, which had been successful. The board asked that this news be added into the newsletter.
 - (d) Neil Edwards had discussed with Roy Sutton the possibility of a visit to undertake some weir inspections. Craig Holliday advised that Essex & Suffolk Water would inspect Beeleigh Weir within the next two weeks. David Smart had undertaken further asset inspections since the Navigation Management report had been prepared. Colin Edmond advised that Jim Dines had some pontoons for sale. David Smart would prepare a dredging business plan and investigate the pontoons with Jim Dines.
 - (e) Roy Chandler reported that Countryside Properties had submitted a new planning application for the North Heybridge Garden Suburb with a revised flood relief scheme, which had led to adverse public comment, and would not allow for the replacement of Beeleigh Flood Lock.. A pre-application meeting between a riparian landowner and Maldon District Council had been fairly positive, albeit a few issues to be addressed had been identified.
 - (f) David Smart reported a visit from Little Baddow Parish Council, which indicated the Council's ongoing concern about the number of vehicles parked along the roadside on North Hill.
 - (g) David Smart reported that Chelmsford Sea Scouts had moved to the Black Shed and that their four small boats were now moored in the marina in exchange for undertaking some maintenance works around Springfield Basin. The Sea Scouts had received instruction on operating the lift bridge to the marina.
 - (h) Roy Chandler reported that Springfield Barges had advertised their office barge for rent either on a 'per desk' or 'whole barge' basis. The pontoon required refurbishment.

Other Business

9. (a) David Smart reported that 10K run had successfully taken place on 16th September and that he hoped to hand over future management of the event to a group of runners based in Braintree. He had said to them that they need to put forward firm proposals.
- (b) John Pomfret reported that he had attended an AINA meeting on 27th September on which the sole topic was the Boat Safety Scheme. John would prepare some notes and circulate them to the board shortly.
- (c) [Confidential item]

Future Meetings

10. The dates for the next two meetings would be Friday 7th December (primarily for budget and finance issues) and then Friday 4th January 2019

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