

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 27th April 2017
at Woodbridge Community Hall at 7.30pm

Apologies for absence: Carolyn Gibbins, David and Jan Hocking, Jeremy Atkins, John Smith, Roger Challis and Jo Lubbock.

Minutes of the AGM held on 28th April 2016: acceptance was proposed by Neil Winship, seconded by Ed Stanford and agreed unanimously.

Matters arising: There were none.

Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2016: The treasurer, James Goldsworthy, reported that the Association is financially sound with an increasing membership; he said that additional members not only brought in subscriptions but greater influence. The subscriptions last year totalled over £3000 and the Association has £10,000 in the Bank. The principal expenditures were £2000 for printing 'The Deben' and a £500 donation to support the Woodbridge Riverside Trust. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Anne Moore and seconded by Sarah Zins and accepted unanimously.

Appointment of Examiner for the 2017 accounts: Peter Thubron was proposed by Peter Jones, seconded by Ted Evans and carried unanimously.

Chairman's report: The chairman, Robin Whittle, said that his report had been printed in the recent edition of 'The Deben'. He wished to add that the laying of the cable from the Offshore Windfarm had started and was going from Bawdsey to Waldringfield to Martlesham Creek. This required two tunnels under the river and a 35metre width of land across the countryside.

Peter Clay followed the report with a vote of thanks for the work done by the chairman during his term of office.

Robert Simper took the Chair

Elections: Sarah Zins had been proposed by the committee to become the chairman of the River Deben Association; at the meeting the members agreed unanimously.

Sarah Zins took the chair.

It was agreed that the officers and committee members could be proposed en bloc as follows:

For re-election: Treasurer – James Goldsworthy

Committee members for re-election in a 3 year rotation: David Bucknell, Peter Clay and Anne Moore.

New committee members for election: Alan Comber (Web Manager), Richard Verrill and the retiring chairman, Robin Whittle.

These were proposed by Wendy Brown and seconded by Mike Bizzey and agreed unanimously.

The new Chairman gave the members a short resume of her life and love of the River.

AOB: Robert Simper said that the Association under Robin Whittle's charge had continued to be an independent pressure group to keep the River Deben the same and make its use possible for everyone. Robin had carried out these duties with great energy but was also an excellent administrator and an enthusiast for getting wrongs righted. He thanked Robin very sincerely for his time in office.

Jon Wilkins noted that the Association was in favour of a coastal path from Bawdsey to Ramsholt, despite the opposition of the Deben Estuary Partnership, and asked why this was the case.

Sarah Zins replied that the RDA had undertaken a survey in 2012 in which some members had expressed interest in such a footpath and that the committee had then met on 31 May, 2013 and had agreed that they would like to see a continuous footpath from Bawdsey to Wilford Bridge along the north east bank.

Robin then read out the Association's formal position on access to the Deben, which is published on the website.

Graham Henderson noted that Natural England is tasked with creating a coastal footpath around England, but said the the Deben Estuary Partnership would like to see the ferry from Bawdsey to Felixstowe operating on a year round basis instead of a footpath.

Anne Moore said that the RDA decision about the path was taken by a committee of 6 people and not the membership.

Ed Stanford asked for a show of hands concerning the path from Bawdsey to Ramsholt and those in favour 21 and those against 23. There were about 100 people in the audience.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm and, after a break for refreshments, Dr Therese Coffey, Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal and Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) was welcomed to the meeting. She addressed the Association on matters pertaining to the River and to a new initiative on natural capital. Her short address was followed by a talk entitled "The Three Lives of Bawdsey Manor" by Robert Simper.