

**DRAFT**  
**RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION**

**Minutes of Committee meeting held on Monday 5th March 2018 at 1 Lime Kiln Quay,  
Woodbridge IP12 1BD**

**1. Present and apologies**

**Present:** Sarah Zins (Chair), Jane Alexander, Peter Clay, Veronica Falconer, Jim Goldsworthy, Richard Verrill, Kate Laydon, Robin Whittle.

**Apologies:** David Bucknell, Alan Comber, Sam Jennings, Anne Moore, Robert Simper

**2. Declarations of Interest**

SZ asked for declarations to be made during the meeting if relevant.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2018**

The minutes were approved with no amendments.

**4. Matters arising**

Flood defences: SZ confirmed that flood defences are now a standing agenda item.

Saltmarsh outing: RW said that RS has agreed to take a group on his boat when the weather has improved, possibly in May. Two groups were proposed, one for technical investigation and another for more general viewing.

**Action: RW to liaise with RS and make necessary arrangements**

Spring 2018 edition of The River: DB is finalising the copy. SZ thanked those who have contributed articles.

Summer boat trip for RDA members: SZ is yet to hire a boat and speaker for river trips which are to be offered to members on a first come first served basis.

**Action: SZ to hire boat and speaker**

Puddles on river wall: SZ has met the local EA officer, Emmett Klipalo, and alerted him to the puddling on the river wall. SZ has his contact details and will be able to pass on any other related concerns of members.

RDA news in local publications: KL circulated copies of local free publications which have featured articles related to RDA's saltmarsh work.

**Action: SZ to send publication list to the Suffolk Saltmarsh Project Board**

**5. Change of Committee Members**

SZ said that JA will stand for appointment as Secretary and KL as a committee member at the 2018 AGM. There are no other proposed changes.

**6. Accounts and Membership to date**

JG said two new members had joined using the online form. The bank balance stands at £9,892.36 with subscriptions in 2018 totalling £153 ahead of the main 1<sup>st</sup> April renewals.

**7. Spring Meeting 2018**

SZ confirmed the booking of the Abbey Hall and the speaker for the meeting on 24 April. The agenda has been circulated. There was a discussion about membership fees and whether they should be raised. JG restated his wish to increase the membership fee to £6 for individuals and £10 for couples and with a membership of 900, an increase of £1 per member would make a significant difference.

VF said it was important that the RDA was shown to be proactive and useful to the community and said increased fees would enable RDA support for other river organisations making applications for further funding. A majority agreed that the RDA's priority is growth in membership, as numbers are important for influence as a pressure group, and that as there is no immediate call for expenditure, an increase should be delayed until 2019/20. The increase will be announced at the 2018 AGM. It was agreed that the RDA would continue to fund saltmarsh work and build up an emergency contingency fund should a flood event necessitate expenditure. PC declared his interest as a member of the Riverside Trust and said the RDA may be asked to contribute to the building of the longship for the museum. SZ said two £500 gifts have already been made and any further requests would be considered at the time.

**Action: SZ will announce a proposed increase of the membership fee from 2019 at the 2018 AGM.**

#### **8. Report from Suffolk Coast Forum meetings**

No meetings held since last RDA committee meeting. Next meeting on 09/05/2018.

#### **9. Report from the DEP meeting on 09/02/2018**

SZ updated the committee on recent business discussed at the DEP meeting including flood defences (see 10 below).

**Action: SZ to attend the next DEP meeting on 23 March.**

#### **10. Flood defences**

SZ reported on discussions about flood defence work at FC1 (Bawdsey marshes). It is very unlikely that it will be worth applying to the Environment Agency for funding for this work. The cost is currently estimated to be in the region of £1.3m.

**Action: SZ to meet with David Kemp of the EA.**

#### **11. Saltmarshes**

The Suffolk Saltmarsh Group (SSG) is the strategic body for the various estuary saltmarsh groups in East Suffolk. The new chair – Karen Thomas - has set up 4 working groups. SZ will join those dealing with Licensing and Consenting and Engagement and RW will attend the Evidence, Data, Monitoring and Analysis group. The 4<sup>th</sup> group will focus on fundraising. RW has submitted an application for a maximum grant of £2000 to fund a survey into the rate of erosion and accretion of the saltmarshes along the Deben. RW reported that interest in providing volunteers to assist with surveying the saltmarshes has been received from Woodbridge School. Also, the Marine Biology department at the University of Suffolk have expressed an interest in research on the effect of shore crabs on saltmarshes as a possible subject for a PhD thesis. RW reported on a separate EA funded pilot study of saltmarshes near Kyson Point for which he has offered the use of his electronic measuring equipment.

**Action: RW to pursue possibilities of recruiting volunteers for the survey and academic research by the University of Suffolk.**

#### **12. Planning Applications and new construction**

There was nothing to report on the development of Melton Hill. VF reported on various planning applications along the river but as none will be visible from the water, the RDA will not take action. SZ said that the DEP wish to take a more active role monitoring planning applications along the river.

### **13. Wildlife**

RV reported that the UK and EU have put a complete ban on the removal of bass of any size from the river which makes a survey of numbers impossible. His article written for the Spring newsletter includes a report from EIFCA stating that bass stock levels have plummeted.

RV raised the difficulty of finding links on the RDA website to past articles on wildlife in the River and asked for a drop-down menu for Wildlife articles and links to other local wildlife groups.

The Chair of the Woodbridge RSPB has agreed to write an article on birds found on the Deben for the newsletter.

### **14. Footpaths and access**

There was no progress to report from Natural England regarding their Coastal Path project.

### **15. Woodbridge Riverside Trust update**

PC reported that the freehold has now passed to the Town Council but that the WRT are not prepared to sign the lease until full access to the slipway is granted rather than it being under licence which is the Town Council's preferred method. The Land Registry issue between the developer and the Town Council has now been resolved.

### **16. Website including news updates**

SZ thanked AC for uploading all back copies of The Deben magazine on to the RDA website and will ask him to improve the navigation of the site. KL's offer to take over responsibility for updating the news section of the site was gratefully accepted. RV suggested the Waldringfield Wildlife Group could supply information on birds to be found on and near the river. There was a discussion about SZ's wish to find an archivist to catalogue all past articles and it was decided that an index of article titles on the website would suffice.

**Action: SZ to ask AC to improve website navigation and KL to contact local river-related organisations for news items for the RDA website.**

### **17. Spring 2018 edition of The Deben**

The magazine will be sent out before 24 March and SZ asked for volunteers to help with envelope stuffing.

### **18. Any other business**

KL reminded the committee of the need to comply with new General Data Protection Regulation due to come into force in May.

**Action: SZ to investigate steps to be taken to ensure compliance.**

The issue of sewage being discharged from houseboats and yachts into the river was raised and will be an agenda item at the May meeting.

**Action: SZ to add sewage discharge to the May meeting agenda.**

RW will attend the Bawdsey Coastline meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March and VF is to attend the Suffolk Coast Against Retreat (SCAR) meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March.

**Action: RW and VF to report back to the RDA.**

Refreshments at the AGM

SZ will buy the tea and coffee and arrange helpers to serve and clear away.

**Action: SZ to buy tea and coffee for approx. 80 people.**

JG said communicating with the membership would be cheaper and more efficient via email but raised the issue of some member's email addresses being out of date. It was noted that specific agreement to opt in to receiving communication via email and/or post is needed to comply with data protection regulations and that this could be combined with asking for current contact details.

**Action: SZ to update the membership form to be included in the next magazine.**

The next meeting will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May at Saxon House, 83 Ipswich Road, Woodbridge IP12 4BT