

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION MINUTES

Minutes of Committee meeting on 13th January 2020 at 6.00 pm at 1 Lime Kiln Quay

1. Present and Apologies

Present: Sarah Zins (Chair), Jane Alexander, Peter Clay, Jim Goldsworthy, Jane Haviland, Michael Holland, Matt Lis, Robert Simper, Richard Verrill, Robin Whittle

Observing: Julia Jones, Moray McPhail, Mark Sargeantson

Apologies were received from Sam Jennings.

2. Committee and Observers

SZ welcomed Moray MacPhail and Mark Sargeantson who were attending the meeting as observers and potential new Committee members. Introductions were made and MM and MS gave brief summaries of their background and interest in joining the Committee.

3. Declarations of Interest

Matt Lis is Manager of the Woodbridge Boatyard, renovators of the Deben Cherub, 'Ariel'.

4. Minutes of the meeting of 13th November 2019

One amendment was made relating to the planning application at Melton Hill. The amended minutes will be published on the RDA website. **[Action SZ to send minutes to Alan Comber to publish]**

5. Accounts and Membership to Date

SZ asked for suggestions of anyone qualified and willing to scrutinise the 2019 financial statement.

[PC to approach his contact]

Total income in 2019 was £4,185.49, with £2,914 coming from subscriptions. Total expenditure was £3,583.93. Funds available amount to £3,960.82 with a further £7K being held in an interest-bearing bond. JG confirmed that following a year end analysis for 2019, the membership stands at 817.

6. Feedback from RDA Activities

Autumn Meeting. The Committee hoped that the audience had been given food for thought to review action they could take to enhance local water quality.

7. AGM – 30th April 2020

Ideas on who might be invited to speak at the AGM were discussed.

[SZ to approach a speaker on the topic of fish stocks on the East coast]

8. Report from the DEP Meeting – 16 December 2019

A website is being set up for the DEP. As reported at the previous meeting, work will start on Flood Cell 4 in August 2020 and the work on Flood Cell 1 is going out to tender again, with Andrew Hawes as project manager and it is proposed that enabling development will fund the work. The Water Management Association has opined that funding might be available from the FDiGA, but as this will be governed by the number of houses affected, it is unlikely to be economically viable. SZ has contacted the Chair of the DEP to discuss the complex issues arising in relation to enabling development. RW expressed his interest in being part of any future discussions on specification for the works.

SZ circulated a paper on a proposed collaborative exercise between Simon Read (SR) and Helena Burningham (from UCL) focussing on the awareness of change and the public perception of landscape value. Over a two-year period six workshops will be held. RW gave some background on the project which relates to the updating of the Deben Estuary Plan and the Local Plan. Funding of £20K has been secured and a series of workshops are planned throughout 2020/21, the first being in February-March at Bawdsey Manor and a final exhibition in the Tin Chapel at Bawdsey in December 2021.

[Action: SZ to offer to publish Simon Read's appeal for volunteers on the website]

9. Report from the SCF meeting on 13/11/19

Minutes from this meeting are yet to be circulated.

10. Flood Defences

RW confirmed that work on Flood Cell 4 (Shottisham) is planned for August 2020.

11. Saltmarshes

RW reported that mud dredged from up-river and placed on Loder's Island very quickly developed into saltmarshes and he feels could therefore be a helpful contribution to sections of the river wall requiring reinforcement. David Kemp of the Environment Agency is supportive of RW's research but the MMO are yet to be convinced. The Committee fully backed RW and agreed that evident silting at Kyson, in particular, could be addressed by dredging and that this mud could be usefully employed elsewhere on the river.

An interactive website is being developed so that any saltmarsh interventions can be logged. In the meantime, SZ will pass on any relevant information to Peter Cosgrove of Natural England and will arrange for him to meet Andrew Hawes.

12. Planning Applications and new construction

- a. **Whisstocks Restaurant.** ML reported that no conclusions were reached at the latest meeting held on 17th December. MS, in his capacity as a chartered surveyor described the difficulties in finding tenants for commercial properties. It was agreed that footfall to the area is greatly affected by the closure of the floodgate and, to a lesser extent, by the lack of anywhere for sailors to land nearby. ML said he has been asked by the Town Council to quote for the building of a pontoon, but insufficient funds were available at the time and no progress has been made.

One plan proposed to improve footfall is to create cycle tracks along the river, but the Committee agreed this would need to be done in such a way as to preserve the safety of pedestrians.

[Action: SZ to contact the Town Harbour Master to stress the importance of the flood gates being kept open when there is no flood risk]

- b. **Melton Hill** –MH reported that the outcome of the appeal by the developer against refusal of application 2 should be available by the end of January. Application 3 has been granted permission, subject to conditions, but a group of local interested parties are evaluating the best time to submit a Judicial Review in an attempt to quash this decision. ESC advise that if the appeal is refused, and application 2 therefore not permitted, the original sale contract with the developer will terminate. This in turn should lead to a new bidding process to find a suitable developer for the site since application 3 will be outside the contract and incapable of completion without a contract to acquire the land. A successful JR (based on incorrect interpretation of planning law and non-compliant affordable housing) will quash the permission for application 3 and again necessitate ESC remarketing the site.
- c. **Creek Cottage, Broom Heath** – following the RDA's opposition to the original application for planning permission, the resubmitted plans for a smaller building with restrictions on exterior lighting have been approved by the AONB and permission has been granted.
- d. **The Sea Scouts** have applied to extend their building next to Whisstocks. The enlarged space will provide meeting rooms and will enable the Sea Scouts to recruit more members. All present agreed to support the development, which is not visible from the river.

13. Wildlife

RV is to meet the wildlife photographer, Sally Westbrook who has expressed an interest in providing photographs and information about birds for The Deben magazine.

[Action: RV to arrange a meeting in May]

14. Footpaths and Access

RW has heard from Giles Merritt that discussions with landowners are continuing relating to the stretch of the Coast Path between Bawdsey and Ramsholt which is proposed to be below the river wall. There was a discussion on the likelihood of walkers preferring to walk on top of the wall, whether this can be policed, and the risk of disturbing birds, particularly if the walkers have dogs. SZ said the RDA are in favour of the path following the river as much as possible and that Natural England will take protection of wildlife into consideration when planning the route.

15. Website including news updates

The newly set up RDA Instagram account already has 97 followers and the Facebook page has had 132 likes. SZ thanked JJ for inspiring the adoption of social media and ML for setting it up. ML said several keen photographers have submitted pictures and he hopes activity will grow organically as more posts and pictures are added. MM said Maritime Woodbridge have a Facebook page and he will encourage their news and photos to be shared with the RDA.

[Action: SZ to invite the Woodbridge Society to post news on the Facebook page]

16. Spring edition of the Deben

JJ has received several articles for publication in the Spring edition of the Deben and asked that any other texts be submitted before the end of the month as time is needed to complete the new layout, which will be in magazine format. The Committee agreed that extra copies should be printed to allow for them to be available for sale to non-members in outlets such as Browsers to encourage wider membership. It was agreed that the cost per copy should be more than that paid by members and that outlets would be offered 50% of all takings. JG said he would prefer to receive a lump sum per edition, rather than monthly payments from each outlet. JJ's request to pay Claudia Wyatt to include her map of the whole river in each edition, was agreed by the Committee. SZ thanked JJ for her efforts and ideas for future editions of the River. **[SZ to check the Constitution for issues about sale of the magazine]**

17. AOB

- a. A suggestion from Kate Laydon that efforts should be made to recruit Young Ambassadors to the RDA was discussed. All those present were in favour of asking SJ to be asked to take the lead. **[Action: SZ to ask SJ to recruit Young Ambassadors from the Sea Scouts and to include an appeal for contributions to the Deben from under 18 year olds]**
- b. SZ is keen to set up a 'Sewage Forum' with the initial aim of finding out the extent of the problem. **[Action: SZ to set up forum and contact Jonathan Simperts re water testing]**
- c. JG proposed that the increased income from subscriptions from April could be spent on securing a professional speaker for the AGM or Autumn meeting. It was agreed this could be an added attraction to members and will be borne in mind.
- d. JJ asked for information about the sign prohibiting landing at the Tips and whether this was legally enforceable. It was agreed that SZ should make a friendly approach to the landlord. The Waldringfield HM will be asked whether he can supply a photograph of the sign ahead of the meeting.
[Action: SZ to approach Mr Clarke of Methersgate Hall and Tony Lyons]
- e. ML reported that the Deben Cherub, 'Ariel' has been nominated for the classic boat of the year award and encouraged the Committee to vote for it. Fox's and Spirit Yachts are also in line for awards in other awards and the strength of local boatyards was applauded.

[Action: ML to send details to SZ for inclusion on the RDA website to encourage members to vote.]

Dates of next meetings:

Wednesday 18 March – 6pm at 1 Lime Kiln Quay	Thursday 16 July
RDA AGM – Thursday 30th April – 6pm at	Wednesday 16 September
Woodbridge Community Hall	Wednesday 11 November
Thursday 14 May	Wednesday 20 January 2021