

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION

3rd Draft Minutes of a meeting held via Zoom on Wednesday, 16th September 2020

- 1. Present:** Joeske Van Walsum (Chair), Jane Alexander, Pauline Bloomfield, Peter Clay, Gary Doggett, Liz Hattan, Jane Haviland, Michael Holland, Oliver Houchell, Moray MacPhail, Sarah Zins

Apologies: Mat Lis, Robert Simper, Richard Verrill

In attendance: Julia Jones

- 2. Minutes of meeting held on 30 June 2020**

No changes were requested and SZ proposed that the minutes be approved. Seconded by JH.

[Action: JVW to post Minutes on RDA website]

- 3. Matters arising**

All issues to be addressed during the meeting.

- 4. Strategy**

JVW stated his aim to increase the membership and profile of the RDA as a lobbying and pressure group with a focus on nature and the environment. A meeting has been held with the DEP, whose main focus is flood risk management (but see their remit as wider) and both organisations have agreed the need to strengthen the identities of each organisation and for mutual co-operation. It was agreed that JVW, JH and OH would represent the RDA at meetings with the DEP to iron out who leads on what, how we can support each other and areas where each goes its own way. **[Action: JVW, JH and OH to meet with Christine Block and team]**

- 5. Revision of Deben Estuary Plan**

It was agreed that JH and OH would be the RDA contributors to the revision of the Deben Estuary Plan.

- 6. Appointment of 2nd Vice Chair**

JVW proposed the appointment of JH in addition to SZ as Vice Chair. This was unanimously agreed.

[Action: JH to be appointed Vice Chair]

- 7. Committee members and functions**

The draft list of Committee members and their responsibilities was discussed. JA's intention to stand down as Secretary at the next AGM was noted with regret and JVW asked for suggestions for a replacement. A few amendments to the list were agreed, and in accordance with the current Constitution, those who have joined the Committee since the last AGM will be listed as Co-opted Committee members until formally appointed at the AGM. The retirement of Jim Goldsworthy as Treasurer and Membership Secretary was noted and JVW confirmed that a thank you card and gift has been arranged to express the RDA's gratitude for his work and contribution during his time on the Committee.

[Action: JVW to amend Committee list as agreed and send to JJ for inclusion in the next edition of The Deben]

- 8. Ben Grundy**

JVW had met with Ben Grundy following his expression of interest in joining the RDA Committee. Mr Grundy is a tug boat captain at the Port of Felixstowe. With his father he also carries out dredging of the Deben and his considerable knowledge of the river was noted with interest.. Following a discussion about the number of new members of the Committee needing to be assimilated and the fact that the gaps of knowledge or expertise on the committee had not been fully

assessed as yet, it was agreed that no further new committee members (other than a Secretary) would be appointed for the time being and therefore no immediate action would be taken, but Mr Grundy's interest would be noted.

[Action: JWV to inform Ben Grundy of the situation]

9. Accounts

GD said he hopes to obtain full access to the administration of the accounts in the next few weeks, following his taking over as Treasurer. He confirmed that RDA currently has available funds of just under £13K. **[Action: GS to complete handover of accounts from JG as soon as possible]**

10. Membership

MM has identified those members who are currently under-paying their subscription, those who are over-paying, some non-payers and a few payers for whom there are no records. It was noted that several people have experienced difficulties in setting up payments for membership via the website and correcting this was agreed as a priority. Some over-payers have been contacted and have expressed their preference for any excess to be retained by the RDA as they consider the membership fee to be too low. MM proposed that non-payers should be sent the next edition of The Deben with a note explaining that their membership has lapsed and inviting them to renew.

It was agreed that if the RDA wishes to be considered a vibrant and active organisation, an engaged membership was needed.

It was agreed to have car stickers printed for paid up members.

[Action: MM and GD to contact non-payers and confirm the fully paid up membership. Car stickers to be ordered and distributed]

11. Ideas for how we can further develop the RDA emphasis on Nature

JWV said that RV feels unable to lead on nature, at this moment. It was agreed that a subcommittee would be formed, to include JH, LH and OH. It was left open who would lead this.

JH said RV's articles on wildlife to be found in the Deben valley, coming as they do from a lay perspective, were a joy to read.

JWV suggested that a series of talks on nature would strengthen the identity of the RDA and its emphasis on nature. These could be held on a regular basis, either via YouTube or Zoom until such time as larger meetings can be held. The idea was welcomed and JH will lead on this

SZ outlined a fundraising campaign recently launched by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to bring nature back to the Suffolk river valleys. It was agreed that SZ would approach the SWT to find out whether the RDA could be involved in the campaign where it relates to the Deben valley.

[Action: JH to start planning series of Talks. SZ to contact SWT to investigate RDA's potential involvement in the campaign]

12 and 13: Increasing membership/making membership more attractive/social events

The stated aim of the RDA is to cherish the river holistically and to celebrate all its various aspects and appeal to those who enjoy it both on and beside the water.

PB had a number of ideas which were to be looked at and discussed at the next meeting and she will be drafting a diary of events for when Covid allows, to attract more members.

MM, Chair of Maritime Woodbridge, raised the possibility of the RDA taking over its organisation. There was enthusiasm for this proposal. JVW said this would raise the profile of the RDA, particularly to families and schools but he thought it might possibly be too soon to take on such a large undertaking and that he wanted to strengthen the focus on nature first. On the other hand it was agreed that there was no big rush on the Maritime Woodbridge proposal as the next festival was due only for September 21. So providing we strengthen the emphasis on nature now, we would have a balanced picture.

JJ was keen to avoid further evidence of the RDA being Woodbridge centric and it was agreed that the project could become a Deben Festival.

MM agreed to discuss with the MW committee whether it would be feasible or appropriate for RDA to run this festival.

[Action: JVW, MM, PB and GD to explore the idea of RDA taking over Maritime Woodbridge and turning it in to a Deben Festival. MM to discuss with MW committee whether it would be feasible or appropriate for RDA to run this festival

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14. Update re Ferry

It was agreed that the reinstating of the Ferry, while not necessarily as an RDA initiative, was a good project. JVW said he would do all he could to facilitate its progress. Eric Reynolds, the owner of Woodbridge Boatyard, has agreed to lead.

15. AGM 2020

The delayed AGM will take place via Zoom at 6.30pm on 18th November. The form of the meeting was discussed and SZ will try and work out the detail. The meeting should probably be limited to formalities plus a short talk or film only, but with the stated hope to return to a full meeting with a speaker in 2021. JH and JJ agreed to consider speakers for a short talk online after the AGM business has been completed.

[Action: The AGM notice to be published in the autumn edition of The Deben and SZ to send Zoom invitations to Committee members and those members wishing to attend]

[PC left the meeting]

16. Confirmation of meeting time.

It was agreed that future meetings would start at 6.30pm and last no longer than 90 minutes.

17. Planning applications

Melton Hill: MH said there was still no verdict on the judicial review.

Riverside development at Waldringfield: Planning permission for the new development has now been approved but with concessions regarding lighting as per RDA's objections. The request to limit the height of the new build was not achieved as a height reduction had already been enforced. MH asked that Committee members who may have a connection to future planning applications should inform him in advance.

18. Website / Social media

JJ requested help in maintaining the RDA's social media presence. PB agreed to administer the facebook page. OH said Instagram would reach a wider, younger audience. She raised the possibility of having a blog on the website where longer or more esoteric articles could be published. OH and JH agreed but added the importance of keeping the blogs updated. OH offered to help build a site with blogs but said that he did not have sufficient time available to maintain it. SZ said this

highlights the expertise gap in the Committee and the need for someone who loved social media and was prepared to run accounts on behalf of the RDA.

[Action: JJ to talk to Alan Comber about the possibility of adding the facility to post blogs on the RDA website. PB to be added as administrator of RDA Facebook page]

19. Heritage Harbour Status

There was no news.

20. Constitution

MH said the work of the sub-committee continues and that an interim report on the review of the Constitution was forthcoming and would include recent changes to the Committee.

MM raised the question of the start date for annual membership as some members renew annually in April, while others renew 12 months after joining. MH said this would require a vote at the AGM and asked that no changes are made until the sub-committee has had time to consider the issue.

[Action: Renewal dates for membership to be considered by the Constitution review sub-committee]

21. Publication of minutes on website

It was reconfirmed that we would have the Minutes posted on the RDA website, as before.

[Action: JWV to approve draft minutes before distribution to the Committee for comment. As before, we post the Minutes on the website marked Draft once approved by the Chair, and then remove the word draft and made any comments after the next meeting]

22. Autumn 2020 edition of The Deben

JJ confirmed the 30th edition was almost ready to go to print.

23. Any other business

MH said the website listed email addresses of some Committee members. It was agreed that the only email addresses to be published should be those of Chair, Membership Secretary and Editor of the RDA.

[Action: Alan Comber to be asked to remove all private email addresses from the RDA website]

JH reported on the results of the photo competition and asked that congratulations to all entrants be minuted. The names of the winners and runners-up of the 15-18 and 10-14 age groups will be printed in the autumn edition of The Deben.

JH and OH have had a constructive meeting with Andrew Hawes regarding flood defences.

[Action: JH to circulate her notes on the meeting to the Committee]

JWV thanked everyone for their time and the meeting was closed.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:

Wednesday 11 November 6.30 pm

Wednesday 18 November AGM 6.30 pm

Wednesday 20 January 2021 6.30 pm