

Minutes of a meeting of the River Deben Association Committee held via Zoom on 21 July 2020

Present: Joeske Van Walsum - Chairman; Jane Alexander, Jim Goldsworthy, Jane Haviland, Michael Holland, Moray MacPhail, Robert Simper, Richard Verrill, Sarah Zins

Observers: Pauline Bloomfield, Liz Hatton, Oliver Houchell, Julia Jones (editor)

Apologies: Peter Clay, Matt Lis

2. Minutes of meetings held on 6th and 13th May 2020

The minutes were approved by JVW and seconded by RS.

3. Matters arising

Any matters to be discussed as they arise during the meeting.

4. Resignations

As previously discussed, Sam Jennings' resignation has been accepted.

JVW has circulated Past Chairman, Robin Whittle's email announcing his wish to resign. Robin's contribution to the RDA was gratefully acknowledged and JVW will write on behalf of the Committee to thank him for his work, particularly regarding saltmarshes, and accept RW's resignation.

[Action: JVW to write to RW and present a 'thank you' gift on behalf of the Committee]

5. Chair – Strategy

JVW repeated his wish to attract more family memberships of the RDA by providing activities and events, and to promote the beauty and tranquillity of the Deben. A family activities webpage will be added to the website. The letter sent out to all parents of Woodbridge School and Farlingaye has been well received.

6. Committee Membership

JVW would like all committee members to make an active contribution and has identified the potential need for the following: Membership Secretary; PR/Marketing; Social Secretary; Admin Support.

MM's offer to take over the role of Membership Secretary from JG has been gratefully accepted. A handover meeting has been arranged. On behalf of the Committee, SZ thanked JG for doing a fantastic job as Membership Secretary for the past 4 years.

[Action: MM, JG to meet on 4 August]

JVW invited potential new Committee members, Pauline Bloomfield, Liz Hatton and Oliver Houchell to outline their interest in the RDA and how they might be able to contribute to the Committee.

Pauline Bloomfield is a Parent Representative at Woodbridge School and has experience of successful event management.

Liz Hattan is an environmental lawyer specialising in water quality. She grew up in the area and is passionate about the Deben.

Oliver Houchell grew up in Woodbridge. An architect and lecturer at UCL, he has a background in engineering and a special interest in climate related responses to development.

7. Accounts

JG reported current membership stands at 836.

Total income to date: £3655.45

Total expenditure: £1842.49

Balance: £12,773.48

Despite reminders, several members are yet to renew their subscriptions and to upgrade their direct debits to the new rates. The lack of email addresses for a large number of members makes communication difficult.

8. AGM – rescheduling options

It is not known when public meetings will be possible. JVW proposed holding the 2020 AGM via Zoom, ideally before mid-September. It was agreed that November would be a more suitable time and that the AGM would be announced in the Autumn 2020 edition of The Deben, with an invitation to join the meeting sent to the first 100 members who submit their email addresses.

[Action: JVW to decide a date and time for the AGM in November and JJ to include details in the Autumn edition of The Deben, due to be published in early October]

9. Flood Defences

JVW reported on the progress made by the RDA sub-committee concerning FC1. The DEP charity, led by Peter Youngs, has appointed Andrew Hawes to draw up plans to reinforce the river wall between Ramsholt and Bawdsey. This will prevent too much water entering the estuary, thus reducing the flood risk further up-river. The reinforced walls will be sufficiently robust to withstand occasional over-topping. It is thought this scheme has the backing of the Environment Agency and despite the need for enabling development, it is thought to represent the best chance of flood defences for FC1 being achieved.

[Action: JVW to circulate details of the scheme to the committee]

10. Planning applications

MH confirmed the letter stating the RDA's concerns over the proposed development on Waldringfield Quay has been submitted. He reported that the Waldringfield Parish Council have raised similar concerns and is hopeful that limitations on the height of the new building and light pollution will be accepted.

Planning permission has been granted for Kings Knoll, Broom Heath but with all conditions related to light pollution, both external and internal, included.

A judicial review on the development on Melton Hill is expected shortly, including news on whether the third application has been quashed.

MH thanked the committee for their assistance with reviewing letters to be sent. JVW thanked MH for his work on overseeing all relevant planning applications and agreed to sign all letters sent by the RDA.

11. Website / Marketing

JJ urged all committee members to join the RDA facebook page. Photos submitted are providing a visual record of the river throughout the year.

200 copies of the Spring 2020 edition of The Deben were to have been distributed for sale by various businesses in Woodbridge and district. It was agreed that these should now be given away free. The committee were asked to email SZ if they were able to help distribute copies to suitable outlets.

[Action: JJ to produce an insert for the magazine]

12. Heritage Harbour Status for the Deben

This topic will be discussed at a later date when ML is available.

13. Constitution

MH reported on progress made so far by examining the constitutions of similar organisations. A draft summary will be circulated at the next meeting. He highlighted the need for JVW to confirm any proposed changes to the Committee to avoid a new Constitution becoming immediately out of date.

[Action: JVW to confirm revised format of the Committee. MH to circulate the draft updated Constitution at the next meeting]

14. Minutes for the Website

Approved minutes of all Committee meetings are currently available on the RDA website. Their interest to the wider public was questioned and it was agreed that in future, a summary, with only decisions and action to be taken would be posted.

[Action: JA to produce a summary of decisions made at each meeting for inclusion on the website]

15. Archives

SZ, as retiring Chairman, has handed over boxes containing the archives of the RDA to JWV. The papers date back 30 years and their relevance and use was questioned. SZ said paperwork regarding the first Deben Estuary Plan may provide useful information for the upcoming second version and RS said all past editions of The Deben should be kept as a history of the RDA. It was noted that all records should be subject to GDPR regulations.

[Action: JWV will review and retain relevant documents]

16. Autumn 2020 edition of The Deben

All contributions for the 30th anniversary edition to be sent to JJ before the end of August.

17. Any other business

It was agreed that future meetings should start at 18.30.

SZ said the RDA's £7000 investment in the Hampshire Bank was due for renewal and she proposed it was rolled over for a further year. JG said he was willing to continue as Treasurer for the immediate future but would welcome the opportunity to hand it over when a suitable successor has been identified.

[Action: JG to discuss Hampshire Bank investment with JWV and SZ]

[The observers left the meeting]

The Committee were asked whether they had any reservations about inviting Pauline Bloomfield, Liz Hatton and Oliver Houchell to join the Committee. MH said that large committees could be cumbersome and difficult to manage, but it was agreed that as there had been recent resignations, the contributions offered by these new members would be welcomed. JWV agreed to discuss OH's availability due to his other commitments. SZ was in favour of inviting Liz Hatton if she was willing to take on the role of PR/Marketing. JWV said Pauline Bloomfield would be an excellent Social Secretary.

[Action: JWV to invite the three new members to join the committee]

There was no other business and the meeting was closed.

Date of next meeting: 16th September at 18.30