

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION

Committee Meeting Weds 19 May 2021 at 6.30pm by Zoom

1. **Present and apologies:** Sarah Zins, Jane Haviland, Moray MacPhail, Sue Orme, Matt Lis, Liz Hattan, Caroline Matthews

In attendance: Julia Jones

Apologies: Martin Waller

The meeting was chaired by JH.

2. **Declarations of interest:** None
3. **Minutes of meeting held on 21 April:** No changes were requested.
4. **Matters arising:** None

5. **Nature and Conservation Sub-committee:** LH reported that it met in person last week. We shall be joining Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust's East Suffolk Catchment Partnership which is both influential and relevant to us. Possibilities for volunteering included tree planting in the autumn and walking safaris to check river health (particularly around sewage outfalls). We will contact the Suffolk Wildlife Trust about training river wardens for the Deben. Robin Whittle had given an update for the saltmarsh following his survey on 20 April with Richard Steward. (Detail captured on specific meeting minutes).

Richard Verrill had reported about fish survey training at Hazelwood Marshes. The committee agreed to contribute £250 for a day's training on the Deben.

SZ has emailed those who received the kayakers guide to see if they also want a physical notice; no replies so far. ML had not received it. JH pointed out that there might be a possibility of using QR codes on the same posts as the DEP monitoring posts, if they get the go ahead.

(Action: SZ to check the email got out)

(LH left the meeting for family commitments)

6. **Committee update:** Given the significant overlap between the duties of the Membership Secretary and the Treasurer, it was suggested that MM take over both posts. MW would then be able to concentrate on Publicity and Media. All present voted in favour, so the committee motion passed.

SZ has written to a possible new candidate for the committee explaining that we are aiming for a period of consolidation but keeping them in mind for the future.

7. Revision of DEP Plan and FC1: JH reported that the scoping report was about to go out for a 6 week consultation period through the East Suffolk Council. It is unclear whether it will be a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). SO and others thought it was a good idea. David Kemp of the Environment Agency had mentioned to JH (during an unrelated meeting) that he hadn't seen the scoping report. JH had reported back to Christine Block. The DEP meeting last week had been cancelled without notice.

(Action: JH to report back that the RDA thinks that the DEP Plan should be a SPD)

FC1: nothing to report.

8. Planning Applications: SO reported a Ferry Cottage extension which would not impact the river.

Access to Methersgate Quay appears to be newly restricted with a fence. There is concern that access to the public beach might be impeded. A walk round would be useful.

(Action: SO will contact Suffolk County Council to obtain more information; JH and SO to walk around that area to assess the fence and any associated impact.)

There was a discussion about restrictions on access in this area generally; it is important to keep a watching brief to identify any potential loss of amenity.

9. Accounts and Membership update: MM reported that the accounts are healthy and that he now has easier access to banking information. He is contacting lapsed (39), overpaying and (approx 150) underpaying members. It was agreed that he should only continue to chase such members by email and that continuing underpayers would receive a last magazine with a personalised letter reminding them of their lapse in membership and giving them the opportunity to renew. We now have at least 820 members plus organisations.

10. AGM Feedback: This had been positive from the committee and the wider membership. The art talk had been a great success; future AGMs should include talks geared to getting more enjoyment from the river.

11. Marketing: The AGM questions had indicated strong support for a discount scheme. Frames by Robert would offer a 15% discount. Deben Inns are a strong possibility. CM asked whether there might need to be proof of membership.

(Action: MM to investigate possible cards, bearing environmental considerations in mind)

Bits and Bobs: The committee was broadly in favour of an RDA Twitter account.

(Action: SZ to talk to MW about Bits and Bobs, Twitter and publicity generally; JH to list objectives of a Twitter account)

ML drew the committee's attention to a new Deben Valley walk - Wickham Market to Rendelsham. (Action: ML to send details)

12. **The Deben: Autumn Edition:** JJ reported that the magazine deadline would be 31 August. The Journal has been widely praised but JJ expressed concern about reader numbers. A Twitter account could give helpful links. JJ is pondering a Deben Annual. SZ raised a concern about obtrusive advertising with the Journal.

(Action; SZ to discuss with AC).

CM reported that the Woodbridge Museum was now stocking the magazine; SZ would take some to Bawdsey Radar and Browsers. JH would do Artspace and nautical clubs. SO would do the Strawberry Café. JJ would deliver extra copies to MM and added that a reprint was possible if demand was high.

13: **AOB:** MM reported on recent accidents on the Deben. Not enough people are aware that a 999 call can connect to the Coastguard. River safety is an important subject that the RDA could address on the website, possibly to be written by a Coastguard. JJ added that it is important not to overload AC with complex Journal responsibilities.

(JH to get in touch with a Coastguard contact from Deben Paddlers)

(LH rejoined the meeting)

The meeting concluded at 7.35.

Dates of next meetings (at 6.30pm):

Wednesday 23 June at SZ's house

Wednesday 21 July