

CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CONSERVATORS HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1 (THE HEIDELBERG ROOM) AT THE GUILDHALL, CAMBRIDGE ON THURSDAY 6 JULY 2006 AT 9.30am

Present: Professor M D I Chisholm (in the chair)

Conservators: Dr N Chancellor, Mr R Ingersent, Dr R Laws, Mr L J Pryce-Jones, Mr L Phillips, County Cllr P Sales, and Dr R D Walker.

Observers: Mr D Bradley, Mr R T Bryant, Mr W Key and Cllr H Smith.

In Attendance: Mr R B Bamford and Mr J R Wakefield (from Archer and Archer - the Clerks), Dr P Noon the River Manager elect and Mr C Sparkes (River Foreman).

And of the general public (who signed the attendance record): Mr A C G Brown, Mr J Leader, Mr J Macnaghten and Mr D Mercer.

Action Required

By

The Chairman opened the meeting giving Mr Facer's apologies as his holiday had been booked by his children. Also he publicly thanked Lacy Anderson following his resignation for his long association with the river since 1982. He introduced Dr P E Noon, the River Manager elect, and her deputy, Jonathan Wakefield.

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Mr J Adams, Mr R Hardingham, City Cllr I Nimmo-Smith and Mr Geoff Facer (Engineer and Control Officer).

Mr Bradley arrived.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th April 2006: These were approved after two corrections, adding the word "positive" before "decision" in paragraph 5.2 and changing "deceased" to "diseased" in 5.7 and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

3. Matters Arising from those minutes as reported (not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda):

7.6.3 1.74 acres at Fen Road: A new agreement had been reached with the usual tenant.

7.9 Granta Punts: The three agreements referred to had all been signed and the appropriate funds received. The owner having been chased for punt registration had now paid them.

The flotilla of boats needed for the film company had provided £1,200 for the privilege of a week on the river.

7.1.2 The two abandoned boats, together with Cyril C, were sold to a consortium who have paid for them but because they are to remain on our water, two have to be registered by the EA (including obtaining a BSSC) before these they can be moved.

7.14 SCDC Towpath: The Clerks were corresponding with SCDC over the payment for this; but it was believed that settlement might be close.

4. Chairman's Report:

On 25th April he had spoken at the Bottisham Gardening and Social Club. This was the 10th such gathering he had attended and was easily the most enjoyable.

5. Hon Engineer and Control Officer's Report:

MATTERS TO NOTE:-

5.1 Jesus Lock: It had been noticed that the doors at Jesus Lock were leaking quite badly. By chance, Atkins brought in divers to carry out an underwater survey of the "tunnels" and walls at Bishop's Mill so he had arranged for them to have a look at the bottom of the gate and cill at Jesus Lock. Their video showed a section of the wooden cill to be missing. This would have to be repaired to ensure that the middle river level can be maintained at its optimum. This was something which could be left until the Autumn but the work might require the closing and pumping out of the lock to get at it, unless an underwater repair could be effected, using divers. Should the middle river level drop this summer due to a prolonged dry spell, temporary measures such as raising the weir level by screwing on some timbers would alleviate matters.

Engineer

5.2 Work Boat: A visit to the manufacturer's works at Brundle on 23rd June showed the work boat to be progressing nicely. The hull had been laid out and was currently being welded up. It was expected that this would be completed in the next week or so and that the craft would be finished in about two months time.

5.3 Baitsbite Lock House: Tenders were sought from five contractors who expressed interest in the work. In the end only two quotations were received, K H Construction for £13,390 plus VAT, Coulsons for £18,275 plus VAT. Both contractors pointed out that there was a lot of expense in the provision of the additional door into the plant room. Following these comments, a revised lay-out was drawn up with an internal passageway into the plant room and excluding the strengthened external door. Mr Bamford and Mr Wakefield had visited the building and were happy that the revised lay-out would be satisfactory for office purposes, if somewhat cramped. A revised quotation was sought from K H Construction which came in at £11,980 plus VAT. After discussion with the Chairman that figure was accepted and the contractors have been asked to proceed to finish by

Engineer

the beginning of August. The Conservators approved the installation of air conditioning at figure approximately to £1,750 inc VAT, if it had not been included already.

- 5.4 City Council Mooring Policy: The introduction of the Policy caused a number of teething problems not least of which being the City's temporarily suspending the 48 hour mooring on Jubilee Gardens in favour of residential craft, which had since been lifted. The City had actively pursued those craft moored on its lands without a mooring permit and the overall situation was slowly improving. The arrangements with the River Bailiff to provide information to the City was also working satisfactorily.

Following pressure being brought to find additional mooring, an extension to the mooring on Stourbridge Common might be necessary. The Conservators agreed that the Engineer and Control Officer should consult with the City Council (at the joint expense of the City Council and the Conservators) for the purposes of costing the operation of moving and disposing of the spoil within the river which has come from the Stourbridge Common bank so that the City could make a formal decision.

Engineer

The Conservators' Mooring Policy would need to be re-considered if this work was ever carried out.

- 5.5 Two serious accidents had been reported during the past quarter. In the first instance someone had fallen from a punt and was taken to hospital suffering mainly from shock. He was quickly discharged with no long term effects.

In the second, a young lady jumped into the river from Clare Gardens and was impaled on a broken punt pole, the top of which was a foot or so below water level. She was taken to hospital and detained with extensive and severe abdominal injuries but had since been discharged. The Bailiff went the day after the incident was reported and found and removed the broken pole which had no identification on it. We had received no notice that a broken pole had been left in the river.

- 5.6 Quayside pontoons: Scudamore's having acquired Tyrells had enquired about the possibility of linking up their pontoon with that of Tyrells, ie infilling the short 3m gap that existed between the two at the present time. The Chairman and officers could see no problem with this as at present, the area was a rubbish trap, providing that reasonable access was afforded to persons wishing to tie up alongside the pontoons to gain access to Quayside.

Considerable discussion followed after Mr Ingersent had declared his interest in the matter and had explained the need to be able to use both sets of pontoons. However, the Conservators were concerned at the blocking off of the remainder of what was a public quay.

Engineer/Clerks The Chairman suggested that this should only be done if all members of the public including other commercial operators were allowed to use the area which was to abridge the two present pontoons. As this was unacceptable to Scudamores. The Conservators agreed that the officers and the Chairman would give this further thought with Scudamores and bring the proposal back to a later meeting for further Discussion before a decision was made.

Engineer 5.7 Discarded bikes and trolleys: It was noted that the River Crew carried out regular inspections and removed whatever they found or were told about. Mr L Phillips suggested that there should be small plaques on all the bridges giving the Conservators' contact number for members of the public to report such incidents. This was noted and would be considered by the officers.

MATTERS REQUIRING DECISION

Engineer 5.8 Access to the Halingway: Conservators noted the report that SCDC and the County Council intended putting a gate/bollard at the Fen Road end of the track leading down to Grassy Corner so that there would now be no need to replace the gate which was removed from the rear of the Halingway at Grassy. This stopping-up of the track should take place just as soon as the EA had resolved the smelly ditch issue with the owners of the treatment plants discharging into the ditches alongside the track. Once a long term solution had been found and funds were available the EA would tanker away the septic sewage from the ditches; the travellers would remove the dumped spoil and rubbish from alongside the track and the aforementioned gate would be erected. Conservators felt that a gate with a key would be most appropriate.

Engineer At the Penny Ferry end, there had been bollards, two of which were lockable and had fallen into disrepair. One of the lockable ones had recently broken off. A lady had tripped over the base before it had been ground off. Thus, at present vehicular access was available onto the Halingway and should be prevented at this point. There were a number of substantial concrete piles in the Conservators' yard which together with two new lockable steel bollards would form an ideal and effective replacements for the current ones. It was agreed that a contractor, who had quoted £450 (no VAT) to break out the existing, excavate and concrete in new ones at a probable cost of £150, was accepted by the Conservators.

CLlr Hazel Smith arrived at this point.

5.9 Overhanging Trees opposite Riverside: Following complaints from the rowing fraternity on the restricted width of navigation for them and larger boats caused by overhanging trees, mainly along the Simoco site. In view of the complaints that have been received in the past, the Engineer sought and was given authority from the Conservators to proceed with this work, which was to be charged to riparian owners, who should be given due notice, first. It was agreed as a matter of

Engineer policy to require an extensive cutting back along this length and indeed anywhere else where a similar problem might exist to a height of 3m above water level.

Engineer/Clerks 5.10 Riverside Bridge: After some discussion, the Conservators agreed that a fee for £1,000 per day for closing of the river should be imposed in this instance. The indications were that closure will only be for one day.

Engineer 5.11 Dragon Boat Festival: The Engineer had drawn attention to the fact that Gable Events would hold a Dragon Boat Festival in conjunction with the Autumn Regatta which last year proved very successful. A fee of £450 plus VAT was being charged by the organisers for each team that enters. At the present time, no formal request had been received to hold the Festival. Last year a charge of £250 was made to hold the event but it was rumoured that no profits went to Charity. In view of this the officers were instructed to charge a minimum of £250 in the hope that a rather higher figure of £500 might be obtained but to make sure that all boats were properly insured.

6. Finance Report:

6.1 The Accounts for the year to 31.3.2006 approved by the auditors received formal approval from the Conservators and Dr Walker and Mr Pryce-Jones were authorised to sign the top three copies on an unanimous resolution proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Dr Chancellor. In addition, the Clerks were authorised to sign the letter of representation.

Clerks In approving the accounts, the Conservators noted that the auditors queried whether the Conservators were responsible for making up any shortfall in the pensions arranged through the County Scheme. No certain provision was made in respect of this although there was an indication that at the present the County had a shortfall of between 5 and 15%. The Clerks and/or the River Manager were asked to investigate further to provide a more accurate estimate so that the Conservators were aware of their future liabilities.

6.2 The Conservators noted the registration income which had been forthcoming from details of the registrations to 20th June which were circulated at the meeting.

Clerks 6.3 Depreciation: After consultation with the auditors it had been suggested that the workboat and weed harvester both being expected to work for 20 years, should be depreciated over that period of time. After discussion, the Conservators on the proposition of the Chairman seconded by Mr R Ingersent approved a change in the depreciation policy on the basis that the balance undepreciated of the purchase cost of the weedharvester should be depreciated over the next 9 years (making 15 years in total) and that for the weed boat for 15 years.

- 6.4 Capital: Conservators noted that there was £300,000 invested in Barclays London Treasurers providing 3.675% and £250,000 on a Hallmark Account at Cambridge Building Society bringing in 3.48%.
- 6.5 The Workboat: The first tranche of the cost of £12,000 had been paid and the balance would be required to be paid from the above capital sum within two months.
- 6.6 Computer Equipment: In the provision of computers for the new River Manager, and the software necessary, the costs had come out at £889 for the hardware and £650 for the software. This was approved by the Conservators.

7. Clerks' Report

- 7.1.1 Following the change in administration which would take effect from the 21st September.

On the proposition of Dr Chancellor seconded by Dr Laws IT WAS RESOLVED unanimously that with effect from 21st September 2006 all powers formerly delegated to the Clerks and/or the Honorary Control Officer and Engineer were to be delegated to the River Manager and/or the Deputy River Manager, in the former's absence and that any document statute or byelaw referring to the post of Clerk, Clerks or Control Officer and Engineer whether Honorary or otherwise should be read and construed as if the River Manager (or her Deputy in her absence) had been appointed to those posts.

Clerks

- 7.1.2 Bank Mandate: On the proposition, passed unanimously, of Dr Laws seconded by Cllr Sale that the Chairman, Cllr Nimmo Smith and Dr Walker were approved to be signatories on the accounts in the format so that the River Manager or her Deputy should be one signatory and one of the three listed Conservators the other signatory for all cheques and other matters with the Bank but that in any transfers between accounts, only the River Manager's signature was required. Insofar as Cambridge Building Society any two of the River Manager and the three named Conservators should be the signatories. Otherwise the formal mandate requirements of both Barclays Bank and Cambridge Building Society were noted and accepted by the Conservators.
- 7.1.3 The Conservators approved the Clerks or the River Manager signing any contracts of employment between the date of the 1st August and 21st September whichever was convenient.
- 7.1.4 The Conservators noted the suggested letter heading and accepted the format of the changes but agreed that if on her taking up office, the River Manager wished to make minor changes to it, there would be no difficulty. It was suggested that the Conservancy's status as a statutory body should be noted on the paperwork.

Clerks

Clerks

7.2.1 Film making on the Backs:

Following the Clerks' suggestion that Scudamore's should be asked to deal with all consents for photographing sessions on the middle river only and limited to one day's operation, it was accepted by the Conservators that Scudamore's should be entitled to take a £10 commission per permit issued. They agreed with the Clerks entering into a formal exchange of letters with Scudamore's. (Mr Rod Ingersent declared his interest in respect of this item.) The permits were to be individually numbered. In the event of other punt operators seeking similar agency they would have to be considered on their merits.

7.3.1 Cam Too - River Safety:

Richard Moseley's e-mails were noted and the officers' reply approved. Discussions ranged around the County Council's responsibility for the chain at Riverside and the need for moored boats to moor tenders so that they did not swing into the main channel, a point which should be raised with the City to add to Conditions on Mooring. It was further agreed to ask Mr Moseley to attend the September meeting for a brief presentation and questions not exceeding 30 minutes.

7.4 AINA (Association of Inland Navigation Authorities):

Their Chief Executive, Philip Burgess, was to visit the Conservancy area on 9th August and arrangements had been made to show him the problems we faced.

7.5 Breaches of Mooring Policy:

Complaints had been made against two wide-beamed boats mooring on Stourbridge Common. The Clerks' legal department were looking into taking action there; but, at the present moment, no further steps had been taken.

7.6 Data Protection:

It was noted that renewal at £35 had been dealt with.

7.7 Field at Fen Road (4.69 acres):

No report from Carter Jonas was available.

7.8 Insurance:

The incidents which had been reported in the Engineer's Report had been reported to our insurers as had a further hole behind the concrete piling on Grassy Corner on the Thursday of the Bumps. Apparently this was due to "washing out" and the crust had collapsed when someone had stepped on it. Luckily no injury occurred and the necessary repair work was carried out the following day.

7.9 Lease of Halingway:
This still goes forward, slowly. Councillor Sales had assisted enormously in obtaining the correct specification to go with it.

7.10 Riverside Bridge:
This had been dealt with in the Engineer's Report.

7.11 Trespass on the Halingway:
A number of accesses had been opened onto the Halingway which appeared to constitute a trespass. The Clerks had instructed their litigation department to open proceedings where appropriate; and the Chairman had authorised this work to proceed to a maximum of £2500 when consent would have to be sought for further expenses which might rise to £30,000 in the event of a dispute going to Court. The Clerks/River Manager would be dealing with this during the next month or two. One aspect of this work indicated that the Conservators did not have a surveyed plan of the Halingway. It may be sensible for the Conservators to obtain such a plan prior to formal action being taken so that formal agreement could be reached with all abutting landowners on an accurate plan which would save possible embarrassment and difficulties in the future. The Conservators authorised the Clerks to investigate this aspect and to report further.

Clerks/River
Manager

7.12 Incident at the May Bumps on the Thursday night:
As reported by the Clerks, "Georgina" had advanced into Long Reach during the final Bumping Race, when Mens' Division One was racing towards them. Not an ideal occasion for it to occur. The officers having looked into this matter had taken no formal action against "Georgina" on the basis that there appeared to have been a serious misunderstanding which it was believed would not recur. The difficulty was that however loud the marshals shouted from the shore, the diesel engines of "Georgina" meant it was virtually impossible for their staff to hear what was said on the other side of the river.

7.13 Scudamore's Request for a longer licence term for the pontoons:
Following the decision reached with the extension of their pontoons at Quayside, it was agreed to leave this matter to be discussed between the officers with Scudamore's and to be brought back later, if appropriate.

7.14 Enforcement of 48 hour Moorings at Clayhithe:

Mr Phillips reported Dr Starkey's complainant about a narrow boat moored for longer than 48 hours during which period the boat kept its engine running for more than 12 hours. Apparently this was to recharge batteries as its alternator had broken. The mooring breach had been noted but because it was during Midsummer Fair, no action had been taken. New signage was being prepared for this area and others. Requests were made to keep signage to a minimum.

Engineer

8. Dates of Next Meetings:

The dates for the next meetings were confirmed at Thursday 21st September 2006, Thursday 11th January 2007, Thursday 12th April 2007 and Thursday 5th July 2007.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 11.22am.