

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 22 SEPTEMBER 2005 AT 9.30am

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

Conservators: Mr J Adams, Mr R C Hardingham, Mr R Ingersent, Dr R Laws, Cllr I Nimmo-Smith, Mr L I Phillips, County Councillor R Sales, Cllr R Smith, Mr R Wakeford, and Dr R D H Walker.

Observers: 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) and Mr G Facer (Engineer and Control Officer).

And of the general public (who signed the attendance record): Mr J Leader.

Action Required

By

1. The Chairman welcomed Cllr R J Smith appointed by the City Council in place of Cllr Ben Bradnack. Cllr Smith made his declaration before the Chairman prior to the meeting. The Conservators asked that their thanks to Cllr Bradnack be formally recorded in the minutes. Apologies for absence had been received from Mr L Anderson, Dr P Convey and Mr Derek Bradley.

Cllr I Nimmo Smith arrived.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th July 2005: These were approved and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.
3. Matters Arising from those minutes as reported (not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda):

It was noted:-

6. that submissions in respect of the use of that part of the field in Chesterton within South Cambridgeshire for off-river mooring had been made to SCDC within the time limits for their Local Development Framework.
- 7.5 that the Dragon Boat Festival paid the fee of £250.
- 9.2 that the Clerks had written to AINA with dates of future meetings to try to avoid clashes.
- 9.14 the Chairman reported that when in Romsey, Hampshire he had seen a notice outside supermarkets pointing out that their trolleys did not operate beyond a certain point. He wondered whether there was any merit in asking the local supermarkets to make the same arrangements, here, to avoid their trolleys being thrown in the river. The view was that possibly more trolleys

would appear in the river then because people would be unable to return the trolleys.

4. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman had nothing to report which was not covered in other respects.

5. City Council's Mooring Policy:

The Chairman and officers had attended a meeting on 20th July with City Council representatives when one or two minor aspects were agreed, including the fact that storage boats would be charged at the same rate as house boats and that applications would be dealt with in order of receipt, if there was an over application.

Mr John Adams arrived.

In addition, the charging for 48 hour moorings was discussed and the Council representatives agreed to talk to the City's Parking Executive to see whether they could help, as it may be necessary to have some form of metered system.

The draft proposal from the City Council had been circulated prior to the meeting and the officers agreed that this set out broadly what had been discussed; but that the Conservators had not agreed to their staff having anything to do with monitoring the 48 hour mooring. This was beyond the Conservators' staffs' capabilities from a time point of view and would be far too time consuming for them.

The point was made that possible difficulties with the timing of both the river registration licence and the mooring licence starting on the same day could create problems; but the mooring licence would be null and void if there was not a formal registration with the Conservators in place.

Mr R Ingersent arrived.

The Conservators were pleased to hear that matters were progressing in this way but confirmed that their officers should make certain that their staff were not involved in the 48 hour mooring verification process. It was also accepted that the Clerks would verify the position under the Data Protection Act.

Clerks

6. The Future of the Administration:

This was taken "in Committee" at the end of the meeting and reference appears in separate Committee meeting minutes.

7. Engineer's Report:

MATTERS TO NOTE :-

7.1 Memorial Bench:

The Engineer had agreed that Lisa Watson (whose father Roger Silk was well known around the river) could install a bench on the towpath in memory of her brother. The bench would be identical to those installed recently by Balfour Beatty, would be concreted in and be located by the riding school on Long Reach.

7.2 Safety Along The Backs:

At the time of writing the Engineer had sought information from the major boat hirers regarding any safety incidents they had logged over the summer as required by the Code of Practice. He reported that he has seen their accident reports which disclose some 13 reportable accidents, 8 crushed fingers, 1 crushed leg, 1 struck by a pole and 2 persons knocked over suffering bruising. Nearly all these incidents had occurred on setting off and/or returning to base. Luckily, there had been no really serious incidents this year reported to him so far.

7.3 Workboat:

He had been searching for a replacement for Cyril C both on the net and in advertisements and he reported that so far he had been unsuccessful. So far as the two boats on the Thames were concerned he had been unable to contact the advertiser despite telephoning to his mobile phone. He would keep the matter in hand. No work had been carried out on Cyril C in the meantime.

7.4 Meeting with South Cambs Planning:

He had met Cllr Hazel Smith with the Area Planning Officer, at, first, Baitsbite Lock. The Planning Officer had been quite pleased and would support fully a conversion of the Baitsbite Lock Keeper's Cottage into an office, believing it to be an ideal use for the building. It was noted that it would require approval for both the change of use and for external alterations. The draft drawing before the meeting was noted.

Secondly, they had visited Clayhithe. The Chief Planning Officer had considered that the out of date planning approval for a new dwelling for summer let in respect of the old derelict cottage would probably be supported if resurrected; but that a dwelling for permanent habitation would definitely not receive support. The Planning Officer was aware of the workshop extension proposals and the existing approval for the large extension; and would be perfectly happy to support the smaller version of the complex which the Engineer had produced to the previous meeting.

The Planning Officer had also discussed the possible future undercover storage for the tractor etc with open lean-tos. He would need to discuss this with the Conservation Officer.

Engineer

At this point, Mr Leader drew attention to the fact that the number of steps to the Lock Keeper's Cottage required a balustrade under Health and Safety Rules. It was accepted that all Health and Safety matters would be considered before any work was carried out.

7.5 Towpath Grass / Tree and Hedge Maintenance:

With the completion of the towpath reconstruction, the Foreman and Engineer had been looking at machinery options for the above with particular reference to the narrower length between Baits Bite and Clayhithe.

Conservators recalled that even before the towpath works the Safety Consultant had expressed concern about the manner in which grass was cut along this section; because of the angle of the bank and the width; the new path had made this angle worse in places. Any new equipment was going to cost something in the region of £12,500 in total and the Engineer was currently going out to see if a contractor would give a quote to do the work which might be a suitable alternative. He would report to the January meeting when a formal decision might have to be made.

Comments were made by the Conservators that this was a large amount of capital to spend for a relatively small usage and it might have to be considered as to whether or not there was other work which this equipment could be used to be done by the staff under the terms of SLAs and the like.

MATTERS FOR DECISION

7.6 Baits Bite Lock:

Following enquiries made after the last meeting, the EA were unable to carry out the chain replacement required. They recommended the firm of Marriotts, a specialist engineering firm, who had carried out this type of work on their behalf in the past. Quotes had been obtained and options provided and were considered by the management and sub committee members following the meeting at Queens' College. The order had been authorised for Marriotts to install the specially coated chains which should endure better the rigours of the harsh climate. While the chains were on special order and had been programmed for delivery during the first week in October, the Engineer had not yet been given a timetable, to allow the closure of the lock to be properly advertised. The closure would be required for seven days and during this closure it was thought that the lock could be properly painted and following obtaining quotations the overall costs of £2,360 inclusive of VAT was approved for expenditure on painting of the guillotine structure which would include an additional top coat as recommended.

The guillotine door also required a delay being fitted to the relay switches to allow the gate to open by two or three inches to allow some water to come in but then not to open fully until the water had settled down. The cost of fitting the necessary delay switch was £431.40 and the Conservators approved this work to follow immediately behind the chain replacement; but Mr Adams drew attention to the need that not only should the door open only this slight distance; but there should be a facility to close it again in emergency.

Mr Leader drew attention to the type of seats which had been constructed and wished to make it clear that there should be concrete plinths underneath them to avoid hollows being created where people's feet swung and gradually filled up with water. He also pointed out that at Baitsbite Lock there were some disturbance to the

fronting stones from some of the large boats going into the lock and he suggested that perhaps these should be steel fronted at some stage. These comments were noted.

7.7 Baitsbite Cottage No 2:

The Engineer reported that flooding had taken place from the header tank at this cottage causing the tenants to have to move out and they were now being accommodated in a Travel Lodge. Appropriate agencies were at work drying out the house and the insurers had been informed. The Engineer was thanked for his report.

8. Finance Report:

8.1 The Clerks reported there was currently £300,000 on a Barclay's Treasurer's Deposit providing 3.545% until 5th October 2006 when it would be reinvested at whatever rate was then available for a further month. This sum was held in addition to £250,000 on Cambridge Building Society Hallmark Account earning 3.55%. (NB This time last year we were receiving 3.765% and 3.9% respectively.)

8.2 Registration income had been received just below budget predictions but there was more to come, once prosecutions commence, which should bring the figures into line with the budget.

8.3 A budget comparison sheet was annexed to the papers. From this it would be seen that, at present we had collected nothing from the EA under the SLA so far. This was because we had had difficulty extracting an order number from them to cover the work under the SLA. The order number had been received and an invoice had been issued. Notwithstanding the above, cash flow seemed to be in line, in that the difference between actual receipts and budget at this time last year was nearly a third lower than budgeted.

Clerks

8.4 Following difficulties encountered by the Clerks in obtaining from the Bank details of payments into the Conservators' account by telephone, it was resolved on the proposition of Mr Hardingham and seconded by Dr Walker that Mr Bamford be authorised to obtain this information by telephone and that the Bank be informed so that their mandate was amended to this effect.

9. Clerks' Report:

9.1 Administration

9.1.1 It was noted that mobile phones provided by O2 had now been replaced with ones of a superior quality under a new contract that was "on offer". This provided extra minutes of free call time per month on local networks (on each phone), at a fixed cost of £30 per month. Any calls in excess of this would be charged extra. It was expected that there would be a reduction in the annual cost of the mobile phone bill.

- 9.1.2 The River Foreman, Colin Sparkes, had advised the Clerks that an application had been made by the Bridge Hotel, located in close proximity to the Clayhithe property, for a variation to their premises licence, which would enable the pub to open for longer hours. The Clerks lodged an objection with South Cambs District Council, the licensing authority, dated 02.08.2005. The closing date for objections was 15.08.2005. The Licensing Committee of SCDC had on 21.9.05 to consider the representations. As yet no result was known.

9.2 AINA

Annual subscription to the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities in the sum of £250 had been paid. The Clerks had arranged for future correspondence regarding meetings and events to be addressed to Mr R Ingersent who had been appointed as the Conservators' representative.

9.3.1 Baitsbite Cottage No 1

The previous tenants had asked to surrender their tenancy early. The agents were in discussion with the outgoing tenants as their monthly rental was £910 until 31st March 2006. The Conservators would be out-of-pocket by approximately £245 (7 months @ £35/month) if this amount were not received. The change-over had now occurred. The agent had sufficient on deposit and held otherwise, to cover the bulk of the outstanding rent. Conservators approved the Clerks agreeing to settle without pursuing the outgoing tenants who had left the place fairly tidy bearing in mind the relevant small shortfall on the figures disclosed.

Clerks

9.3.2 Baitsbite Cottage No 2

As reported by the Engineer there had been this minor disaster. It was hoped that the drying would be completed by Friday when the plumber/electrician was returning to check the safety of the electricity before permitting the tenants to return. The insurers had been informed and the cover was merely on loss of rent and the cost of drying out the house and the carpets which belonged to the Conservancy. The Clerks and the Engineer were authorised to finalise this matter with the insurers and the tenants.

Clerks

9.4. Baitsbite Lock

Mr J Russell, the temporary lock keeper, had submitted an invoice for lock-keeping and gardening work at the Lock for the period 28/06/2005 to 01/07/2005 and only that morning the Clerks had received his later one to the 05/09/2005 at the previously agreed rates which would be paid. His hours would reduce, now, to 7 hours per day, with the shorter evenings.

9.5 Boat Standards

The requirement to comply with the Inland Waterways Small Passenger Boat Code (IWSPCBC) was noted. The Marine Coastguard Agency, AINA and punt operators on the River Cam were in ongoing discussions to ensure that in consequence punting on the River Cam

- was not forced off the river. It was AINA's view, as reported by Mr Ingersent, that the safety requirements for punts should be left with the relevant navigation authority. Under the circumstances, the Conservators agreed that their safety protocol covered what they considered to be necessary and there was then no necessity for the Clerks to include reference to the IWSPCBC in their future registration forms.
- Clerks
- 9.6 Interchange Agreement with the Environment Agency (EA)
The annual boat count was conducted on 08/08/2005. 261 boats were counted (last year, there were 249 boats counted) for which an invoice had been raised in the sum of £29654.56 (last year, £26820.28 was invoiced).
- Clerks
- The EA's Transport and Works Act Order was still with lawyers and would not now be coming into effect next year as a consequence the current Interchange Agreement would have to be renegotiated. The Conservators approved the Clerks making similar arrangements to the present year for next year with the EA.
- 9.7 Fisheries
The rent review notice for the lease of the fishing rights on the west bank of the River Cam between the Pike & Eel Public House and Clayhithe Bridge had been served. The Conservators authorized the Chairman and Clerks to agree the final details to resolve the rental for the next three years.
- Chairman/Clerks
- 9.8 Grants
The Conservators noted that the Cambridge City Council's grant for 2004/05 of £1,790 had to be refunded because the Conservators had not committed the expenditure of that grant by the 31/03/2005.
- 9.9 Tenant of 1.9 ha.(4.69 acres) grazing land at Fen Road
On 02/08/2005, the tenant wrote to Carter Jonas, indicating that she wished to terminate her tenancy of the above property. This was because one of the horses that she kept on this field had been maliciously wounded and she was not prepared to keep her horses there any longer, where they were not safe.
- Clerks
- The tenancy agreement was due to expire 06/11/2006. The Clerks had instructed Carter Jonas to re-let the field. Until a new tenant is found, the tenant would remain liable for the monthly rental of £152.50. Under the specific circumstances of this case, Conservators confirmed that the Clerks should not enforce this additional requirement. It was noted that Carter Jonas were charging on an hourly basis at £75 an hour for re-letting the property and the Conservators agreed that this should be limited to a maximum of £500 inclusive of VAT and that they should make sure that no trespass should occur to the property to avoid the necessity of having to evict caravans and the like.

- 9.10 Jesus Lockkeeper's Cottage
Clerks/Engineer The Conservators noted that the application for a licence for houses of multiple occupation was in train and authorized the officers to carry out such work as might be necessary to ensure registration.
- 9.11 Cambridge City Council - Local Plan enquiry
Chairman Cambridge City Council had acknowledged receipt of the Conservators 'Proof of Evidence' in respect of 0.915 ha. of land (up until recently used for grazing (see 9.9 above) which the Conservators have put forward for development as an off-river mooring facility). This was to be considered at a hearing scheduled for 26/10/2005, which the Chairman would attend on behalf of the Conservators.
- 9.12 Registration
The River Bailiff, Adrian Hoyes, had issued non-conformity notices against a number of boats which remained unregistered for the current year. The Clerks would ask their litigation department to arrange for summons to be issued against the owners of these boats remaining unregistered at the time of this meeting (where Environment Agency had not issued a licence to any of them). The up-to-date breakdown of registrations was noted.
- 9.13 River Incident - Growler
This incident reported to the Conservators by Mr Jenner had also been referred to the Police. In due course, the Police had indicated that they were taking no action. Mr Jenner was informed and appeared to be happy that this matter should be left in their hands.
- 9.14. River Work
The Conservators noted the work carried out under the SLA with the Environment Agency. The Engineer and Clerks had met a representative of the EA to discuss the terms for the current SLA on 6.9.05. It appeared that the present agreement, dating back to 1998, did not fulfill the EA's procurement requirements. It had been agreed verbally that the agreement could be updated; but any new agreement would require a greater amount of paperwork and bureaucracy to cover appropriate consents and environmental issues. Conservators approved the Chairman signing any new agreement if it was approved by himself and the officers.
- 9.15 Rubbish Clearance
The Chairman mentioned that he had been approached by Cllr Baker for "Cleaner Cambridge" and was going to attend a meeting on 14th October which he was arranging. The Conservators noted the position and report about the rubbish clearance budget.

9.16.1 Staff

Following the publication of the NJC wage scales for the current year showing increments which were approximately 2.95%, the new pay scales were processed in August and backdated to 01/04/2005. The report from Geoff Beel Consultants would be discussed “in Committee” at the end of the meeting.

- 9.16.2 Josh, the son of Colin Sparkes, had attended with him on call-outs on four or five occasions when other staff members had been unavailable to attend. An allowance of £20 (which was rather less than the staff call-out fees) had been paid to Josh for each attendance. Bearing in mind that current Health and Safety requirements prohibit after-hours work by a lone employee, the use of Josh was useful providing that he was used within the requirements of the rules relating to the employment of under age persons.

Clerks

10. Dates of Next Meetings:

The meetings for Thursday 12th January 2006, 13th April 2006 and 6th July 2006 were confirmed and 21st September 2006 was agreed.

The meeting closed at 10.45am.