

CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CONSERVATORS HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE GUILDHALL, CAMBRIDGE ON THURSDAY 9 JULY 2009 AT 9.30 am

Present: Conservators: Mr J A Adams (in the chair), Dr G Brighty, Mr A C G Brown, Mr R Ingersent, Cllr M I Nimmo-Smith, Mr L Phillips, Mr J R Pryce-Jones, Dr R D Walker, Cllr R M Williamson, Cllr L Walker and Cllr T Ward.

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

In Attendance: Dr P E Noon (River Manager), Mr J R Wakefield (Deputy River Manager) and Mr C S Sparkes (River Foreman).

And of the general public (who signed the attendance record): Mr J Grove (Cambridge Evening News), Ms T Rogers, Mr M Rogers, Lady S Farrell, Mr J Bailey, Mr B Thrush, Ms Clare Laidler, Mr N Waters, Mr J Rossouw and Mr A Wilkinson.

Action Required

By

The Chairman opened the meeting at 9.30am.

1. Apologies for absence were tendered by Mr R Hardingham and Observer Mr J Bayliss-Smith.
2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th April 2009:** Cllr Nimmo-Smith believed that Dr MacGinnis had made a much more emphatic request to restrict punt widths and that the Minutes did not deal with this matter adequately. Cllr Nimmo-Smith recalled that the Conservators had agreed to look into the legal basis for restricting punt widths. The Chairman added a note at item 7.8.1. The Minutes were approved nem con and the Chairman was authorised to sign the same.

River Manager

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

Mr Ingersent
entered the room

- 1 Appointment of Conservators: The Council of the Senate of the University had appointed Professor Keith Richards, Dept Geography and Fellow of Emmanuel College, to serve as a Conservator for the period up to 31 December 2011. Owing to a late exchange of papers, Prof. Richards was unable to attend this meeting.
- 9.2 Baits Bite Lock: The lock closure to allow the fitting of the new gear unit was to be delayed until early autumn to minimise disruption to river traffic. The works were expected to be completed within one week. The Chairman thanked Dr Brighty for the EA's contribution to the project.

4.1 Staff procedures: Middle Level Commissioners were in the process of arranging cover under their contract with Croner. The River Manager was due to collect the relevant paperwork from the MLC offices imminently.

Mr Ingersent arrived

9.5 Conservators' Policy on Strong Stream flow conditions: Mr B Jones, EA, Peterborough, had been approached to institute a warning system for the Cam based, initially, on the sluice gate settings at Baits Bite. An automatic messaging system was to be trialled in-house over the course of a year. If successful, an alerting system would be offered to Cam river users.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman welcomed Mr Wilkinson, EA Waterways Development Manager for the Anglian Region, who was in attendance as a casual observer, a position which might be formalised at a future meeting.

4. **Conservators Mooring Policy (Midsummer Common and Riverside):** The River Manager's report and recommendation had been circulated with the meeting papers. In addition, Camboaters had prepared their own report and DVD for the Conservators. The Chairman reminded Conservators that when the Mooring Policy was reviewed in 2007, there had been a lack of substantive evidence to justify a modification to the mooring zones at these locations. Having gained further data, the River Manager's recommendations were:
Victoria Bridge to Elizabeth Bridge (Midsummer Common): lift the seasonal prohibition (1 Oct to 31 Mar) with immediate effect and agree with the City Council a term to be included in the mooring permit so that vessels may at times, be requested to move for certain events.
Elizabeth Bridge to Stourbridge Common (Riverside): prohibit the mooring of vessels from 1 April 2010.

At Midsummer Common, the impact of the moorings on navigation was weak. Recorded incidents mostly related to user error or vessels being set adrift. Riverside was more complicated, the river being sinuous and of restricted width, where vessels travelled at greater speed, causing more incidents of blade clashes, collisions and entrapment in vegetation. The River Manager had noted that it was only by good fortune that there had not been a more serious accident there.

The Chairman outlined the Conservators' role in limiting their deliberations today to the navigational impacts, including access issues. Byelaw 3 had been used recently to prohibit landing at the middle set of steps at Quayside. The Chairman invited comments from Conservators, Observers and members of the public.

The Conservators did not believe that the commercial punting operations and passenger operations at Quayside were a good analogue for Riverside where experienced boat owners were exercising their right to moor at their own risk. Cllr Walker noted that the number of incidents at both locations over the recording period (Jan 07 to Jun 09) were very similar; the contrasting recommendations were at odds to the presented data. However, the River Bailiff's observations at

Riverside painted a different picture: 7 incidents had occurred within one hour on one January morning, indicative of congestion and channel constraints. None of these observed incidents had been reported directly to the Conservancy. There was a feeling amongst Conservators that the congestion issues experienced during short peak-time periods in the day by rowers were a self-made problem. Their activities needed greater regulation, either by their own body or by the Conservators imposing controls upon them. The Cam was limited in width along its greatest part and Cllr Nimmo-Smith argued that these data needed to be compared against the baseline of incidents across the whole Conservancy Area in a more scientifically robust manner. Congestion, competency and speed were highlighted as key factors affecting the navigation at Riverside. Mr Phillips was concerned at the potential impact of an outright ban on moorings on the residential boating community. The problems at Riverside needed to be tackled differently from a traffic management perspective. Dr Brighty informed Conservators that a risk-based approach used a hazard score (severity x likelihood). Control measures could be employed, if necessary, to reduce the overall score to an acceptable level of risk. The pattern of moorings on the Cam had developed over time; it was not a 'model' navigation. Dr Brighty told Conservators that their officers had raised this issue with them and asked how they would defend themselves if they had to attend a Coroner's inquest having knowingly been aware of these low-impact incidents. The 'risk pyramid' principle suggested that these incidents were only a small fraction of actual incidents. The correct control measures needed to be found to reduce the incident rate, be that through a prohibition of moorings, temporarily in the first instance to assess the effects of a policy change, or by controlling vessel numbers and their speed. Cllr Ward drew attention to the situation on the College Backs which were also congested and where collisions were frequent; prohibiting mooring had not been deemed necessary there.

Mr Phillips reminded Conservators that they should not delay any further in creating off-line moorings in the form of a marina. He tabled a plan of the new marina facility at Northampton. Cambridge was in need of a similar facility and the City and County Councils needed to be part of this planning process. The City's mooring licence scheme offered 70 berths along the Commons. The River Manager was concerned that in the event of a major flood, these boat dwellers would struggle to find a safe haven. Riverside had previously served as a 'safe' mooring during past floods owing to the high freeboard of the wall when river levels were elevated.

Dr Walker noted that collisions seemed to be linked to wide-beam vessels, therefore proposing a partial control measure by restricting the Riverside moorings to narrow-beam vessels only (i.e. less than 7 ft or 2.15 m beam). The effects could then be evaluated, perhaps commencing in April 2010 for a period of up to 2 years, returning to the April 2011 meeting with further recommendations. The moorers should also be ordered to provide grab-lines along their vessels and to provide fenders for rowing crews to push off against. He also suggested that the authority with responsibility for the railings (County

Council) should be made aware of the risks and liabilities in the event of an accident.

River Manager

Mr Ingersent asked for more monitoring observations to be undertaken across the Conservancy Area to better assess the navigational issues.

Mr Wilkinson warned that it would be unacceptable for the Conservators to do nothing now that these risks had been identified. Cllr Wright supported a restriction on vessel beam width along Riverside plus a moratorium on the number of rowing crews using the river. The River Manager informed those present that the rowing community had already imposed restrictions on the number of vessels using the river in the mornings.

Cllr Williamson left
the room

Mr Rogers, Chairman of Camboaters, said that the proposal to remove 500 metres of public moorings from a river limited by its mooring capacity was disgraceful. Boats had been moored there for years. The reaches were not of uniform width or depth, being sufficiently shallow near the margins for a person to stand up. The CRA had allegedly claimed to have no issues with the moored vessels being there. Boat owners were well able to look after themselves, even during times of flood.

Mr Catto, resident of Riverside Place, had observed a serious incident in May when a disabled cruiser being towed side-by-side had drifted across the river causing two rowing crews to make emergency stops, one of which collided with the riverbank. He had also taken video footage of two narrowboats cruising side-by-side. Rowers could not use these reaches at any speed, and if the Riverboat Georgina was making passage all the rowers had to halt. Local residents believed that the permanently moored vessels had caused silt to build up along the wall, blocking surface water drain outfalls. The boaters, he claimed, did not dispose of their rubbish responsibly and the river bed was a dumping ground for dangerous objects. He had suffered a personal injury as a result of using one of the access ladders.

Mr Rossouw, a boat dweller at Riverside, invited the Conservators to gather more observational evidence but the solution seemed to be to stem the rowing congestion by agreeing terms with the rowing community. The boat-based community in the audience were keen to meet with local residents and other parties, such as the Conservators, to have a balanced discussion. Media reports of 'illegal squatters' had been most unhelpful. The boaters were proactive in caring for the river environment.

Mr Adams drew the discussion to a conclusion. Conservators were not minded to ban mooring along Midsummer Common. Mr Brown asked that a caveat should be added: the City Council should include a clause in each mooring licence agreement that moorers were to be required to move for events. The Chairman took a vote on the proposition that the seasonal prohibition on mooring on Midsummer Common should be abandoned to allow year-round mooring, subject to the City Council's Mooring Licence including a clause that boats were required to move for certain events. On the proposition of Dr Walker, seconded by Mr Phillips, Conservators voted unanimously in favour of this motion.

Regarding Riverside, the Chairman noted that Conservators were unwilling to support the officer recommendation. However, as an authority the Conservators needed to do something so that they were not left open to criticism. Dr Walker had proposed a restriction on vessel width and the mandatory provision of grab-lines. More evidence needed to be gathered over the next 1-2 years. Risk factors had been identified, but the full suite required assessment ahead of employing any mitigating measures. Dr Brighty suggested that the Chairman and officers should bring back to the next meeting a new paper with a firm set of risk management options, making reference to industry best practice by consulting with other navigation authorities. Being better informed, Conservators could discharge their duties adequately. The Conservators' officers were stretched and the study might be better undertaken by a professional or student, in particular the boat observations. Mr Phillips and Cllr Ward were supportive of this need to gather more information in a new paper. Dr Walker reminded the Conservators that they had a very narrowly-defined set of powers. They had no mandate to manage vessel moorings, which were deemed in the statutes to be an obstruction. He cautioned Conservators that they must not act in breach of their limited responsibilities.

Cllr Ward said that a ban on mooring could not be supported by the evidence but to impose a speed limit was similarly disproportionate. Mr Pryce-Jones said that the rowing clubs had a duty of care to themselves and they needed to be involved in this process of risk management.

The Chairman was concerned that there would be insufficient time between this meeting and the September meeting to gather more data and observations should be deferred until October when the university crews returned, a notion supported by Mr Ingersent.

Rather than ban wide-beam vessels from the Riverside moorings, Dr Walker suggested that the vessels should be re-arranged, the wide-beam vessels being allocated to the wider stretch of the river between Elizabeth Bridge and Saxon Road. Mr Phillips proposed that this re-arrangement should take place by September in liaison with Camboaters, and that the Conservators should commence discussions with the rowing community regarding their code of conduct along these constrained reaches and the control of speed.

The Chairman put these two proposals to the vote: (i) that he and the officers should initiate discussions with the rowers; and (ii) that in liaison with the vessel owners, the wide-beam vessels should be moved to the wider reaches of Riverside. Cllr Ward seconded this proposal. Six Conservators were in favour, and one (Dr Brighty) against.

Dr Walker added that officers should draw to the County Council's attention the safety issues beside the railings, citing these known incidents, and that a letter should be sent to all of the Riverside moorers asking them to provide a safety rope or chain to provide assistance in the event of an accidental immersion.

River Manager

Dr Brighty proposed that a paper should be brought back to the next meeting with either (i) no further suggestions or (ii) other risk

management options. The Chairman would review the budgeting of buying-in expertise of staff resources.

Chairman/River
Manager

Mr Phillips offered Camboaters' assistance in gathering information. Mr Rogers asked for the boaters to be included in future consultations.

5. **Matter Agreed:**

5.1 Claythithe House & Depot: Drainage issues (Minutes, 16th April) were unresolved. EA consent (ref. L09/C/045) had been granted for a length of new to be laid linking the field drain to the existing river outfall. Quotations for repairing the pipe ranged from £1.8k to £6.8k ex VAT. Conservators were wary of commissioning the works until the responsibilities were established, and also believed that the landowner who would benefit from this arrangement should contribute to the costs.

Conservators deferred the spend until such time that the ownership of the pipe, and the drainage maintenance responsibilities, could be clarified.

River Manager

5.2 Staff training: It was proposed that the Deputy River Manager would benefit from some part-time secretarial training given the absence of any office secretarial support, estimated cost £500 for 20 weeks.

Conservators approved this training.

5.3 Events: Cambridge Building Society had requested permission to hold a charity Duck Race on the river downstream of Victoria Bridge, 22nd September, 6pm to 8.30pm. Typically, duck races did not command an event fee. The River Manager sought permission for the event to proceed on this basis.

Conservators approved the event unanimously.

5.4 Official opening of Jesus Lock: The River Manager proposed an official opening ceremony for the new lock gates instead of the Conservators' annual inspection of the river.

Conservators agreed to this suggestion, the date to be arranged by the River Manager.

River Manager

6. **Chairman's Report:**

The Chairman had attended a demonstration of an impressive new system using acoustic technology for sensing and mapping objects in the river. The Chairman recommended that it should be purchased (cost £3k) to assist the river crew's operations, pending the refurbishment of the Berky weed harvester. The Chairman had

attended a workshop in Reading convened by Defra as work commenced on a new draft of its strategy document 'Waterways For Tomorrow' to reflect the shift in government initiatives. The draft document would be open to a 3-month public consultation period. The Chairman had met with the rowing community, as last year, which provided a positive forum for resolving navigational issues. The Chairman had been impressed with the capabilities of the mobile mini-crane used to lift the gates from Jesus Lock and reported that the project was on schedule, the new gates to be put in place on 28th July.

7. Finance Report:

7.1 Accounts 2008/09: The audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2009 received formal approval from the Conservators. On the proposal of Dr Walker, seconded by Mr Brown, the Conservators were unanimous in authorising the Chairman to sign the three top copies and the letter of representation.

7.2 Income and expenditure: Income from craft registrations for the year up to 30th June was presented in a table comparing figures across major craft categories to income received in the same period for the 3 previous years. Punt registrations had been affected in 2008 as operators had to meet more stringent application requirements but year-end income had been in line with budget predictions.

Mr Phillips asked if in future, Conservators could be given the option of receiving the Minutes in paper or digital format, to help reduce waste and keep costs down.

River Manager

7.3 Capital expenditure: Work to refurbish Jesus Lock commenced in June; the expected project outturn was expected to be £70k. The Chairman thanked the EA for arranging the engineering inspection by Halcrow under their contract; the report would be a valuable benchmark document.

7.4 Capital reserves: There was £400,000 on a Barclays London Treasurer's Deposit providing 0.12% (until 8th July 2009, when new rates would become available). This sum was held in addition to £250,000 on a Cambridge Building Society Hallmark Account earning 0.75 AER as at 22nd June 2009.

7.5 Capital finance sub-committee group: Mr Brown, Dr Noon and Mr Wakefield met with the Barclays Bank Relationship Manager, 20th April. Two of the bank accounts with small balances (£5,772 combined) were to be closed and the monies transferred into one account. The Manager was consulting with the bank's legal department about the Conservators' investment powers. The bank proposed that the Conservators could amalgamate their finances (including the CBS deposit) into one account. Barclays Private Banking required a minimum balance

of £500,000 and offered a 3-year fixed deposit, but this was deemed unsuitable given the projected cash reserves depletion to £400,000 over the next 3 years. Mr Driscoll, of PEM Carwood (see Minutes, 16th April 2009) had given an opinion about the Conservators' financial investment powers which was tabled. Further advice was needed before any strategic decisions were taken, the outcome to be presented at a future meeting.

Chairman/River
Manager

8. River Manager's Report:

The Conservators noted her report on:-

8.1 Administration

The River Manager attended a meeting of the Regional Navigation Group at the EA's offices, Peterborough, 3rd June at which Black & Veatch reported their findings for the Great Ouse Tidal Study. The River Manager joined RFERAC and Regional Flood Defence Committee members touring Fen Waterways Link sites, 19th June, courtesy of Mr Wilkinson, EA Waterways Development Manager for the Anglian Region.

8.1.1 Archiving: Nothing to report.

8.1.2 Business Plan: A table was presented showing progress on capital projects.

8.1.3 AINA/BW consultation: The River Manager attended an AINA Executive Committee meeting in London, 14th May. AINA had yet to complete its 2008/09 core work programme reports for Defra. The half-yearly (Jan-Jun) return of Cam incident reports had been submitted to the AINA office. The Chairman attended a Defra strategy workshop on 'Waterways for Tomorrow', Reading, 10th June. BW had announced a series of regional consultations on its '2020' strategy.

8.1.4 Insurance: Royal & Sun Alliance had confirmed that the file on Mrs Baker had been closed (total cost £49,434). Insurance certificates for 2009/10 had been received from Towergate Risk Solutions and displayed on the Conservators' premises. The insurance valuation for Jesus Lock under the Business Combined Policy had increased from £121k to £171k to reflect the addition of the new gates.

8.1.5 Office supplies: Nothing to report.

8.1.6 Procedures: See Matters Arising.

- 8.1.7 Staff: Wage rates for the year commencing 1st April were awaited from NJC; the previous year's rates were being used in the interim. The river crew received training and were assessed in the use of pesticides (PA1) and use of hand-held sprayers (PA6) at Clayhithe Depot, 21st -23rd April. Saffron Walden Agricultural Training Group charged £1023 for this training.
- 8.1.8 Licensing Act: Trumpington Farm Co. had applied to SCDC to extend the terms of its licence at Spring Lane Field, Grantchester, for a pay-bar at wedding receptions and parties hosted on the site. Local residents had voiced opposition to this application fearing rowdy behaviour. Cam Valley Forum's representation included the River Manager's comments.
- 8.1.9 Grant Applications: Nothing to report.
- 8.2 Property management
- 8.2.1 Jesus Lock Keeper's Cottage: Monthly rental had been received via lettings agents Carter Jonas. The tenancy agreement was due to expire 4th August. Four students were to depart. The remaining student was to find new students to fill the vacant rooms. A new 6-month tenancy agreement was to commence (period to 4 Feb 2010). A carbon monoxide detector was to be installed upon the gas inspection engineer's advice.
- 8.2.2 Baits Bite Cottages: Monthly rental had been received via Carter Jonas. Exterior window frames had been repainted green. The side door of No. 1 Cottage had suffered wind damage; a stable door had been fitted at the tenants' request. These renovations cost £1,550. The water pump serving No. 2 Cottage had been repaired (cost £195). A Redcare intruder alarm system had been installed in No. 1 Cottage (cost £620 plus £85 p.a. maintenance agreement with Sygma Security Systems). Carter Jonas and the River Manager had a security code for emergency access. The boiler in No. 2 Cottage failed in April leaving the tenants without heating and hot water. Their oil tank was found to be empty; the sight gauge had been giving a false reading. A J Gilbert, handyman, had fitted a new gauge.
- 8.2.3 Baits Bite Office: Exterior window frames had been repainted green (cost £450). Ongoing telephony problems had affected the Broadband service and e-mail messaging had been disrupted again. The fixed electrical inspection conducted by Holgate & French, 27th March, identified a fault in the RCD requiring attention.
- 8.2.4 Clayhithe House and Depot/Workshop: The fixed electrical inspection of the Old and New Workshops by Holgate & French had identified areas requiring urgent remedial work to

River Manager

meet satisfactory safety standards. New pine doors, painted green, had been fitted to the Old Workshop using the existing metalwork (cost £1,100). A quotation had been received for the renovation and painting of the House window-frames. Further quotes were being sought. The half yearly (Dec 08 – May 09) water bill serving the House and Depot had been paid (£123). The River Foreman had altered the garden boundary line to accommodate future straightening of the track leading from the slipway into the yard. The wooden field gate had been refurbished and mixed hedging had been planted. The Cambridge Group of the Ramblers Association had affirmed their desire for a bench near the slipway. The order had been submitted to the manufacturers, David Ogilvie Engineering, and the Group had agreed to pay the costs.

8.2.5 Jesus Lock: A public notice was advertised declaring a suspension of navigation, 19th June – 31st July, for the period of works to the gates. Residential moorers above the sluices were reluctant to meet the request to move citing inconvenience to them. They finally obliged before formal notice had to be served. Hargreaves Lock Gates fabricated oak stop timbers, to be retained at Clayhithe for future use (cost £4,888). These were delivered to the Depot in May, thence transported to the lock by workboat. The river crew de-silted the lock chamber using the Berky weed-harvester before the lock closure. Two casual labourers were taken on to assist with operations on 23/24 June when the lock was dammed, pumped and a hired mobile tracked crane lifted the gates out. Public use of Jesus Green footbridge was restricted during the crane operations. The empty chamber was inspected by engineers from Halcrow. Hargreaves took the old gates to their workshop to produce copies in new oak (cost £9,709). Jesus Green Residents' Association had been approached for their views on the future planting scheme on the lock island. Quotes were being sought for the refurbishment of the under-bridge cupboard to stop rain ingress. The fixed electrical inspection by Holgate & French, 24th April, noted the unsatisfactory condition of the wiring systems in the under-bridge cupboard which fed into the Bailiff's hut on the lock island. After refurbishment, these faults would be rectified.

River Manager

8.2.6 Baits Bite Lock: R J Marriott Engineering carried out a biannual service, 21st April (cost £711). Graeme Cooper electrical rectified a faulty time-delay switch which had been affecting the functioning of the guillotine gate, 25th April.

8.2.7 The Halingway: The litter bin at the end of Fen Road, Milton, had been destroyed by fire (cause unknown), early May. Member of the public had been using the small dog litter bin for mixed rubbish which had been spilling-out over the towpath and into the river. SCDC was due to replace the bin. There had

been a marked increase in the number of black bin bags in the river and along the towpath between Chesterton and Baits Bite. Local Police and river users had been asked to remain vigilant to any suspicious activity. The brick rampart above the gravity gates at the same site was fractured and a section had fallen into the river some months previously, leaving an exposed drop. Asset ownership was unknown, but the Conservators' former Engineer recalled that the drain was constructed as part of the Cowley Road/Science Park development as a joint venture between the City Council, Anglian Water and SCDC. The Government's new Flood Bill, in draft, would require all flood control structures to be identified in an asset register held by the lead authority, Cambs County Council.

River Manager

8.2.8 Lease of Fishing Rights: CFPAS had indicated their wish to continue with the lease as from 1st June 2009 at the current rental. The half yearly (Jun-Nov) rental had been received in advance (£1065). A meeting was to be convened with Mr Tweed, President of CFPAS, to discuss the terms of the new lease.

8.2.9 Grazing, 1.74 acres Fen Road: Nothing to report.

8.2.10 Grazing, 4.69 acres Fen Road: Mr Burton's ponies remained on the field out of contract. Notice to vacate given his failure to pay his rent had been served in January. The site had suffered chronic management issues but was being retained in the portfolio given its development value. Mr Brown was anxious that a tenancy contract needed to be put in place. The River Manager explained the problems associated with the field's proximity to the Fen's neighbouring caravan sites.

River Manager

8.2.11 11.3 acres Clayhithe Field: The annual rental had been received (£400). The tenant Mr Smart had paid the Cambridge Water Co. bill. Mr Sparkes had noted that swans nesting in the field's northern boundary ditch had raised 2 cygnets for the first time.

8.3 Plant and equipment

River Manager

8.3.1 Computer: The River Manager's anti-virus software was due for renewal.

8.3.2 Conservators' Boats: A quotation to fit a manual-hydraulic lifting arm to the 'mud barge' had been received from Halstead Marine Services, builders of the 'Michael C' (£2650 ex-VAT). The river crew subsequently requested a powered lifting arm instead. Further quotations were to be sought. Initial estimates for refurbishing the Berky weed harvester were in the order of £26k-£35k, above budget predictions in the Business Plan. The machine was committed to the summer work programme; refurbishment was scheduled for the autumn/winter period.

8.3.3 Safety Equipment: A Crewsaver auto-inflating lifejacket had been purchased to replace the one which had been stolen from the workboat in February. The cost (£93) was met by the insurance claim.

8.3.4 Vehicles: The Ford tipper truck (R172 UOC) had passed its MOT and the road fund application had been submitted for 12 months (expiry 30th June 2010).

8.3.5 Mobile phones: Nothing to report.

8.4 River Work

8.4.1 Bishop's Mill SLA with the City Council: The City Council had expressed concern at the increase in the number of out-of-hours attendances by the river crew over the last four years. Cllr Walker queried the reasons for this. Attendances were generally in response to notifications of high or low water levels from the EA. The River Manager speculated that the river's flow behaviour was responding to a changing regional climate. There had also been an increase in Strong Stream Advice events on the River Great Ouse over the same period (see 8.5.5).

8.4.2 EA Memorandum of Understanding (SLA): The EA's official order was awaited.

8.4.3 Towpath - grass cutting: Country Grounds Maintenance cut the grass between Chesterton and Clayhithe, 13/14 May (cost £837).

8.4.4 Miscellaneous Applications: Film permits had been issue for a number of productions by Scudamores, agents acting on behalf of the Conservators. A production company sought permission to film 'John Sergeant's Tourist Trail' from punts in May. The Financial Times was writing an article on the punting industry which required photographs of the navigation. They were assisted by St John's College Punt Society. Schmidt Media Ltd was commissioned by St John's College to make a promotional film in the college grounds in May. BBC Sport filmed on the navigation, 14th May. The BBC filmed 3 students from Sidney Sussex College punting on the navigation for a programme in their 'Drop Zone' series, 11th June. AM Films UK (a 'Bollywood' production company) filmed on the navigation, 20th June, near St John's College. The company wanted to return for night-filming, dates to be confirmed. A Guardian newspaper journalist was writing a piece for its 'Enjoy England' supplement and enquired about filming permissions ahead of a visit, weekend 27th-28th June.

National Gas Grid was due to replace a gas main to the rear of Cripps Court, Queens' College (EA ref. L09/C/053). The River Manager stipulated on the Flood Defence Consent consultation reply that a s15 licence was required for any works to the riverbank.

Mr Muggeridge, through Freeland Rees Roberts Architects, applied to the EA to discharge rainwater into the river from a new development at 47 Pretoria Road via an existing outlet. Comments returned to the EA included a reminder that the landowner was responsible for tree maintenance. Some new willow trees had been planted next to the property and these were likely to encroach on the navigation as they matured.

Mr Phillips asked if the film permits required applicants to give credit the Conservators. The current application form did not require this. Standard film permits cost £50 but other more involved filming affecting the navigation (e.g. historic productions) was charged a discretionary rate, recently £500 per half-day. Licensing generally was in need of review.

Chairman/River Manager

8.4.5 Rubbish Clearance (City): Nothing to report.

8.4.6 Third Party Rechargeable: A silt bar had formed across the entrance to Eights Marina during February's high flows. The Directors were advised to apply to the EA for consent for any desilting or dredging operations. Owners of vessels moored in the Marina took action to 'prop-wash' the material back into the main river channel. The marina entrance was particularly prone to silting up after high flows. An engineering solution, in terms of flow deflectors, might redirect the silt elsewhere.

Mrs Bentley, Capstan Close, had requested the river crew's assistance with bank repairs to her property where the bays of the former Banham's Marina were collapsing. The river crew had no time or materials spare to undertake the works, at cost, until late autumn.

Stretham Engine Trust (Old West River) had enquired about the use of the Berky to clear reeds from their cut. The Museum Trustees were to consider the day-rate quoted at their meeting in late July.

8.4.7 Tree Pollarding: SCDC had remitted £1k of grant monies towards the tree pollarding works completed in early April. Dr English, Fen Road Chesterton, expressed concerns about a large willow tree beside her property. The tree had developed a large creaking crack near its crown. The river crew took the precaution of pollarding the stump immediately.

8.4.8 Weed cutting: The Deputy River Foreman cut the rowing course before the May Bumps and made further passes of the Boathouses and the reaches between Chesterton and Clayhithe in June. He noted vigorous growth plus blanket weed brought-on by the warm weather and low flows, as compared to the

previous year. After an exhaustive application process to tender for the EA's framework contract for weed control in the Anglian Region, their procurement team advised that the tender had been unsuccessful and the contract had been awarded to Country Grounds Maintenance.

- 8.4.9 Bank Maintenance: The river crew had made emergency repairs with sheet steel piles to a damaged section of bank near the Milton STW outfall. Consent (ref. L09/C/040) had been granted by the EA for the soft bank protection works proposed for Horningsea using materials purchased by Cambs County Council (Minutes, 16 April 2009). Cambs County Council, via its Cycling Officer, Mr Joyce, sought permission for two automatic counters to be installed at the Chesterton and Clayhithe ends of the towpath to monitor traffic movements. A licence agreement had been drawn up for a trial period (up to 30th June 2010).

The County Council's engineers had been notified about a loose flagstone beside Garret Hostel slipway. Repairs were undertaken promptly; the pier was being used to load passengers on and off punts.

Contractors from Drake Towage, Wisbech, undertaking a visual survey of Riverside wall on behalf of Cambs Highways, parked their lorry illegally whilst launching their workboat, much to the annoyance of a local resident who reported the traffic violation to the Police. Residents had become sensitised to parking along Riverside associated with the residential boats. The City Council's engineer, Mr Robertson, was about to commission contractors to start riverbank repairs along Midsummer Common. EA consent (ref. L09/C/056) had been reviewed. A s15 licence had been issued; payment of the fee was awaited. Active Communities met with the River Manager and Mr Phillips (Camboaters) to discuss further improvement works to the Commons' moorings, including the provision of access steps on steeper sections of riverbank and mooring bollards.

- 8.4.10 Miscellaneous: Scaffolding contractors tendering for works to St John's College had contacted the office about permissions and fees. A licence would be arranged for the successful tenderer. Scudamores was seeking to improve its on-site welfare facilities for the workshop on Crusoe Island. The proposed toilet facility and sewage treatment plant would require a new outfall into the river. Copies of the plans had been requested prior to the granting of a s15 licence.

8.5 Acts / Byelaws

- 8.5.1 Breaches of mooring policy: Two commercial punts had been obstructing the slipway at Garret Hostel Lane. Action was to be

taken against the vessel owners for breach of the Conservators' byelaws.

- 8.5.2 Incidents: A summary table for the last quarter was circulated. There had been 46 incidents on the navigation and towpath. These ranged from instances of illegal fishing during Close Season to attacks by an aggressive swan on rowers.
- 8.5.3 Overloading of punts: there had been no sightings of overloaded punts in the last quarter. The Middle River had been very busy, particularly the Garret Hostel Lane area where a number of commercial operators had relocated their operations from Quayside.
- 8.5.4 Prosecutions: The River Manager was pursuing the DVLA for the vehicle owner details in respect of the speedboat incident on 18th April at Chesterton.
- 8.5.5 Navigation: A wooden gate had been installed at the top of a flight of steps leading to the river into Granta Mill Pond next to Newnham Terrace, presumably for the purposes of preventing 'independent' punt operators from establishing a business base there. The City Council had been alerted; being in a Conservation Area planning permission was possibly required for the gate.

GOBA was sponsoring a MSc student thesis, with Cranfield University, to investigate the causes for an increasing trend in Strong Stream Advice notifications on the River Great Ouse from 2007 onwards. Some of the incident dates matched the callout records at Bishop's Mill Sluices suggesting a shared cause (e.g. synoptic weather patterns).

The 'Danger – Weir Ahead' sign was stolen from its mountings near Baits Bite in April. A new sign had been ordered.

The Committee of Cambridge Motor Boat Club had written to the River Manager complaining about the number of university rowing boats passing their moorings at Waterbeach at excessive speed. The Club was concerned for its elderly members who could lose their footing due to the violent wash rocking their moored vessels, the wake being amplified by the narrow river channel. The letter was tabled at a meeting with Cam rowing representatives on 18th June. The River Manager had also noted more rowing crews carrying their craft past the office window in the evenings. Mr Key explained that the emphasis of the sport nationally was changing: crews preferred longer endurance pieces now rather than short sprints. The River Manager would write to the Cam rowing bodies to seek a consensus use of the reaches downstream of Baits Bite.

River Manager

Navigation restriction notices had been received from the EA: emergency works at Eaton Socon Lock (11th-14th May) and Willington Lock (1st & 7th May); restriction due to scaffolding at Branch Bridge, River Lark (29th May – 19th June); diving

inspection at Bottisham Sluices and Pumping Station (24th/25th June). These notices were displayed at Baits Bite and circulated electronically to Camboaters.

- 8.5.6 Obstructions: Volunteer divers taking part in the Great Cam Clean Up, 25th April, had found half a car underneath Elizabeth Road Bridge in approximately 3 metres water depth. This object not pose a hazard to normal navigation, but it would have to be relocated and recovered at some time in the future. The secretary of Cambridge Canoe Club had noted floating pennywort in Grantchester Mill Pool, early May. Other patches had been observed near Stourbridge Common and at Horningsea, as in 2008. The Captain of Boats for Peterhouse had requested permission to trim the willow tree next to their clubhouse. Being in a Conservation Area, permission was required under the Town & Country Planning Act. The Captain was advised to make an application to the City Council. The River Manager had applied for permission to trim back three large willow trees, left bank, above Jesus Sluices before the fronds set down roots into the water. Prof Everson, Anglia Ruskin University, was making progress developing his remote river-survey hardware, and was due to trial the equipment in July.

- 8.5.7 Pontoon licences: The terms of the new licences for Quayside and the Mill Pit were due for consideration in the next quarter, the current licences expiring 31st March 2010. Stakeholder meetings were to be part of this process.

Chairman/River Manager

- 8.5.8 Registration numbers: Many boats were not complying with the byelaw requirement for vessel identification. The EA had adopted a strategy to achieve compliance: they were dispensing self-adhesive numbers to unidentified vessels on Anglian Waterways gratis, giving vessel owners no excuse for failing to abide by the regulations.
- 8.5.9 Sunken Boats: G15664 'Thistledo' and G5092 'Bidean' had been sold by sealed tender following the failure by their owners to reclaim the vessels from the Conservators' Depot after the relevant notices had reached their end-date.
- 8.5.10 Vehicles on the Halingway: the persistent nuisance of mini-motors and quad bikes on the Halingway had reached peak levels during the Whitsun period when the weather was fine. A cyclist was knocked off their bicycle by a quad bike in June. The Police attended but no arrests were made.
- 8.5.11 Noise: Mr L Phillips, moored at Stourbridge Common, had complained about the unacceptable level of noise made by rowing crews in the early morning, weekend of 27th-28th June.

8.5.12 Disposal of sewage: The River Manager and EA Environment officers, S Wicks and D Griffiths, had made a number of late afternoon and evening visits to moored boats in the City in April and May to distribute free oil-absorbent pads and leaflets about the correct disposal of sewage and oil. The free pads had been well-received. All the moorers visited were adamant that they made use of the City Council's sanitary station at Jesus Green. Dr Brighty perceived that this area of regulation needed to be tightened-up, especially at Riverside, and asked those present in these areas to be vigilant.

8.5.13 Diving operations: Written consent (byelaw 15.6) was granted for divers to inspect Baits Bite Sluices on 19th June on behalf of the EA.

8.6 Environment and Planning

8.6.1 Biodiversity: Mr McKee, licensed nest inspector, inspected the barn owl boxes with Mr Sparkes on 8th July. One box contained eggs; another had become home to nesting doves. Mr Russell of Baits Bite, reported a large bees' nest in an old log beside the towpath, occupied for the second year in a row. Cllr Walker asked if the bees were to be removed; there was no plan to do so. The City Council's Community Reserves Officer, Mr Selway, had organised three Himalayan balsam clearance days on the upper river in June and July. The River Manager and River Foreman took the Bailiff's motorised punt onto the upper river but the expedition was curtailed by heavy weed growth which rendered the outboard engine useless. Nevertheless, the pair cleared a large patch of the invasive weed, head-high, from the right bank at Newnham.

8.6.2 Cambridge City Council Local Plan: The City Council's planning consultation database had been updated with the Conservators' administrative details.

8.6.3 Cambridge Sports Lakes: Mr Woolhouse's offer of a potential grass-mowing partnership agreement for the Halingway had to be declined; on inspection, it was apparent that the Country Park's tractor was too wide for safe use along the Halingway. The Trust intended to use Todd's Lake within the Country Park for rowing training and triathlon swimming, but weed control was an ongoing issue. A series of events had been hosted at the Country Park to stimulate public interest, including Environment Day, a bicycle rally and in late July, an open-air Shakespeare production which took place in spite of heavy rain.

8.6.4 CamToo Project: Mr Moseley had made a presentation to the Cambridgeshire Transport Commission arguing the case for the CamToo transport link. Questions regarding the reliability of the EA's one-dimensional flood risk model remained

unanswered. The CamToo Project had commissioned its own independent consultant's study into the flood benefits of constructing the relief channel, but the independent findings had been severely criticised by the EA. The CamToo Project had made a detailed critique of the EA's response; their reply had been awaited for 4 months. The EA had offered to meet Mr Moseley and partners once their evaluation had been completed; the invitation was to include the River Manager. Other stakeholders (i.e. Highways Agency, City and District Councils, Sport Lakes Trust) had vested interests in the reliability of the flood model. A larger stakeholder meeting was advisable. Mr Moseley had also approached Cambridgeshire Horizons for support in principle.

- 8.6.5 Planning Consultations: The River Manager attended stakeholder workshops convened by the City Council on 15th June and 8th July to re-appraise its failed Heritage Lottery Funding bid project for improvements to Jesus Green. Priority project elements were to be carried-forward using different funding streams based on stakeholder feedback. An objection was lodged via the Peterborough City Council Planning Portal to its consultation on the Minerals and Waste Processing (MWP02) Additional Sites, which included a proposed household waste recycling facility on land owned by Jesus College within Chesterton Fen, near First Post Corner. The River Manager attended a meeting of City Council officers about the Government's draft Flood and Water Management Bill. Cambs County Council was the lead authority with the duty of producing an overall flood risk management strategy for the county. An indicative surface water flooding map had been produced by the EA for the City area showing the 'worst case' scenario to assist with emergency planning. It was foreseen that the surface flooding predictions would ultimately be joined with the river flood predictions for the Cam.
- 8.6.6 SCDC Towpath: Members of the Cambs Youth Probation Team had removed graffiti from the fencing and signs at the end of Fen Road, Milton, by SCDC's arrangement.
- 8.6.7 Land Registry application, at Quayside, by Scudamore's: Nothing to report.
- 8.6.8 Miscellaneous: A Flood Defence consent consultation had been received for the construction of a new bridge immediately downstream of Bottisham Lock by Blackburn Fraser Ltd, on behalf of the National Trust. The new bridge was a key link in the infrastructural improvements for the Wicken Fen Vision. The bridge was designed to carry cyclists, horse-riders and pedestrians. Being outside the Conservancy Area a s15 licence was not required and approval was indicated.

8.7 Moorings

- 8.7.1 Camboaters: The Great Cam Clean Up took place 25th April, attracting over 200 volunteers. Baits Bite office was used as a station for volunteers. Twenty-eight bags of rubbish were collected from the reaches downstream of Baits Bite. Floodwaters in February had deposited much debris along the river margins. A leaflet drop to Cambridge households about 'swine flu' had failed to include the residential moorers, deepening their sense of marginalisation. The River Manager provided an updated events' listing for the June edition of Camboaters' newsletter.
- 8.7.2 Clayhithe 48 hour visitor's moorings: The visitor moorings acted as a temporary overflow for City permit-holders fleeing Midsummer Fair by agreement with the Control Officer.
- 8.7.3 Mooring Arrangements with Cambridge City Council: The City Council had been invoiced for the River Bailiff's monitoring and enforcement. Three residential narrowboat owners ('The Phoenix', 'Zoneca', 'Chester Chaffinch') had failed to apply for permits to moor on City lands for 2009/10. They had been undermining the City's policy by exceeding the 48-hr time limit at Jubilee Gardens visitor moorings on a regular basis. Members of Camboaters had voiced unrest, questioning why they should pay fees when others were able to take advantage of the facilities for nothing. Legal notice was served upon 'The Phoenix' to move by the City's officers.
- 8.7.4 Conservators' Mooring Policy: Riverboat Georgina was granted permission to moor beside Magdalene College Gardens overnight on 17th June to serve as a floating casino for the May Ball. Midsummer Fair (24th – 29th June) and the closure of Jesus Lock (19th June to 31st July) had displaced a number of vessels from their usual moorings. The limited bank available for moorings gave little flexibility for any displacement, the river being at capacity, and some vessels had to moor temporarily in zones which were normally prohibited owing to channel constraints. The River Bailiff routinely served notices after the Fairs to ensure that vessels returned to their proper moorings promptly. The River Manager attended a joint meeting with Active Communities, Camboaters and Cam rowers to discuss moorings and related issues, 24th June. Unfortunately, rowing representation was low on account of Henley Week.

8.8 Registration

- 8.8.1 Boat Standards: Having been interviewed by the River Manager, the following commercial punt operators had been authorised to operate for the 2009/10 season (as at 30th June):

A. Ramsey, Cambridge Chauffeur Punts, E Wynne, J Agius, J Bayliss-Smith, J. Dale, J. Fowler, J. Lyall, J. MacGinnis, J. Merwiak, N. Maseychik, O. Prevett, S. Beaney, S. Godfrey, S. Matthews, Scudamores, T. Arnold, T. Lohman, T. Owen-Jones and T. Sugden.

Steel cruiser N6563 'Mistral' had been deemed dangerous on account of protruding metalwork from its superstructure; the Bailiff had served notice upon the owner bringing attention to its hazardous condition.

The Boat Safety Scheme office, Watford, had informed the River Manager about a carbon monoxide incident on residential narrowboat 'Innocenti' moored at Midsummer Common. The owner had left ashes smouldering in a bucket inside the cabin which had set off the vessel's CO alarm (250 ppm recorded). The BSS would be reporting the matter to its advisory committee, being one of 19 serious incidents recorded since 1st January 2009 on the inland waterways.

The City Council had received a complaint about a permit holder flying a 'Jolly Roger' flag on his barge's masthead. This was a matter for planning enforcement, the Conservators' byelaws not being applicable.

Staff from Scudamores, plus the River Manager, were invited to try the new sport pursuit of 'stand-up paddling' 23rd June on the upper river courtesy of Mr Gurner, who hoped to set up a business in the region. The boards were subject to normal registration requirements on the navigation. Mr Gurner was advised to restrict his activities to the upper river for safety reasons.

8.8.2 EA Interchange Agreement: The agreement for 2009/10 had been signed by Mr Forbes, Head of Anglian Waterways.

8.8.3 Non-registration prosecutions: Compensation orders from the Magistrates Courts had been received in respect of actions taken for the 2008/09 season. Unregistered vessel notices had been issued to approximately 50 boats since 1st April. Those remaining unregistered by mid-July were to be issued 7-day final warning notices.

8.8.4 Interchange agreement with the British Canoe Union: No further progress.

8.8.5 Interchange agreement with the Amateur Rowing Association: No further progress.

8.9 Events

8.9.1 Events: High entry numbers had caused the organisers of the Spring Head to Head and Spring Regatta to divide the events across two days, 9th & 10th May, instead of the one day agreed with the River Manager. The Chairman was minded to refuse

permission given their presumptuous attitude; the events were allowed to go ahead in their modified form accompanied by a warning that late notice would not be considered again. Understandably, other river users complained about the poor event planning reducing the availability of the navigation.

Signs had been made up for temporary display on the towpath when the firing cannon were in use near the A14 bridge. CUCBC and CRA had agreed to pay an equal share of the costs. More general 'event in progress' signs, with fold-down lockable panels, had been ordered, to be placed at Chesterton, Plough Reach and Baits Bite.

The Great Cam Clean Up took place 25th April (see 8.7.1).

Cambs Fire & Rescue Services had been undertaking water safety and rescue training on the navigation and upper river by agreement.

A gentleman assumed that he could hold a wedding reception at Byron's Pool Local Nature Reserve. The City Council denied permission being out of keeping with the area's status.

Gable Events hosted corporate dragon boat racing at the Plough on 8th June. Fees were charged for the temporary registrations of two dragon boats and two safety boats.

Revd Thompson, Senior Treasurer of the CUCBC, had been extremely proactive in the planning of the May Bumps (10th-13th June), liaising with the River Manager regarding use of the towpath and gun shed, meeting with the manager of the Riverboat Georgina to agree sharing of the navigation and arranging the provision of portaloos on Stourbridge Common with the City Council. A briefing note was sent to Bridge Boatyard about the navigation arrangements for the benefit of their customers. An aggressive swan was causing problems at Plough Reach, mounting boats and attacking crews and coxes to defend its family. Advice on moving the bird was sought but only Natural England was able to grant a licence and the circumstances did not warrant, in their opinion, an application. HM's Swan Marker had caught wind of the story; he feared a media frenzy if the birds came to any harm during the high-profile races. Volunteers from the Fen Ditton moorings trained the swans into a feeding regime, enticing them off the navigation with cornmeal, and for the final day of the Bumps, the whole swan family was contained in a temporary pen using barrier fencing supplied from the Conservators' Depot. The race organisers were very grateful for the volunteers' help. Mr Middleton assisted again for the X-Press Head Race on 15th June, containing the swans. For this he received a thank you card from the organisers and his partner, a bunch of flowers.

Cambridge v. Padova punt racing took place along the Backs, 14th June, as part of an annual exchange visit organised by Friends of the Cam (Darwin College).

Sailfish Weekend took place 19th-21st June ex-Cam Sailing Club. Five visiting boats joined the racing fleet.

The True Jesus Church was seeking a suitable location for a water baptism. Grantchester Mill Pool was suggested, subject to other local permissions. A full risk assessment was undertaken. The ceremony was due to take place 19th July.

8.10 Publicity

8.10.1 A.I.N.A. directory and bulletin: Nothing to report

8.10.2 Notice boards: A new notice board for river users was to be ordered by Active Communities for Stourbridge Common. Its location was to be agreed with Camboaters.

8.10.3 Publications: The removal and break-up of cruiser 'Skadi' was featured in the May edition of Towpath Talk, which also featured an article 'Calls to clean up the Cam' about the joint EA/Conservancy leaflet (see 8.5.12). The Fen Ditton swan, named 'Mr Asbo', had attracted considerable media attention before the May Bumps. Articles had been published in the Cambridge Evening News warning rowers to be mindful of river wildlife. A dead cygnet was taken away by the RSPCA officer for a post mortem. The Times newspaper ran a full page article on the punting industry, weekend 6th June. A journalist from Anglia Afloat visited the Cam 26th June aboard the GOBA Chairman's cruiser. He was greeted at Baits Bite by the River Manager. His article was to be published in August.

8.10.4 Presentations: The River Manager gave a presentation on managing the river Cam to the St George's Over 60s Club on 28th April. Questions from the audience related to the unattractive appearance of many of the residential boats, illegal sewage discharge from boats, riverbank ownership and dredging policy. The River Manager and River Bailiff demonstrated the operating of Jesus Lock to year groups 5 and 6 from St Philip's School, 17th & 18th June, mornings. The River Manager attended the first Family Fun Day at Byron's Pool LNR 21st June with a display stand. The River Manager provided pictures and captions for the Cam Valley Forum's display stand at the annual University Conversazione.

8.10.5 Media: Jeremy Sallis (BBC Radio Cambs) interviewed the River Manager live on 24th June about the Jesus Lock project and footpath closure. Aura Public Relations, Newark, was generating media releases on behalf of Hargreaves Lock Gates.

8.10.6 Website: The webmaster had been provided with various event updates for the river diary. A Frequently Asked Question had been added to the web pages about flooding and flood warning registrations until a Strong Stream Advice policy had been developed. A copy of the BCU Canoeist's Code of Conduct, made available by Mr Savage (Eastern Region Access Officer)

had been placed on the website following a minor conflict between some canoeists and anglers on the upper river near Grantchester.

- 8.10.7 Miscellaneous: The River Manager had responded to various public enquiries about the history of buildings in the Mill Pond area and history of the City's watercourses, plus various moorings' requests, the demand being unrelenting.

9. Dates of Next Meetings:

The meetings for Thursday 24th September, Thursday 14th January 2010 and Thursday 15th April were confirmed, and Thursday 8th July was agreed.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.02pm.