

Medway River Users Association



Minutes of the Monthly Committee Meeting

Held at 19:30 hrs on 9th June 2009

At the Bull Inn, East Farleigh

Present:

Brian Hegarty (Chair)

Roger Mobbs

Terry Riley

Pat Fyfe

Des Long

Adrian Larkin,

Philip Munslow

Bev Henderson

Jim Clarke

Katy Turner

Bob Jennings

Brian Clayton

Item 1: **Apologies:** Ray Chitty

The Chairman welcomed everyone, especially new committee members and introductions were made by all. Email addresses were obtained from the new members and it was agreed the contact details of all committee members would be sent out with the minutes.

Item 2: **Acceptance of the Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. Proposed: Roger Mobbs, 2nd Bev Henderson

Item 3: **Minutes & Matters Arising**

The subject of bi-monthly meetings was not discussed at the AGM. However, it was proposed that from July, the committee would meet bi-monthly, with extra meetings called if required. Proposed: Brian Clayton, 2nd Roger Mobbs. Carried. The dates of the meetings for the remainder of 2009 will therefore be: 14th July, 8th September, 10th November. All to be held in the meeting room at the East Farleigh Bull.

Item 4: **Discussion Topics**

None.

Item 5: **Report from the Environment Agency**

Philip reported as follows;

Hampstead Lock. This has been completed with the exception of minor snagging works, and is now operational. BH advised that the new footpath is breaking up already. Philip to inspect and arrange repair if necessary. BC asked whether double gates were to be installed to allow access. Philip advised this is the responsibility of Highways, but understood only a single gate was being installed.

Dredging: Following the incident with the dredger, no further works can be carried out until after an investigation has been completed and any recommendations implemented. However, 95% of the dredging works had been completed and the removal of the sunken vessel at Tovil would be undertaken when the dredger was again available. The old EA dredger will be auctioned off.

Wilderness Boat Club: Had a very enjoyable weekend, and reached upstream of Tonbridge.

KCC divers are undertaking bridge inspection works between Allington and East Farleigh between Wednesday 10th and Friday 12th June. There would be a safety boat in attendance and river users were asked to proceed with care.

Porters Lock

The canoe and fish pass at Porters Lock has been completed and well received.

Tonbridge Town Lock

Walkways being replaced late July/early August – should not affect navigation.

Allington Sluice refurbishment. Work should be starting in a few weeks. The walkway across the structure will be closed whilst the scaffolding is erected. Exact date not yet known.

East Farleigh & Teston Locks: Work on replacing landing the up and down river landing stages should start around September/October.

Eldridges Lock: The anticipated "Kick Start" funding had not been received and work on Eldridges Lock will therefore be deferred into next year's work programme.

Moorings: Philip had been in discussion with the Hop Farm, who will be offering camping facilities for river users. He had suggested that they may wish to tidy the river-bank to provide moorings at a small charge.

River Tidy Up: Philip explained that EA staff are allowed 1 day per year environmental leave, which resulted in a 3 day litter pick when 12 people in canoes collected 62 bin liners full of litter between Tonbridge and East Farleigh. The majority of rubbish was collected between Tonbridge and East Lock.

Licence Fees: Consultation on next year's charges would take place around November/December as usual. Philip advised that the EA plans to harmonise charges across the region. The exact formula has not been calculated, but would reflect the facilities available, ie charges for the Medway would be lower than for the Thames. This harmonisation would help reduce admin costs. It is anticipated it would be 3-5 years before the draft document was ready for consultation.

Works and Transport Act: This is still with DEFRA, however it is understood this is due to be signed off before the next Election.

Trees

Philip was asked to contact MBC/KCC regarding tree cutting work being carried out along the riverbank in Maidstone, as it appears the contractors are allowing the trees to fall in to the river, where they are posing problems for navigation. He was also asked to look at a fallen tree in Tovil. It was noted that there is a branch which appears to be standing upright in the river bed in the centre of Maidstone, outside the court buildings. This has been reported to Allington Lock and Philip will investigate further.

Tovil Boatyard

BH reported that the developer of Tovil Boatyard site has gone into receivership and the site is for sale. There was concern amongst residents that the slipway will be opened to public use. It was confirmed that this has never been a public slipway and Philip advised that permission would need to be sought from the EA for this, and this was unlikely to be granted. The EA were interested to know whether the new owner would be required to remove the old moorings and tidy the river area.

Speeding Boats

It was reported that boats are speeding along the river, particularly in the late evening. It was believed these were being launched at the slipway in Maidstone and at Yalding. There was a report that the wash from a boat in Maidstone splashed an elderly pedestrian on the footpath. Philip advised that the EA is purchasing a speed gun and will be training its staff, but requested that if a speeding boat was spotted, to ring Allington Lock. Philip also suggested putting up signs reminding people to watch their wash.

Philip advised that Kings College had requested an exemption for their new coaching launch.

Tovil

BH reported there were problems with drug dealing in Tovil and cars had been sighted around the iron bridge. There were reports of suspicious boat activity in the area and everyone is asked to report anything suspicious to the local Police.

Item 6: **Report from Medway Valley Countryside Partnership**

No report submitted – BH had spoken to Caroline Drewett who had agreed to send a representative to the meetings.

Item 7: **Planning Report**

BH advised planning permission had been given for the illuminated sign for the new floating restaurant.

Permission had been granted for the marina at Yalding.

The Cygenta site has had the number of units reduced to 350. An exhibition has been advertised, and BH will attend when he finds out the details.

Item 8: **Boating Report**

Roger Mobbs apologised that the rowing club had not been represented at the AGM.,

Item 9: **Commercial Interest Report**

Bev will submit the bill for the AGM to Janet for payment.

Item 10: **Treasurer's Report**

No report submitted. BH advised that Janet has agreed to continue as Treasurer and Membership Secretary until August. It was agreed to email/write to all members requesting applications for these posts.

Item 11: **Membership Secretary's Report**

No report submitted

Item 12: **Media**

TR advised he has been adding more archiving material to the website.

Item 13: **Any Other Business**

BJ advised that it will not be possible to share the RNLI stand at the River Festival due to lack of space. It was agreed that BH will provide a couple of display boards which would also hold membership fliers and these would be located around the area of the RNLI stand.

There will be no river music stage this year due to security concerns. Live music would be located elsewhere.

Meeting concluded at 21:10hrs

Future meetings: **14th July, 8th September, 10th November 2009 in the meeting room, The Bull Inn, East Farleigh.**