

# *Medway River Users Association*



## **Minutes of the Monthly Committee Meeting** 19:30 hrs      9th September 2008

### **Present:**

Tony Elliston (Chair)  
Katy Turner  
Brian Hegarty  
Bob Jennings

Janet Higgins  
Graham Ingram  
Ray Chitty (Sec.)

Pat Fyfe  
Terry Riley  
Bev Henderson

Item 1:

### **Apologises:** Roger Mobbs

Item 2:

### **Acceptance of the Minutes**

- The minutes of the last meeting were accepted unanimously.

Item 3:

### **Minutes & Matters Arising**

- Further to last months statement that we are now receiving planning applications from Tonbridge Brian Hegarty stated that he needed to write to Tonbridge Council in order to gain access to these planning applications.  
**Action: Brian Hegarty**
- Bev Henderson stated that Steve Birling, a councillor for Maidstone, may have information on contact points for local fishing organisations.
- Tony Elliston informed the meeting that he had replied to Roger Mobbs letter discussed at the July meeting.

Item 4:

### **Discussion Topics**

A general discussion took place on the proposed **Teston Lock Site Management Plan** submitted by the Environment Agency (EA) in March 2008. A copy of the whole document was provided for the committee to review but it was felt that this rather large document was too involved to consider in detail. A lively discussion however took place on the main points of the plan and effects that the plan may have on the lock environment. Ray Chitty said that he had looked in detail at the proposed plan and felt that there was little that the MRUA should be concerned about. It was agreed that Ray Chitty should write to the Environment Agency and formally support the Plan in principal.

**Action: Ray Chitty**

Further discussion was opened by Tony Elliston on the relationship between the MRUA and EA. Currently the EA comes to us and informs us about what is happening along the river and gains input from the MRUA on these issues. Tony Elliston asked the committee what other areas they felt would be helpful to improve the flow of information between the two organisations. Bev Henderson expressed a view that the EA were only reactive in dealing with issues along the river and not proactive in preventing issues. Bev raised the issue of the fallen tree opposite the water works and the EA's lack of response in dealing with it other than to tie it back against the bank. Tony Elliston suggested that maybe the MRUA should consult with the

landowners directly along the river bank about the condition of the river and banks, consulting with the EA in supplying the relevant contact details. Katy Turner added that we should in fact be offering to assist landowners in getting a response on issues along the river and not being critical about them. Tony Elliston agreed to speak to Brian Clayton regarding access to contact details of landowner along the river.

**Action: Tony Elliston**

Janet Higgins reminded the committee that as yet no notification of Environment Agency consultation had been received; this is normally done in September. The meeting agreed to continue this discussion next month when hopefully the EA would be represented at the meeting.

Item 5:

**Report from the Environment Agency**

No report submitted

Item 6:

**Report from Medway Valley Countryside Partnership**

No report submitted

Item 7:

**Planning Report**

Only point of interest raised was that of Sandal Perkins plan to undertake a major redevelopment of their riverside site at Aylesford which effectively comes under the Medway Ports jurisdiction. It was noted that part of this redevelopment would include improvements to the riverside path. Also mentioned was planned redevelopment of Thamesport in the estuary, raised at the meeting as a matter of interest.

Item 8:

**Boating Report**

No report submitted

Item 9:

**Commercial Interest Report**

Bev Henderson informed the meeting of restricted height at Barming bridge from the 22<sup>nd</sup> September until 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 due to maintenance work. Bev also mentioned that a barge, planned to be moored in Maidstone as a floating restaurant, was currently moored at Sandgate awaiting a survey. The size of the barge was thought to be too big to navigate the river above the lock.

The lack of response by the Maidstone police to people using drugs along the riverside in Maidstone was a cause for concern and it was felt that this deterred people from using this area at times.

Item 10:

**Treasurer's Report**

Current balance of the account stands at £5578.13p

Item 11:

**Membership Secretary's Report**

There has been one new member joining the association since the report. Janet Higgins also enquired about the possibility of setting up a contact group on the computer, Ray Chitty said that that was simple enough and given the information he would gladly assist.

Item 12:

**Media**

Terry Riley was thanked for successfully getting the last printed version of the Crier published. The new web site has now been published and future newsletters will be printed from the site for those without computer access. A discussion on the new site took place and it was mentioned by Ray Chitty that the new site was still in effect a work in progress as the site could be adapted to meet the need of the association as new ideas and items were thought of. The next step was to advertise the site where ever possible to get people to use it.

Item 13:

**Any Other Business**

The new facilities at Allington Lock will be formally opened on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008; Brian Hegarty & Terry Riley will represent the MRUA. Bev Henderson and Graham Ingram will also attend in their other roles, commercial and inland waterways.

Ann Widicombe, our patron, will be holding a Thanksgiving Service at St Francis Church on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008 to mark her retirement from politics and as our local Member of Parliament. Tony Elliston will attend and represent the MRUA.

A meeting regarding the issue of treated water being returned to the river will take place at Strood Yacht Club on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at 7:30pm.

Meeting concluded at 21:30hrs

Next meeting: **14<sup>th</sup> October 2008**