



Medway River Users Association

Minutes of the bi-monthly Committee Meeting 19.30hrs 11th May 2010

Present:

Brian Hegarty (Chair)	Ray Chitty (M/S&T)	Des Long (Sec)
Bob Jennings	Pat Fyfe	Phil Munslow
Adrian Larkin	Bev Henderson	Terry Riley
Eric Percival		

Item 1:

Apologies:

Roger Mobbs Andrea Griffiths

Item2:

Acceptance of the Minutes

The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Item3:

Minutes & Matters Arising

Item 12: We confirmed that the AGM was set for Friday 21st May 2010.

Item 8 Ray confirmed he had written to Ian Chittenden and read his reply regarding the closure of the toilets in the town centre and confirmed that there was commitment at the last planning meeting on 6th May to reopen the toilets once the budget has been restructured.

Item 6: Brian confirmed that in respect of the Enforcement Notice placed on the building project at Tovil there was a public enquiry meeting commencing next week. Brian will have a meeting with Helen Grant MP to enlist her support.

Item 4:

Change of Officer

Ray asked the committee to consider a change of officer as Des had asked to become the secretary whilst Ray took over the membership secretary and treasurer role. This was agreed by the committee.

Item 5:

AGM arrangements

We confirmed that the AGM being held at the Allington Belle would have a pick up time at 7pm from the Town Centre.

Item 6:

Letter from EFCC

Ray reported that he had written to the East Farleigh Cruising Club in respect of correspondence received from Peter Booker who wished to clarify the banking procedures used by the Club. Ray had written to the EFCC and received a reply from the chairperson which clarifies the matters satisfactorily.

Item 7:

Report from Environmental Agency

Phil apologised for not attending previous meetings and confirmed that John Morgan had now retired and a new temporary manager was in post for an initial six months to assess the tasks/role of the post. The new manager was Chris Wick (Chris.wick@environmental-agency.gov.uk) Phil confirmed that anything urgent could still be dealt with by the Waterways Manager, as Chris was still in transition into the new role.

TWA Orders have confirmed that Waterways now have new powers in that a) a new road safety scheme provided bylaws to remove vessels that did not comply with the standards etc. b) a consultation meeting was in place regarding navigational and recreational issues and the MRUA will be invited alongside other cruising clubs to partake in the consultation process. A key issue at the meeting would focus on centralising the present licence costs of the three separate waterways including the Anglian and there may need to be adjustments of all present rates to deal with the present disparities.

Dredgers

Phil confirmed that the work has been completed for this season and the boat that had sunk at Tovil has now been removed.

Bev noted the high variations of water levels that have been noticed recently and Phil described the floating control at Allington sluice gate that can become problematic if the gates are jammed with logs etc. The lock keepers have an alarm in place to prevent this if possible.

Litter clearance

It was noted that there had been a recent four day period where 12 staff had focused on clearing litter from the river and total of 70 bags of rubbish had been taken out of the river.

Ongoing Capital Works

Phil confirmed that the Allington Sluice was a £1.1 million investment and the work was ongoing with the fish pass aiming to be completed by early June. Eldridges Lock i work aims to start on 10th September with the possibility that it will close to navigation at that time.

Tovil boatyard

- a) Brian asked whether there was any news regarding the moorings on the front of the boatyard and it was confirmed that there were no recent updates.
- b) Tovil slipway. The Environmental Agency does not enforce usage of the slipway unless there is unauthorised usage by visitors.

Item 6:

Planning Law Authority Approval

It was noted that there was a possibility of a further restaurant craft being established on the Medway and we discussed how we could oppose such an application. We discussed what influence we could make to express our concerns and noted that Des had recently contacted Helen Grant the new MP asking her to consider becoming the patron of the MRUA and a meeting with Helen was being planned. It was also noted that Alan Smith who works as a reporter with the Kent Messenger is also a good contact to provide any media influence regarding concerns.

Item 7:

Report from the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership

An apology was sent to the meeting as no report was available at this time.

Item 8:

Planning report

We noted that there were no planning issues of concern at the present time.

Item 9:

Commercial Interest Report

Bev updated the meeting in a business initiative she was taking forward in providing two hire boats on the river that could be hired for two or four hours or all day and she was hoping to get two berths established this week.

Bob expressed his concern that the Medway Motor Yacht Club was closing down after being a viable club for 35 years. The closure was due to lack of member and officer support to keep the club going.

Item 10:

Treasurer's report

Ray confirmed that the banking issues he had inherited had now been fully sorted out and he was now receiving all authorised bank statements. The complications that have had to be ironed out were due to change of data systems that had taken place within the bank itself, Terry and Brian were now the counter signatories on the account and Ray provided the statement of the association's accounts with a total credit of £6,113.91. Ray also confirmed that the copy of all mandate's are now available and the committee expressed their thanks to Ray for all his hard work in sorting out this inherited banking complication.

Item 11:

Membership Secretary's report

Ray confirmed that all previous members have been written to asking them to renew their membership and at the present time he had had 45 replies and two cancellations.

The meeting unanimously agreed that the membership was poor and we needed to have a much stronger voice if we wanted to be influential in standing up for issues impacting on the river.

A number of suggestions were made by Ray including

- 1) Giving present members free membership if they were to recruit two new members to the Association.
- 2) Visits to other Marinas to push for further recruitment.
- 3) Could we consider having discounts in local chandlers and shops to encourage membership take up.
- 4) Bev asked that she be provided with a batch of application forms that she could use on the Allington Belle and we agreed that these would be sent to her (**action Ray**).

Next Meeting 7.30 on the 13th July