

Medway River Users Association



Minutes of the Monthly Committee Meeting

19:30 hrs 15th July 2008

Present:

Tony Elliston (Chair)	Janet Higgins	Pat Fyfe
Katy Turner	Graham Ingram	
Brian Hegarty	Ray Chitty (Sec.)	
John Morgan (EA)	Anna Preswell	

Item 1:

Apologises:

Roger Mobbs	Bryan Clayton
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Item 2:

Minutes & Matters Arising

- It was suggested that the M.R.U.A consider giving presentations to parish council along the River Medway in an attempt to inform them of the associations function and role. The format of the presentations was discussed and ideas put forward as to the production of flyers or leaflets for distribution. Janet agreed to draft a document for presentation.

Action: Janet Higgins

- Difficulty has been met in obtaining any contact details of fishing organisations using the river, work will continue in trying to obtain contact points so that these organisations can be represented at MRUA committee meetings. Anna stated that she have some contact details and would provide them to the committee

Action: Anna Preswell

- There has been no response from the canoe club when asked if they would like to be represented at meetings.

Item 3:

Discussion Topics

The document titled 'Southern Water – Resources Management Plan' was presented and discussed. In essence the document laid out proposed plans to draw water from the river for domestic use and replace it with treated water, arguments within the document pointed out that the treated water could contain elements harmful to the river environment.

The topic was discussed at length but the committee felt that too little was known about the subject matter and the only information was that supplied within the document. No action or communication would be undertaken at this time until the committee were in possession of independent facts.

Item 4:

Report from the Environment Agency

The environment agency has now moved into their new offices situated at Allington Lock, current telephone numbers remain the same. The new facilities at the lock are running slightly behind schedule but the new toilets, showers, slipway and pump out facilities are expected to be complete by the end of August. An opening event is to be arranged to which the MRUA would be invited.

A large tree has fallen into the river by the Southern Water pumping station moorings and efforts have been made to clear it, due to its size the main trunk of the tree may not be cleared until the autumn. In the meantime the tree has been tied back against the river bank.

The committee was advised that the Boat Safety Scheme would come in force on the Medway from 2009 and all 800+ boats on the river would need a safety certificate. Discussion took place about the impact that this would have on boaters using the river and the fact that there were not many examiners in the area to check every boat by April. One suggestion was that as so many boats will be obtaining certificates for the first time and will need to renew them again in four years maybe the scheme should be phased in over two or three years to spread the work load on examiners out. John Morgan will consider this suggestion.

A letter had been received from Roger Mobbs regarding the footpaths and riverbanks, it was critical of the maintenance of the paths and in particular, the perceived lack of cutting of undergrowth. There was a full discussion of the issues raised, including comment from the EA. It was agreed that Tony would respond to Rogers's letter.

Action: Tony Elliston

Item 5:

Report from Medway Valley Countryside Partnership

No report submitted

Item 6:

Planning Report

Brian Hegarty stated that he was now receiving planning information from Tonbridge Council as well as Maidstone.

Item 7:

Boating Report

Katy Turner advised the committee that boaters had experienced very low water above Sluice Weir and on a few occasions boats had grounded.

Item 8:

Commercial Interests Report

No representative present – no report submitted

Item 9:

Treasurer's Report

Item 10:

Membership Secretary's Report

Item 11:

Media

Terry Riley was not present but it was reported that he was awaiting some last pieces of copy before publishing the Crier.

Ray Chitty said that the new web pages were almost ready and that it was hoped that the new site would be online within the next few weeks.

Action: Ray Chitty/Terry Riley

Item 12:

Any Other Business

Pat Fyfe suggested that the committee meetings be moved from the third Tuesday of the month to the second Tuesday as she had other commitments which clashed with the MRUA meetings. It was also mentioned that Roger Mobbs had the same problems attending due to other commitments. The committee, after discuss, agreed to move the meetings to the second Tuesday in the month as from September.

It was mentioned that Community Police Officer Neil Lettington had become the unofficial river liaison officer for all incidents on the river and if anyone witnesses any acts of criminal intent along the river they should contact Neil on 07772 225958 or Maidstone Police on 01622 690690.

Meeting concluded at 21:10hrs

Next meeting: **9th September 2008**