

Medway River Users Association



Minutes of the Monthly Committee Meeting

19:30 hrs 20th May 2008

Present:

Tony Elliston (Chair)

Janet Higgins

Bev Henderson

Katy Turner

Bob Jennings

Graham Ingram

Brian Hegarty

Terry Riley

Ray Chitty (Sec.)

Item 1:

Apologises:

Roger Mobbs

Philip Munslow

Pat Fyffe

Item 2:

Minutes & Matters Arising

As there were new members of the committee present Tony Elliston suggested that everyone introduce themselves and say a few words about their connection with the river.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and accepted. Proposed by Terry Riley and seconded by Janet Higgins.

Tony Elliston thanked Bev Henderson for the use of the Allington Belle for the Annual General meeting and the excellent buffet that was supplied. Comment was made regarding the distraction by some members in the stern of the Belle during the talk by the guest speaker at the AGM and it was thought that in future the stern speakers would be switched on so as to involve everyone on board in the talk being given.

Tony Elliston updated the committee on his plans to hold a civic reception with the new Mayor of Maidstone to mark the 40th anniversary of the MRUA. It is hoped that a reception of past and present committee members would be invited to this function.

There appeared to be no change to the current situation regarding the River Festival. The change in council control does not appear to have moved things forward. Bob Jennings stated that the Medway Motor Yacht Club will still attend in Maidstone on the River Festival date as was planned by East Farleigh Cruise Club. It was mentioned that this is the way that the River Festival started and going back to basics may not be a bad thing.

Item 3:

Election of Officers

The vacant posts within the committee were filled as follows;

Vice Chairperson	Brian Hegarty
Treasurer	Janet Higgins (combined with the Membership Sec.)
Planning	Brian Hegarty
Media	Terry Riley & Ray Chitty

It was agreed that the new signatories would be;

Janet Higgins	Terry Riley	Ray Chitty	Brian Hegarty
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Discussion pursued on the need to attract more interest from other areas of river users and a drive to increase membership of the association. This discussion lead into the value of the Crier publication and the web site (see Item 12).

Item 5:

Report from the Environment Agency

No representative present – no report submitted.

Item 6:

Report from Medway Valley Countryside Partnership

No representative present – no report submitted

Item 7:

Planning Report

Brian Hegarty had nothing to report on this item other than to mention that there may be a possible development plan in the future regarding moorings in the Allington/Ringlestone area. Brian also asked if anyone residing in the Tonbridge & Malling area could get themselves on the planning list as currently he was only able to view Maidstone applications and for the benefit of the association needed to be aware of all planning applications on the river.

Item 8:

Boating Report

Katy Turner gave a verbal report on plans to hold a raft race on the weekend of the ‘would have been’ River Festival. As there is no formal sponsor any money raised by holding such an event would be used for the benefit of the participants and organisers. Katy reiterated that East Farleigh Cruise Club intended to moor in Maidstone during the weekend of the ‘would have been’ River Festival.

Item 9:

Commercial Interests Report

Bev Henderson stated that the Environment Agency was prepared to fund the placement of moorings along part of the Millennium Park in Maidstone if the council would sign over the land to them. It appears that with a change of council control no one is sure who is now responsible for this project and there is a danger that this important piece of work could now be shelved until next year.

Item 10:

Treasurer's Report

Having produced a full association account sheet at the AGM there was nothing to report.

Item 11:

Membership Secretary's Report

There have been eight(8) membership renewals and one (1) new member since the last meeting. The association has also received a £5.00 donation.

Item 12:

The Crier Editorial

Terry Riley stated that he did have some articles for publication but as usual it was very difficult to get people to submit material. This statement lead to a full discussion on the value of the Crier and the current web site layout.

Ray Chitty said that he had viewed the web site and felt that it was difficult to find out what the association were doing when in fact the committee were working extremely hard on behalf of its members. As such he presented an example of an updated web site and asked the committee if they would like to develop his example and turn it into a completely re-design site. The committee were happy to use Ray's design and asked that he work with Terry Riley to design and publish the new pages. The new site could be updated frequently and keep abreast of important information with a facility to print off the news page as a news sheet. This brought the subject back to the Crier and Tony Elliston expressed concern that those who did not own a computer would not be informed of events and news if the Crier was replaced by a computer information system only.

It was agreed that a new style news sheet would be a better option than the current Crier booklet and this could be published twice or three times a year. The next Crier issue would carry an article on this subject.

Ray & Terry will begin work on the new site pages and Ray will publish on-going development on his test site. Address to be supplied to committee members.

Item 13:

Any Other Business

Brian Hegarty raised the issue of people using the disused slipway at Tovil are asked if this was permissible. It was thought that since the gate has been placed across the public slipway at Maidstone, to ensure users pay the required fee, people are using the old slipway at Tovil. The unauthorized use of the old slipway should be monitored by members.

Tony stated he would like to arrange, as last year, to take some Environment Agency personnel upriver to show them the river from on the water. The E.A. are keen for a re-run of this trip and would allow some of the office staff to attend. Tony is hoping that some boat owners will volunteer to get involved in this trip.

Meeting concluded at 21:35hrs

Next meeting: 18th June 2008