



# CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM

*Navigation authority for the River Cam, between Cambridge and Bottisham Lock*

TO ALL CONSERVATORS, OBSERVERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Meeting of the CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM **THURSDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2023** at the Guildhall,  
Cambridge, at 10.00am.

## Minutes

### 1. Welcome and apologies

#### **Attendees:**

**Conservators:** Ms Kate Hurst (Chair), Cllr Anna Bradnam (VC and Acting Clerk), Mr Giles Greenfield, Mr Simon Judge, Mr Paul Separovic, Cllr Katie Thornburrow, Cllr David Levien, Cllr Richard Swift, Dr May Block, Mr Tim Wotherspoon, Mr Alistair Storer.

**Observers:** Mr Bill Key, Dr Christine Heath, Mr Peter Watson, Father David Goode, Mr Roland Beevor, Mr John Leighton

**Officers:** Mrs H Cleary (CEO), Mr David Partridge (RPO)

**Consultant:** Mr Clive Brown

**Public:** Rod Ingersent

**Apologies** had been received from:

**Conservators:** Richard Turnill (Uni), Steven Morris (Uni)

**Observers:** J McNaughten (Punt), Clara Todd (CVF)

The Chair noted that item 4.3 Events Policy Changes Complaint would be discussed with other items in the closed session to follow because it was a sensitive issue and involved matters of legal privilege.

### 2. Minutes of a previous meeting of the full body of Conservators 27 April 2023.

Proposed – AB, Seconded – KH (Chair).

Approved unanimously.

**Decision:** *The Minutes of the Conservators meeting 27 April 2023 were approved unamended.*

### 3. Matters arising (not otherwise on the agenda)

3.1 **Clerk role update** – Two candidates had undertaken a screening interview. Second interviews would be held on 1 August.

3.2 **Section 15 works** on the river preliminary application from Trinity Hall. On receipt, it was not clear whether this application should be considered by Regulatory Committee (Reg Comm) or by General Purposes Committee (GPC). On consideration it was proposed to delegate to Reg Comm.

CB noted that a policy had been adopted some time ago, which categorised Section 15 applications into different classes and which committee would determine them. Whilst not entirely up to date, the principles were clear. **Action CB to forward the policy.**

***Proposal from Chair - to delegate the S15 application to Regulatory Committee for determination.***

**UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

3.3 **Conservator Day (Chair)** No action on this would be possible until a new Clerk had been appointed.

3.4 **Meeting Venue (Chair)** The Guildhall had advised that although bookings had been made for forthcoming CotC meeting dates in Committee Room 1 (the larger room we normally meet in), they might have to switch us to Committee Room 2 at short notice.

Note - Committee Rm 2 seats 17 around a round table with 4-5 chairs at the side. If all conservators, observers and members of the public attended (23 or more) it would be cramped but possible. It was felt likely that bookings would be retained in Committee Room 1. GG – there is a standing offer of a room to seat 40 at Darwin College (but no parking).

#### 4. **Regulatory Committee Report (GG)**

4.1 **Overview & Report from 27/06/2023** – those matters not requiring decision from Conservators were taken as read.

4.2 **Health and Safety Annual Review 2023** – For Decision

Reg Comm had reviewed the Health and Safety Annual Review and made two recommendations:

- a) A modification to the text on *Page 31 of the Draft Health and Safety Policy Manual, section Driving for Work, Drivers, "Whilst driving, drivers must: point 5 - it is recommended that clarification is added that*  
*"use of fixed Satnavs or mobile devices including mobile phones, for example, when held in a cradle, permanently or temporarily fixed to and designed for vehicle use are acceptable".*
- b) *That the Conservancy's Environmental Policy be reviewed and updated to reflect the wider goals of the Business Plan. KT and RB offered to work on this and make a recommendation to Conservators in due course.*

SJ asked how R&R's use of CotC assets and equipment is captured. This is covered in the contract.

***Conservators were asked to approve the recommendations from Reg Comm as above.***

**UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

4.3 **Events Policy Charges complaint** – this had been moved to the closed session.

4.4 **Future Regulatory Committee meeting dates** were noted:

28<sup>th</sup> September 2023

12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

21<sup>st</sup> March 2024

20<sup>th</sup> June 2024

5.1 **General Purposes Committee Report and Recommendations (up to 20 July 2023) (Chair)**

GPC had met several times and was bringing the following recommendations to the Conservators. The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) are proposing membership of the relatively newly created Waterways Ombudsman Scheme. Members of AINA

would be able to join this scheme at a reduced fee. As members of AINA, the Conservators have been asked to comment on whether they would be interested in joining the scheme.

**Conservators were asked to delegate consideration of this matter to the General Purposes Committee.**

**UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

### **5.2 Business Plan Prioritisation**

Conservators have agreed the Business Plan 2023 – 28, which has now been distributed to Conservators and Observers and added to the website. To move forward with the Business Plan (BP) Conservators need to prioritise the work and delegate responsibilities.

**Propose adoption of the proposed Business Plan Priorities document.**

**UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

**The General Purposes Committee Recommends that Conservators consider the quantity of work required and their engagement with the Business Plan. They recommend that Conservators look to divide the tasks and considerations between committees and the wider body of Conservators and therefore delegate the responsibility for making progress to the various nominated groups. Terms of reference may need to be agreed for working groups if appointed. It is also recommended that the GPC undertake the management of this process, and that the relevant reports be directed to this committee once complete.**

**Conservators are asked to agree to:**

**A) Delegate different Business Plan recommendations to consider, investigate & review to**

I. The full body of Conservators (working groups/individuals)

II. The Regulatory Committee

III. The General Purposes Committee

IV. Officers

**B) Delegate the management of the Business Plan to the General Purposes Committee**

I. To set timeframes for the individual items

II. To review evidence and research

III. To report updates to the Quarterly Meetings.

SJ – Noted that the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) are drafting Byelaw templates which can be used by its members (the CoRC is a member). Rather than duplicate the work, perhaps it would be better wait for them to complete this process.

CB – noted that some work had been started on Byelaws

GG – noted Reg Comm had been delegated a lot of work and welcomed volunteers.

CB – stated this was a job for the Clerk and had information to hand on to the new appointee.

Chair would contact Conservators seeking offers of help.

### **5.3 Application to extend the Pontoon Area at Granta**

The request was to install an additional pontoon, half the size of the original pontoon in the Mill Pool at Granta. GPC had considered the application and recommended approval, which would also be subject the landowner's approval.

It was noted the original and extension pontoon formed a zigzag and some discussion ensued about the merits or requirements of mooring end-on or side-by-side. It was noted that in the past we had permitted Scudamores to moor end-on, which other operators have adopted.

AB asked what is safer? Boarding via the prow or stern is no more hazardous than stepping across the bows of one punt to another further. End-on mooring is more practical when loading a number of punts.

CB - There is a policy (not to enforce Byelaw which says they need to be moored side by side) to allow us to dis-apply the Byelaw.

***The General Purposes Committee recommended to Conservators that the application for an extension to the pontoons at Granta is approved subject to evidence of the consent of the land owners.***

***FOR – 10, ABSTAIN - 1***

#### **5.4 AGM proposal (HC)**

It had been suggested that an AGM would be an opportunity to improve communications with user groups. Perhaps replace one of the Quarterly meetings (not Jan) with an AGM in a different room at a different time. It would be an opportunity to explain to the public the difficulties we are facing, and how we are planning to move forward.

KT – supported the proposal, both as Cllr and Conservator. Transparency and openness were really important and would help us to engage with future Cllrs and Conservators.

Al Storer – expressed concerns about our ability to complete quarterly business. Meetings were already long.

Various options were considered; a separate meeting, or a short AGM before moving on to the Quarterly meeting. Many rooms have live feed and hybrid capacity now.

FDG – suggested liaison with the Cam Motorboat Club, Waterbeach, whose clubhouse seats 120 people and has plenty of parking.

RS suggested it would be a good opportunity to explain how we are managing the trees along the towpath and how much it costs to maintain them.

***Conservators were asked to delegate to the GPC, consideration of a Public General Meeting followed by a Quarterly meeting.***

***UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.***

#### **5.5 Request from Cam Valley Forum to write a letter in support of their request for Bathing Water Designation.**

Anne Miller representing Cam Valley Forum explained why they wish to seek Designation for Bathing Water. The designation imposes statutory regulations on the EA and will in turn require improvements at the Haslingfield Water Treatment Works. A consultation has been launched 8 July. Conservators were asked to submit representations. There had been some opposition, concerned that if the river was designated, it would attract a huge number of users from elsewhere into the bathing place. If designation improved water quality, that would be good.

KT – SCDC had passed a motion earlier so the proposal has cross boundary, cross party support. Good that CVF and councils are working together.

CB - noted that Conservators have a regulatory function with regard to bathing water.

Byelaw 15 1 – 4 apply to this regulation. (4) states - no person shall... bathe at any place where or between any hours when bathing is for the time being prohibited by the Conservators.

***Conservators were asked to agree to sending a letter in support of the request for Bathing Water Designation.***

***FOR – 9, ABSTAIN – 2.***

#### **5.6 Future committee meeting dates were noted:**

12<sup>th</sup> October 2023

11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (venue to be confirmed)

4<sup>th</sup> April 2024

4<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## **6 Officer Reports**

### **6.1 CEO Report**

The CEO presented the Quarterly Finance Report and highlighted concern about the current cost of audit, legal and estates costs around the sale of Baits Bite Cottages and Anglian Water.

Concerns were reported about machinery that had broken down, was awaiting assessment and repair and the need to hire in alternative machinery at considerable cost.

During intensely hot weather and following a thunderstorm, fish had died in the river on 22 June, as they did in other water bodies all around the country. The EA had been alerted. This was said to be due to low oxygen levels. We stopped weed cutting to reduce silt disturbance and further deoxygenation.

Conservators discussed the difficulties of ageing equipment and the need to review the assets. PS offered to share a weed cutting matrix, used by EA, to assessing the water depth, temperature etc.

The RPO asked if we (or EA) need to consider deploying aerators. PS said EA use mobile aerators and would deploy immediately if there was a need.

PW explained witnessing the hard work of the contractors in cutting and clearing the weed.

Despite the social media frenzy the river had been in good condition for the races.

The Chair wished to express formally our thanks to R&R for ensuring the river was in good condition for the Town Bumps races, despite the difficulties experienced with machinery.

The Conservancy is in the process of recruiting a Clerk; meantime the Deputy Chair is Acting Clerk, supported by the CEO and officers.

**The CEO Report was noted.**

## **6.2 River Patrol Officer Report (DP)**

The RPO presented his report. There had been no HSE reportable incidents and all H&S training had been completed. A number of incidents had been reported in Quarter 1. Incidents illustrated a lack of courtesy but also ignorance of river etiquette and necessary best practice amongst river users

Chair – rowing leads need to train new rowers not to push off from moored vessels and what to do if they strike a moored vessel – including be courteous, apologise, exchange details including insurance details.

PW (as a powered vessel owner) had shared observations with rowing clubs which had improved awareness.

DL observed that rowing vessels are wide and not easy to manoeuvre.

CB suggested re-introduction of a talk on river etiquette to novice coxes, four weeks into term but noted that power boaters are not blameless.

CH (sailing) hoped that rowers are advised to give way to sailing vessels. Training week in August.

**Action – to look into the opportunity for a representative of the Conservancy to provide a talk on river etiquette to novice coxes.**

**The RPO Report was noted.**

## **7. AOB**

BK noted that the litter bins on Grassy Corner were full after the Bumps races and asked who this should be reported to.

Clr Bradnam agreed to make enquiries.

## **8. Dates of meetings in 2023 were noted:**

26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 10 am, Guildhall Cambridge

25<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 10 am, Guildhall Cambridge

25<sup>th</sup> April 2024, 10 am, venue to be confirmed

25<sup>th</sup> July 2024, 10 am, venue to be confirmed