



## CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM

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

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CONSERVATORS HELD ON MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY 29<sup>th</sup> JULY 2021 at 9:30AM.

#### 1. Present and Apologies

##### **In Attendance:**

**Conservators:** Catherine Hurst (Chair); Dr May Block; Mr Clive Brown; Mr Giles Greenfield; Ms Ceridwen Salisbury; Cllr Mike Sargeant; Mr Tony Wieser; Cllr Alan Cox; Cllr Katie Thornburrow.

**Absent:** Dr David Munday; Mr P Separovic.

**Officers:** Mr Tom Larnach (River Manager); Mrs Helen Cleary (Business Manager); Mrs Pearl Gonsalves (Finance and Admin Officer)

**Members of the Public:** Observers: Mr J Martin; Mr B Key; Ms C Lindon, Mr R Ingersent.

The Chair welcomed new Conservators, Cllr Alan Cox and Cllr Katie Thornburrow, and confirmed that the signatures of both had been witnessed, and that the necessary documents had been received before the meeting to enable them to vote.

The Chair informed Conservators that apologies had been received from Cllr Anna Bradnam and Mr Steven Morris.

Cllr Damien Tunnacliffe had retired as Conservator, and Mr Brown expressed his gratitude to Cllr Tunnacliffe for his long service and support as a Conservator. The Chair echoed that sentiment, and also extended her gratitude to Cllr Nicky Massey for her contribution, as she had also left the Conservancy.

Cllr Sargeant said that if a Councillor ceases to hold office as Councillor, this will terminate their tenure as Conservator, irrespective of the Conservancy's requirements. Mr Brown emphasised that the appointment and tenure of Conservators is governed by the 1922 Act, which did not provide for automatic termination of their tenure if a Councillor ceased to hold office. It was, however, open to the City Council, as an appointing body, to remove such Councillors and to replace them. This required a specific decision by the Council and did not happen automatically. The appointment of a replacement would expire at the end of existing term of office of Council appointees, which in the present case was the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

The River Manager said the Officers liaise with Claire Tunnicliffe at the City Council with regard to the appointment of Conservators and she is aware of the Conservancy's requirements. Ms Tunnicliffe has been very helpful in the matter.

## **2. Minutes of the meeting of Conservators held on 29<sup>TH</sup> April 2021**

The Chair asked Conservators whether they had any comments on the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021. No comments were received.

**It was agreed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the Conservators' meeting on 29 April 2021.**

## **3. Matters Arising**

### **3.1 Clarification of requirement for stickers on commercial punts in the Code of Practice:**

Mr Brown stated that due to time constraints this item is to be carried forward.

### **3.2 Business Plan Update**

The Chair invited Mr Brown to comment. Mr Brown said that it was not at present possible to report in detail publicly. He said, however, that on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, an extraordinary meeting of Conservators was held in order to consider proposals on the way forward and certain decisions had been taken in that meeting. The GPC and the BPWG were working to implement those decisions.

## **4. Ratification of executive decisions made by the Chair under delegated authority**

### **4.1 Flail mower attachment**

The Chair asked the Board if they had questions regarding the paper presented. No questions were raised. The Chair invited the Conservators to vote on the ratification of the purchase of the flail mower attachment.

**This was ratified by all the Conservators present.**

## **5. Reports**

### **5.1 Finance and Licencing Report**

The Business Manager said that a general overview of the first quarter was good. The Conservancy was keeping within the expenditure budget. The COVID-19 pandemic had inevitably had an impact, especially in relation to club, college and commercial registration fees. Commercial operators were paying registration and pontoon fees in four instalments. There had been no default in instalment payments. The last of the instalment payments was due in January 2022 which is when the total income from commercial operators would be shown in the accounts. The fees from the commercial operators have increased significantly this year as a result of COVID restrictions being lifted.



Good progress had been made to ensure that vessels were registered, Furthermore, communications with, and income from Colleges and Clubs had significantly improved over the last eighteen months. Mrs Cleary expressed her thanks to Mrs Gonsalves who had been handling the role of the licensing officer with efficiency.

There were unregistered vessels on the river, and action was being taken against the owners. Some river users only partially complete their registration applications, and therefore remain unregistered. Warning letters are sent in these cases, in which they are asked to provide the missing information.

In respect of the last financial year, despite the significant loss in registration fee income, and an expected overall deficit in income against expenditure, the accounts reflected a year end surplus. This was largely the result of the unusually high income received from Section 15 licences, in particular in relation to the Chesterton Bridge project, and the additional income from contract work.

Income from the works carried out at Salters Lode had been received this year. The Business Manager further stated that there had been an increase in legal fees.

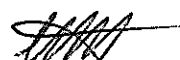
The Chair thanked the Licensing team for their hard work during the peak time of the licensing period.

Cllr Sargeant asked if the net proceeds from the sale of Jesus Green Lock House had been put in a separate account. He further questioned the cost of the audit this year as he thought £13,000 was very high. The Business Manager said that due to the complexity of the work to be done by the Auditors it had taken a lot of time, hence the high fees.

Mr Brown stated that when the Conservators House was sold the proceeds had been transferred to an investment fund in the accounts and thus ring-fenced for reinvestment. This procedure was followed with the sale of Jesus Green Lock House as well. The way the accounts were presented was being discussed with the General Purposes Committee. The GPC were auditors are scheduled to meet in August.

Mr Martin asked whether the Officers planned to include a balance sheet in the quarterly accounts. The Chair responded that a balance sheet would not be included in the quarterly accounts but would be available as part of the annual accounts.

The River Manager thanked the team for their hard work and commitment in difficult circumstances. He also noted that the number of boats shown as unregistered in the licensing reports was based on the invoices created for each vessel. Not all the vessels invoiced are on the river, and so the number of unregistered boats on the river is less. The extremely good result had been achieved even with a shortage of staff. The Conservators echoed this congratulation to the staff.



## 5.2 Public Consultation Report

Mr Brown said that the Regulatory Committee had produced a draft paper for a public consultation on registration fees which it was intended would be launched in August. One purpose of the consultation was to address the imbalance between different categories of unpowered vessels and thus make the licence fees fairer.

The River Manager stated that he was chairing the consultation group and reported that the paper was almost ready and was awaiting figures to be finalised.

## 5.3 River Manager Report

The River Manager said that there had been a number of challenges in the management of vegetation and maintenance of the towpath. Great support had been received from the GPC to enable the Officers to purchase new equipment to be able to carry on works along the towpath.

Weed cutting on the river was delayed due to Berky being off the river for essential maintenance work. This was now complete, and Berky was back at Clayhithe depot

Mr Key thanked the Conservancy team for their assistance with the Bump races.

## 5.4 Chair – Report

The Chair said that a lot of work had been going into the business planning and the future of the Conservancy. The Chair particularly thanked Mr Brown for his continuing hard work in relation to this. The GPC and the Regulatory Committee had been working very hard to progress the consultation paper and circulate information to the Conservators.

The Chair noted that the River Management team had been dealing promptly with issues on the river despite the limited number of staff.

## 6. Any Other Business

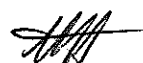
Mr Martin asked whether the income received from the sale of both Jesus Green House and Conservators House had been invested and was earning interest.

Mr Brown responded that this was in hand and the money had not been invested as yet. This matter would be further discussed by Conservators in the closed session.

## 7. Dates of future meetings:

The Chair said that she was working with the Business Manager to endeavour to meet at Guildhall for the next board meeting. Risk assessments and policies were being put in place in line with the pandemic. Conservators would have an opportunity to express their concerns about attending the meeting in person. Government guidelines would be followed. For those who did not wish to attend the meeting in person, the Chair said that they would try to make alternative arrangements to attend the meeting online. The following dates for future board meetings were agreed:

28<sup>th</sup> October 2021      Guildhall – 9:30 am  
27<sup>th</sup> January 2022      Guildhall- 9:30 am



CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM  
Minutes of Quarterly Board Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021

28<sup>th</sup> April 2022      Guildhall – 9:30 am  
28<sup>th</sup> July 2022      Guildhall – 9:30 am

Meeting ended at 10:30 am

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CATHERINE HURST  
8 Dec 2021

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