



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 28th April 2022 at 9:30AM.

Present:

Conservators: Ms Catherine Hurst (Chair), Mr Clive Brown, Dr May Block, Mr Giles Greenfield, Mr Alistair Storer, Mr Tim Wotherspoon, Cllr Katie Thornburrow

Absent: Cllr Alan Cox.

Officers: Mrs Helen Cleary (CEO), Mr David Partridge (River Patrol Officer- RPO), Mrs Pearl Gonsalves (Licensing & Finance Officer).

Observers: Mr John Martin, Mr Rod Ingersent, Mr James Macnaghten

Members of the public: Mrs Christine Heath – Cam Sailing Club

1. Welcome and apologies received

Apologies were received from Cllr Anna Bradnam, Mr Paul Separovic & Mr Steve Morris.

2. Appointments:

2.1 Resignation of Cllr Sargeant and future appointment of Conservator by City Council

The Chair announced that Cllr Sargeant had resigned as Conservator. The City Council will be appointing a new Conservator after the May Council elections. Mr Brown thanked Cllr Sargeant for his contribution as a Conservator. This was echoed by the Chair.

2.2 Appointment of Conservator by University Senate.

The University Senate have yet to appoint a Conservator to replace Dr Munday who has resigned.

2.3 Regulatory Committee requirement for additional Conservator member.

The Chair stated that currently there were only three Conservators on the Regulatory Committee, leaving a vacancy for one more Conservator, and she invited Conservators to fill the vacancy. Four Conservators were needed to ensure that meetings were quorate. The Chair summarised the role of the Regulatory Committee and said that meetings were held approximately every eight weeks during working hours. Cllr Thornburrow expressed an interest in joining the committee, but said it depended on the outcome of the May elections.

RESOLVED: The election of a fourth Conservator will be carried forward to the July meeting of Conservators and the Regulatory Committee will continue with three Conservators until then.



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3. Delegation of Powers

Review and Adoption of Delegation of Powers for Clerk and Control Officer

The Chair stated that, since the last Quarterly meeting, the Conservancy had appointed Mr David Partridge as River Patrol Officer (which includes the role of Control Officer) and Mrs Gillian Elwood as Clerk. Mrs Elwood was not able to attend this meeting because of leave booked before her appointment.

Conservators were asked to vote on the appointment of Mrs Gillian Elwood as Clerk and Mr David Partridge as Control Officer.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to appoint Mrs Elwood as Clerk and Mr Partridge as Control Officer.

Conservators were asked to vote on the delegation of powers to the Clerk and Control Officer, as agreed at the January Board meeting.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to delegate to Mrs Elwood and Mr Partridge the powers delegated to the Clerk and River Patrol Officer at the meeting on 28th of January 2022.

The Chair welcomed Mrs Elwood and Mr Partridge to the Conservancy.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th January 2022

The Chairman invited Conservators to comment on the accuracy of the minutes.

RESOLVED: It was agreed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the Conservators' meeting on 28th January 2022.

5 Matters arising (not otherwise on the agenda)

There were no matters arising.

6 Matter for Decision

6.1 Floating Cam Bar Application

The Chair informed Conservators that this would be the Floating Cam Bar's fourth year in operation. They have reapplied for 2022/23, with no changes to the initial proposal. The Chair asked Conservators to approve the licence for the Floating Cam Bar.

RESOLVED: It was agreed unanimously that Floating Cam Bar be granted a Commercial licence for 2022/23.



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The Chair proposed that future applications from Floating Cam Bar be considered and approved by Officers only rather than being referred to the full Board of Conservators.

RESOLVED: It was agreed unanimously that future Floating Cam Bar commercial licence applications should be considered and approved by the Officers.

6.2 Our Place in Space

The Chair referred to the paper circulated to the Conservators.

Mr Brown suggested that a fee be charged for this project as it has taken up a large amount of Officers' time.

Mr Storer expressed an interest in the project. He objected to the proposed location of the sculptures. He stated that the base of the ramp from the new Chesterton Bridge, which is the site for Saturn, is a main transport corridor and the full width of the path is used by the public during rush hour including both cyclists and pedestrians. Placing a sculpture there would cause an obstruction. The Chair agreed with Mr Storer's concerns.

Mr Partridge said that the organisers of Our Place in Space were meeting with the Safety Advisory Group on the 5th of May to discuss access for the fire services. He also said that further discussions would take place about access for cyclists. Mr Partridge confirmed that cyclists can get through a 1.6m gap. The organisers were looking for an agreement in principle now, and would provide more detail at a later time.

Mr Storer asked if the towpath would be closed while the sculptures were being installed. Appropriate signage at a reasonable distance would be needed.

Mrs Cleary and Mr Partridge had been involved in discussions and agreed with Mr Storer's concerns. The proposed date of installation of the sculptures was 30th of July. Mrs Cleary was concerned that there would not be enough time if a decision on the proposal was left until the next Conservators' meeting in July. An agreement in principle was therefore essential, subject to all concerns being satisfactorily dealt with.

ClIr Thornburrow asked what materials were used to create the sculptures and how they would be used after the sculptures had been removed. She also asked whether the organisers had obtained planning permission to erect the sculptures.

The Chair asked how the sculptures would be transported onto the towpath and how they would be installed without causing any damage to the towpath. Mr Partridge said that the drilling option would be ruled out at Baits Bite. Various concerns were raised with drilling on the towpath in other areas which could cause damage to the bank revetments.



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The Chair proposed that this project be agreed in principle on the condition that the concerns raised were met and a fee levied. The Chair also proposed that further communications on the project be conducted via email.

Resolved: It was agreed unanimously that the proposal be agreed in principle as proposed by the Chair. It was also agreed unanimously that further communications will be done via email.

6.3 Ratification of GPC decision to purchase a mud barge

The Chair referred to the paper circulated to Conservators. She said that the Conservancy owns a mud barge which is towed by Berky when weed cutting, and filled with weed or any other obstructions in the river. Earlier in the year the mud barge sank because of both internal and external corrosion. A survey was conducted and declared that the barge was economically beyond repair. Various options were considered by the General Purposes Committee. The most cost-effective option was to purchase a new mud barge. The GPC approved the purchase of the new mud barge and the sale of the old mud barge for scrap.

Resolved: It was unanimously agreed to ratify the decision of the General Purposes Committee.

6.4 Future Conservators' Meetings

The Chair said that she had hoped that the current meeting could be held in person at the Guildhall, but, because of lack of time, it had been agreed by the majority to hold the meeting on Teams.

Mrs Elwood had pointed out that it was 100 years since the 1922 Act had been passed. To celebrate this occasion the Chair proposed that the July Conservators' meeting be held at the Guildhall.

The Chair asked the Officers to investigate whether the large meeting room fell under the free meeting space, as the Conservancy is permitted to use meeting rooms 1 and 2, free of charge for up to 5 hours.

Resolved: It was unanimously agreed that the July meeting of Conservators be held in person at the Guildhall

6.5 Ratification of GPC decision re: Rowing Fees

This item was an addition to the Agenda. In summary, the Chair said that following the January meeting at which fee increases were set, it was discovered that there had been an error in the table of fees presented to the meeting. The error related to rowing fees. The fee increases for rowing craft shown in the table only reflected the agreed 2.5% increase, but not the further increase of 4.6% in CPI. The GPC had decided that fee increases for rowing craft should remain



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as they were tabled at the January meeting and reflect only the 2.5% increase and not the further 4.6%

Conservators were asked to ratify the decision made by the GPC and the Chair.

Resolved: The Conservators unanimously agreed with the ratification of GPC's decision as stated above.

7. Reports

7.1 General Purposes Committee and Chair's reports

The Chair welcomed the new officers, Mr David Partridge and Mrs Gillian Elwood. The Chair reported on the mud barge which became inoperable during the major tree work operation. It became essential to rent another mud barge to clear the arisings from the tree clearance. The rental was expensive. The GPC then agreed to purchase a new mud barge which had helped carry out essential works on the river and was cost effective.

The Chair further stated that the emergency tree works were now completed. Tree works would not be undertaken from March until late October due to nesting birds and other wildlife. The contract for the tree management was near completion.

There were continuing discussions at the GPC meetings about the pension deficit and potential sale of Baits Bite Lock cottages. These items would be discussed further in the closed meeting.

The Cambridgeshire Rowing Association had invited Officers to join a meeting in the spring which the Officers could not attend. The Chair requested that more notice be given of future meetings, and said that Officers and Conservators would be very happy to attend.

Letter from Mr James MacNaghten

The Chair referred to a letter received from Mr James MacNaghten which she felt would be of interest to Observers as well as the Conservators.

In his letter, Mr MacNaghten pointed out that a major drain on the organisations' resources was caused by non-navigational assets and activities, in particular the Halingway. The Halingway itself generates no income for the Conservancy but is in fact one of its largest operational costs in terms of maintenance. Mr MacNaghten made some suggestions about generating revenue, some of which had been considered in the past. One suggestion was to use a field owned by the Conservancy beside the towpath to create a marina. Mr Larnach, when he was the River Manager, had explored the possibility of doing this.

The Chair read her reply to the Mr James MacNaghten.



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Mr Brown added that nearly 40% of operational costs are spent on maintaining the Halingway, including tree management and bank revetments. The major source of Conservators' income is from river users. Ideas are welcome on how to attract finance from a wider source. Mr Brown suggested that Mr MacNaghten's letter be more widely circulated as it raises interesting and valuable points.

Mr MacNaghten said that if the Halingway was no longer a cost to the Conservancy, and if the Conservancy could generate extra income from additional vessels on the river, the finances would look very different. Mr MacNaghten offered to assist and advise as it was in the interests of all river users that the Conservancy's income was stabilised.

The Chair thanked Mr MacNaghten for his input and said that his advice would be sought if it was required in the future.

7.2 Regulatory Committee report

Mr Greenfield referred to the notes circulated to Conservators and summarised as follows:

- Arising from the consultation and the review of licence fees and vessel categories, a legacy issue had been identified which needed to be addressed, namely how event fees should be treated. This requires investigation and further work before a proposal on event fees can be produced. There are a number of different classes of user on the river who organise events, for example, rowers, the Cam Sailing Club, the Canoe Club and others. These need to be reviewed carefully to ensure that different vessels and different users are treated equally and fairly.
- An interim measure was needed for the Sailing Club to cover the events it organises until a new system is in place. The Conservancy also needs to determine how vessels visiting the river for the Sailing Club events should be registered.
- There is a small number of sailing vessels with auxiliary engines, The engines are only used for short periods of time, usually to assist in mooring safely. The Sailing Club has brought this to the Conservancy's attention and asked that this category be reviewed.

Conservators were asked to agree the Regulatory Committees recommendation to review the fees related to Events.

Resolved: The Conservators unanimously agreed.

Conservators were asked to delegate powers to the Regulatory Committee and the Chair to make an interim agreement with the Cam Sailing Club about 2022/23 event sailing fees.

Resolved: The Conservators unanimously agreed.



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Conservators were asked to delegate powers to the Regulatory Committee and the Chair to make an interim agreement for registering visitor participants to Sailing Club events.

Resolved: The Conservators unanimously agreed.

Conservators are asked to delegate powers to the Chair and Regulatory Committee to review fees for sailing vessels with auxiliary engines up to 4.5 horse power.

Resolved: The Conservators unanimously agreed.

7.3 CEO & Finance Report

The CEO reported the changes taking place in the organisational structure.

Some notable points in the budget were as follows:

- Because of the changes to the organisation last year there had been some expenditure in certain areas that exceeded the original budget.
- The Conservancy worked within a small margin, so any unforeseen increases in costs had a large impact. An example was the emergency tree work which was unavoidable because of safety concerns.
- Legal fees were substantial during the past year.

Mrs Cleary also reported that River and Rural had performed satisfactorily over the winter. River and had fulfilled their obligations in accordance with their contract.

7.4 River Patrol Officer & Licensing Report

Mr Partridge referred to the report circulated to Conservators and summarised as follows:

- A vessel audit had been conducted on the river, including the Backs.
- A potential partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary was being developed.
- A standard operating procedure for engaging with vulnerable persons was under discussion and would include a graduated approach.
- A sunken vessel had been retrieved and taken to the Clayhithe depot. Successful discussions with the owner through an intermediary were undertaken, and personal belongings were recovered by the vessel owner. The vessel would now be advertised for sale.

With regard to licencing, Mr Partridge said that there were 11 unregistered vessels, out of which 7 had not paid their licence fees. One minor error was noted under CAT38, the income received to date should read as £52,352, where one individual has not paid. Overall, it was a positive position wherein the unregistered and unpaid vessels are slightly less than 1%.



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The Chair thanked the licensing team for their hard work and Mrs Cleary echoed her thanks to the licensing team and Mr Partridge. Mrs Cleary said that the licensing report would change slightly in the future to make it more readable.

8. Dates of future meetings:

28th July 2022 – Guildhall
27th Oct 2022 - Guildhall
26th January 2023 – Guildhall
27th of April 2023 - Guildhall

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Meeting concluded at 11:00am