



CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM

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

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, CAMBRIDGE, ON THURSDAY 27th OCTOBER 2022 at 10.00AM.

Present

Conservators: Ms Catherine Hurst (Chair), Mr Clive Brown, Councillor Anna Bradnam, Mr Giles Greenfield, Mr Alistair Storer, Mr Tim Wotherspoon, Cllr Katie Thornburrow, Councillor David Levien.

Absent: Mr Steven Morris

Officers: Mr David Partridge (River Patrol Officer- RPO), Mrs Gillian Elwood (Clerk)

Observers: Mr Bill Key, Mr Rod Ingersent

Members of the public: Mr Peter Watson

1. Welcome and apologies received

Apologies were received from Mrs May Block, Mr Paul Separovic, Mr Richard Turnill, Councillor Richard Swift and Mrs Helen Cleary.

The Chair, Miss Hurst, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced the new City Council appointee, Mr David Levien. Introductions were made by all meeting attendees. Mr Bill Key (Observer) discussed his book with the meeting and its availability to purchase.

2. Appointments:

2.1 Appointment of Conservators by City Council

The Clerk updated the meeting as to the current status of appointments, namely that Mr Levien had been appointed due to the resignation of Councillor Hauk.

2.2 Appointment of Conservator by University Senate.

The Clerk confirmed that the University Senate have appointed Mr Richard Turnill, Senior Bursar at Trinity College as their third appointee.

2.3 Committee Appointments and Vacancies.

Mr Steven is now an advisor to the General Purposes Committee, not a member, which has created the need for a new committee member. The Chair requested that if any Conservator was interested in the role, they could discuss it with her at the break time.



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3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th July 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 27th April 2022. Agreed unanimously.

4. Matter Arising Not Otherwise on the Agenda

The meeting agreed there were no matters arising to be considered.

5. Matters for Decision and Ratification

The meeting agreed there were no matters for decision and ratification to be considered.

6. Reports

6.1 **General Purposes (Finance) Committee and Chair's Reports.**

The Chair, Miss Hurst, told the meeting it was the aim of the General Purposes Committee (GPC) to meet once in between the Quarterly Full Body meetings. However, it had needed to meet twice since the July meeting, as certain decisions could not wait over the summer period.

- Miss Hurst stated the Our Place In Space installation had been a great success, enjoyed by many members of the public. There had been an incident with a manhole cover being damaged during the installation, but this had been resolved. All due fees had been received. Councillor Bradnam agreed it had been successful, unlike other events held by the same company.
- Miss Hurst updated the meeting as to the Anglian Water situation with regards to the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation (CWWWTPR). There has been progress made with their consideration of our legal fees incurred. Mr Brown confirmed the due processes open to Anglian Water would override the need for a Section 15 Agreement, and that legal advice from Hewitsons had been sought over payment of possible Conservancy costs that might accrue on the matter. The only matter for consideration for Conservators would be the outflow of the plant. Anglian Water have offered £5000 to date, and it needs to be established whether more costs could be claimed for if required.
- With regards to capital repairs Miss Hurst stated the Jesus Lock examination by River and Rural was running slightly behind due to upstream cill damage and silt. The planned revetment works were mostly on schedule. It was noted by the Regulatory Committee that Mr Larnach is working to ensure the best quotations for works, and for the Conservancy's best financial interests. In the January 2022 budget, it had been agreed



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that the MC engine and legs be sorted, and that revised repairs to 'Binky', the Conservancy River boat were to be minor works to the gel finish, the windscreen and an engine examination.

- The major exception to the budget to date is the ongoing cost of the Baits Bite Lock cottages as rental properties.
- The Anglian Pass is being reviewed by all three member groups, the Environment Agency, the Middle Level Commissioners, and the Conservancy. All parties are happy for its continuation, and the review of the fees for 2023/24.
- The Environment Agency have been advised that their appointments to the Conservancy end on 31st December and they are required to make two new appointments.
- The CEO, Mrs Cleary and the River Patrol Officer, Mr Partridge, attended a meeting of the Cambridgeshire Rowing Association (CRA) to raise awareness of the Conservancy with their delegates. The meeting was felt to be productive, but it became apparent that delegates were not aware of our role and remit with the River Cam. It was felt that Observers might have a bigger role in taking information from the Conservancy and its meetings to their groups.
- The Business Plan is almost complete and has been presented to the GPC. However, year-end accounts are still awaited from the auditors, with information from them needed for accuracy in the Business Plan and forecasts. Mr Brown stated that the plan serves as a formal plan for the Conservators over the next five years, and where we are currently. It is apparent that our income stream is too narrow and alternative streams need to be considered for viability. Areas for consideration are the need to meet capital expenditure needs, and ongoing financial commitments such as the pension funds. Better use of capital assets such as the various land and properties owned by the Conservancy needs consideration. The draft plan will be circulated to the Conservators and Observers for comment and input. An extraordinary meeting of the Full Body to discuss the plan was proposed for January 2023. Mr Brown will no longer be an appointed Conservator at that time but could be retained as a consultant until the Business Plan has been completed. Mr Key queried the figure of £100,000 for the Halingway expenditure, which was confirmed as the maintenance costs including trees, revetments, vegetation and surfacing. Councillor Bradnam asked whether advice could be sought from other cities in our situation, and Mr Brown stated that where towpaths are in the ownership of organisations, there are permanently moored boats along them. Councillor Bradnam stated that her question pertained to maintenance, which is a major expense for the Conservancy. Miss Hurst stated further research could be carried out.



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6.2 Regulatory (Licensing) Committee (Reg Comm) Report

Mr Greenfield (committee Chair) stated he would make a brief oral report and take any questions arising.

- Block Licences are under review by the Clerk and River Patrol Officer, for the Cambridge Canoe Club and the Cambridge University Canoe Club for the year 2023/24.
- The Conservancy officers are currently reviewing the Events Policy. The intention is to make river users aware of why there are fees for events as well as their licences, namely the additional impact on the river and towpath. The policy should be ready for consideration at the next Full Body meeting in January. It has been the intention to establish fairness when considering the size and impact an event has on the river, its users and the towpath, and ensure the Conservancy is carrying out its statutory duties including Health and Safety. The objective is not to raise revenue but to ensure parity for river users. The matter of charges and charging need to be addressed. Mr Greenfield stated he welcomed the Full Body comments in due course.
- The City Council is to hold its annual Firework Display in November. The River Patrol Officer will issue the customary notice restricting navigation temporarily for safety reasons. The Conservancy is not liable for marshalling or the Health and Safety for the event.
- Recently there have been several enquiries about installing memorial benches along the towpath. Whilst in principle this can be supported, there are considerations re responsibility for installation, maintenance, materials etc. The matter of costs and a due process will be looked at, with a view to approving applications where possible. Councillor Bradnam returned to the matter of events and spoke about a district council group that advises on whom event organisers might contact for assistance. Mr Partridge confirmed that this is also the case within the city, being the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). Event organisers are encouraged to contact them. Mr Partridge will be attending future SAG meetings. Whilst advice given by the group is not legally binding, it would be relevant in any issues that might occur. The meeting returned to discussing memorial benches and their costs. Mr Ingersent stated that people feel a strong connection with the river and wish to have a legacy connected to it. The meeting discussed charitable giving and volunteer help as alternative. Mr Brown reminded the meeting that Conservancy's remit was to the navigation of the river; any charitable element would need to sit along side the Conservancy, not as part of it. Miss Hurst stated the Cam Valley Forum already have volunteers, as do the City Council. A meeting with CVF was suggested.



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6.4 CEO and Finance Report

In the absence of Mrs Cleary, Miss Hurst referred Conservators to the CEO report, and asked if there were any questions or queries. Councillor Bradnam asked about repairs to the Jesus Lock. Miss Hurst stated that once the survey had been completed, then repairs are due to start. There were no further questions.

6.5 River Patrol Officer and Licencing Report.

Mr Partridge spoke to his report.

- A power boat user has been charged for three offences by the police, and another reported for verbal abuse.
- The audit for the boathouses has been started. Punt operators and Mr P Watson, another commercial river user, have also been visited.
- A large willow tree had fallen into the river near Clayhithe and has been pollarded.
- The cardboard boat race and bumps took place with no issues.
- A meeting has been scheduled with the college Head Porters. Miss Hurst asked what relevance that had to the RPO role. Mr Partridge confirmed it was with riparian colleges to instigate information collection and sharing. The meeting discussed the need for making connection with other organisations to improve assistance to river users and boat dwellers and supporting witnesses in prosecution situations. Miss Hurst raised a concern about boaters not having insurance in place in cases of collision between vessels.

7. Observers

Miss Hurst stated that a proposed change in the selection of observers was her proposal for a broader, more ambassadorial role, with more varied river user groups represented. The past system has been to select from those present at the January meeting, on an almost ad hoc basis. There are many instances of non-attendance once appointed and of multiple appointments from the same user groups. Miss Hurst stated that by inviting applications in writing for the role, the intention is to seek a variety of skills and experience, and make better use of observers in our decision making process. Mr Storer suggested that the roles be advertised on river user media platforms. Mr Levien suggested contacting the Great Ouse Boating Association(GOBA), who have a large river using membership. Mr Key mentioned the River Users Forum. The meeting went on to discuss the education of river users in river etiquette, whether from forums, meetings or contact from the RPO. Councillor Bradnam suggested that someone be nominated to explore the options and it was agreed this was a matter for the Regulatory Committee to consider.



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8. Proposed Extraordinary Meeting of the Full Body on 15th December 2022

The decision was made to defer the meeting to January 2023, date to be decided.

9. Dates for future Meetings:

26th January 2023 at the Guildhall
27th April 2023 at the Guildhall
27th July 2023 at the Guildhall
26th October 2023 at the Guildhall

10. Any Other Business

Councillor Thornburrow asked whether the Conservancy issues commercial licences to the commercial punt companies. It was confirmed that we do not. Boats running as businesses require licences from the City Council.

Miss Hurst and Councillor Thornburrow raised concerns about issues within the City Council mooring areas. Mr Brown stated that visitor mooring maintained by the City Council is not good. The various matters have been raised with the Executive for Open Spaces. The area opposite Jesus Green needs to be addressed, requiring a Section 15 application for the work to be approved. Councillor Bradnam suggested a letter be sent to the City Council flagging concerns, and the Conservators concerns be formally minuted. Miss Hurst agreed a letter would be sent.

Mr Ingersent raised a concern that the River Cam is running low, which has been raised with the Environment Agency and Conservators of the River Cam. The Conservancy response was positive, but the EA do not seem to be engaged. The meeting discussed what the issue involved, including over extraction, lack of water generally and potentially a trapped sluice. There may be ongoing water level issues. There were suggestions to contact the support hotline number and the Cam Valley Forum. It was agreed a review of the system could be considered, and a group put together to look at the issues. Councillors Thornburrow and Bradnam expressed interest taking part in a meeting on the matter.

The meeting concluded at 12.05pm