

## **2B River Thames Boat Project**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Pavilion Club West Molesey on Monday 4 November 2019

1 Keith Knox (Chair) welcomed all those present and thanked the Pavilion Club for providing the venue for the AGM free of charge. Keith confirmed that he was standing down both as Chair and a Trustee; he had had a great time being involved so closely in the Project and, as he had always been 'boaty', he planned to continue as a volunteer. He wanted to mention and thank some people in particular – Peter Oldham 'the Skipper', the office staff, Richard Robinson and Sir Peter Harrop, always a source of sage advice. And the volunteers for whom he had great respect, thank you.

**2 Minutes of the AGM held 12 November 2018.** There were no corrections to the Minutes. Acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Peter Low, seconded by Terry Kemp and accepted unanimously.

**3 To receive the general report and Financial Statement 2018-19.** The Annual Review (the digest of the Annual Report) was on the website and copies were on the tables. The Chair reviewed what had been a very busy year. We had successfully moved the office to Tamesis, much closer to the River. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> boat, Thames Discoverer, had come into full service. We had our first 3 event day – education on Thames Venturer and at Hermitage + a cruise on Discoverer. The new education module "Drastic Plastic" had been developed and launched with assistance of a grant from Heathrow Community Fund and was proving very popular. We had celebrated our 30th Anniversary with a series of events and publicity. Volunteer skippers were now playing a major part in delivering the number of cruises we could offer. We were close to sorting the issues with the dock and Canbury Wharf.

Stephen West introduced the Financial Report and thanked Pippa Butterfield for all her support and work during the year. The Charity had broken even at the end of year; we had an operating loss but this was offset by a grant for Thames Discoverer. Our current assets were about £800k which comprised the value of the two boats plus £300k cash. This needed to be viewed in terms of the projects planned which would all drain reserves – the refit of Thames Venturer and any repairs to both boats; the work needed on the dock and Wharf; new IT for the office and we aim to hold a 9 month operating costs reserve. This didn't take account of new money coming in.

Peter Finch asked whether the Project was able to claim gift aid on clients' fees and was assured it was.

Acceptance of the Financial Report was proposed by Bob Darke, seconded by Anthea Wilkinson and passed unanimously.

## **Election of Trustees and staff changes**

The Chair first announced that Zaria Greenhill, the Education Manager, would be leaving the Charity at the end of November. We were pleased that Gemma Hindi would be able to help us until someone new was recruited.

The Chair was pleased to announce that Jon Chapman and Bob Darke had agreed to be Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year. During the year two new Trustees had been co-opted and we were pleased that Prasad Shastri had agreed to stand for election. This was approved. Unfortunately Amy Hayes did not feel able to continue because of other commitments. Luke Gannon had stood down as a Trustee for personal reasons. Keith thanked him for his work on risk assessment. Jane Newman and Paul Barry had both reached the end of their three year period. Both had been nominated and agreed to stand for another three years. Both were elected. Three long standing Trustees were standing down – Keith Knox, Byron Turner and Peter Low. Keith paid tribute to both Byron and Peter who had been pivotal in making the second boat become a reality.

Jon Chapman pointed out that the three retiring Trustees had contributed 35 years' service between them so the Charity was losing a great deal of experience. He highlighted the features that stood out for him of each – Keith ubiquitous, knowing what was going on; Byron the 'new tech' man with valuable links to Lest We Forget; Peter the voice of calm reason but not reluctant to push his point of view. He thanked them for all they had contributed to the Charity. This was endorsed by all present.

## **Update on current year and activities**

**Peter Oldham** reported that Thames Discoverer had bookings from March to December, proving the value of having an all-weather boat. He thanked Turks for allowing Discoverer to use their pier as an embarkation point. We had also trialled using Tamesis. The volunteer skippers had helped make it a 'bumper season' for cruising with a 30% increase over 2018 and the clients had been appreciative. Over the last ten years our activities had grown from around a hundred activities a year to 129 cruises and 63 education days in 2019. Thames Venturer had spent most of August in dry dock having some much needed renovation. As Discoverer operated with three crew, there were fewer opportunities to cruise but there were plenty of other volunteering opportunities.

**Zaria G** reported that the education programme had grown well resulting in some problems resourcing the bookings but she was pleased to report that we now had some new volunteers coming on stream. The Education Pack had been updated and a new module "Drastic Plastic" developed and come into regular teaching. Jane Newman paid tribute to all the work Zaria had done to expand the education programme, to move everything on and her vision for the work.

**Kate Dodds** reported on a very busy year. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary on top of the office move presented challenges. However, the former had provided opportunities to meet funders and for them to see Thames Discoverer. Kate had initiated a series of advertorial articles in local community magazines which had encouraged some new volunteers and bookings. Funders seemed to understand our reasons for doing these to raise awareness of the Charity. There had been some good fund raising efforts – Nigel’s bike ride, the sponsored walk, people running half marathons and providing water stations. The walk had raised nearly £4000. Waitrose stores continued to provide funding; Kate thanked Sarah for keeping up the momentum by sending letters etc. Obtaining grant funding was becoming more challenging; some whilst received were not as much as requested. It was all the more important that we increased income streams from the boats whilst looking for other ways of obtaining sponsorship. Kate would also welcome someone to help rejuvenate the Friends’ organisation and act as a champion.

**Pippa Butterfield** introduced herself as the staff member who loved figures but was also pivotal in keeping track of bookings and payments. She had with her Woodcraft Folk group trialled a sleep over on Thames Venturer. Useful lessons were learnt. This was followed by a sleep over as part of an activities week for Tamesis SC cadets; they were keen to repeat this next year.

The Chair thanked all the staff for their efforts and commitment to the charity.

### **Any other business**

Peter Finch asked about flexibility now that venture is not able to go on the Tideway. He asked about the likely cost of making her “Tideway friendly” again. Also people had talked about taking groups of children. Was there scope for a 3<sup>rd</sup> boat which could take 50-60 passengers? Keith Knox commented that TV’s long term future was still to be discussed. The cost of making her acceptable for the Tideway would be very high. Another new boat – perhaps for the future.

Clive Mitchell and Julian Meers asked about the current position with the Barge Dock and Canbury Wharf. Jon Chapman reported that Keyway Estates had appealed against the refusal of planning permission to build 9 apartments at the Barge Dock. They are currently accepting a mooring for Venturer and RTBP was maintaining a neutral stance. E.ON is the legacy owner of the strip of land called Canbury Wharf. E.ON wish to off load it but to ensure that any historical liabilities go with it (loads of documents). RB Kingston will accept the transfer of land as long as any responsibilities relate only to the narrow strip of land. RBK will then give a long lease to RTBP. The next steps for the Wharf once we have the lease are general improvements to make it safe, better fencing which will make the boats more visible, lighting and a practical clean up – cost estimated around £75k.

The Chair closed the meeting with thanks to John Frye for all the photography he did for RTBP during the year including the displays tonight. On a personal note he

20191127 to agree for website

wanted to record his thanks to Miranda Jagers for introducing him to teaching on School on the River when he joined the Charity and to Louise Sibley with whom he worked closely as Vice Chair.

November 2019