

River Thames Boat Project

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 15 November 2021 at the Pavilion Club East Molesey.

Chairman, Jon Chapman welcomed all those who had felt able to join the face to face AGM this year. 28 people attended the meeting. 40 members had apologised for absence.

Minutes of the 2020 AGM held by zoom; the minutes were agreed as a correct record. There were no matters arising that were not covered on the current agenda.

Overview of 2020-21 and Financial Statements: Jon Chapman reminded members that 2020-2021 had been a challenging year with staff changes, pressure on income and a reduction in activity. We had to make use of online methods to keep in touch, with the AGM, a Christmas Social and a Quiz all held on Zoom, as well as day to day communications with our members, volunteers and Friends. We continued to be supported by many of our funders and were able to make use of the furlough scheme and a Covid recovery grant from LB Richmond. This had enabled the charity to end the year with a small surplus.

Stephen West reported that current assets comprised the two boats (*TV* at insurance valuation; *TD* at build cost) and £303,809 cash. John Cannon asked about 'restricted' funds. These were either amounts given by donors for a specified purpose – refit of *TV*, for instance – or grants to be used for a specific purpose and/or area of benefit. The General Report and Financial Statements for 2020-2021 were approved. A copy of the report is on the website.

Election of Trustees: Jon Chapman reported that he and David Bell were due to stand down in line with the three year rotation specified in the Articles of the Company. They were both prepared to stand for re-election. Jon Chapman was proposed by David Bell and Chris Deavin; David Bell was proposed by Jon Chapman and Pippa Butterfield. Both were elected unanimously. Prasad Shastri had resigned during the year. Bob Darke and Stephen West both wished to stand down. Jon thanked them for their contribution to the charity over the period they had been Trustees.

Three new Trustees had been co-opted during the past 12 months and were prepared to stand for election. Richard Boulton, Chris Deavin and Steven Wibberley introduced themselves briefly. Richard Boulton was proposed by Jon Chapman and Bob Darke; Chris Deavin by Jane Newman and Paul Barry; Steven Wibberley by Ivor Gibson and Byron Turner. All were elected unanimously.

Review of the current year 2021-22. Jon reported that education bookings had picked up; cruises were a little slower. Many of our clients were older, potentially

vulnerable people and cautious about resuming activities. Everyone in the charity was thrilled by the award of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS), the highest honour a charity can achieve. Thanks to everyone who has contributed over the years to help RTBP achieve this award. Nigel Williams and Linda Varney represented the Charity at the Awards Ceremony on 27 September; Jon presented them with a copy of the official photograph to commemorate the occasion. The crystal award and certificate were displayed at the meeting for everyone to see.

Gunnar Christensen had been delayed on personal business in US; Jon presented his Skipper's report. Gunnar had initiated a complete inspection of all the life jackets on the boats assisted by an RNLi colleague. These were now worn routinely by crew. Another colleague had undertaken a fire safety inspection. Other improvements included the fitting of safety handles on *Thames Discoverer*, repositioning the anchoring system and painting the hull. Volunteer skippers were taking the Inland Waterways Helmsmans' Certificate with Bisham Abbey trainers before being assessed by Jon and Gunnar for competence on our own boats. Thanks to Peter Finch for identifying relevant qualifications and courses. *Thames Discoverer* had an issue with its gearbox at present; David Bell was supporting Gunnar on this. Her 5 year out of water inspection was due shortly. Improvements were also being made to *Thames Venturer* – including improvement of the gas system and the canopy.

Jane Newman presented the report on education as Hannah was unwell. Jane thanked Gemma Hindi for her support during the recruitment process and induction and training for Hannah. RTBP owed Gemma a great deal for all she provided. Hannah had made a great start. She was very enthusiastic, noted ideas as she went along and was growing new and different directions for our education offering. Covid had meant that both on board sessions had been taught on deck to start with, but the rocks and soils module was now below deck again in a well ventilated space. This year there had been 43 bookings for education days so far and for the first time a preschool group came for a cruise and activities.

Kate Dodds reported that it was great to be back doing things – cruises for funders and supporters, running water stations and having a firework event. After all the disruption and staff changes they were rebuilding the staff team and the wider RTBP team. Those who gave us funds regularly had been supportive which was very much appreciated. Other sources of funding had diverted funds to Covid support and recovery projects. All recognised the value of a cruise to recuperate after the stress of the Covid period. The QAVS award had generated some good publicity for the charity in many local magazines and on Radio Jackie. It also provided a good opportunity for re-engaging and rebuilding links. The Friends provided a valuable source of income and support. Please encourage your friends to join. Kate thanked John Frye who couldn't be at the AGM for all the photos.

Pippa reported that education bookings had almost reached the expected level, 43 as against 45 planned. We had delivered 33 cruises. She and Kate had to take on additional tasks whilst things settled down, even supporting two education days when volunteers dropped out. Over 20 new volunteers had joined the charity during the year. Covid protection measures had continued so staff were still working partly from home. The IT support being provided by Tribeca was being withdrawn. John Wilson was working with staff to develop a new office IT system which hopefully will help make some of the procedures more straightforward.

There was a display of photographs from the year provided by John Frye.

Forward look

Jon Chapman thanked the staff members and Office volunteer Sarah Herrick for all their hard work to keep the Charity operating through the difficult times. We hoped we could return to something like normal operations in the not too distant future. Jon reported on -

Canbury Wharf: E.ON and RTBP are ready to complete the process of transferring the land. RBK had some issues with a historic Section 106 permitting access to the riverside. RTBP would not want the mooring and our boats to be fully open and accessible to the public. Improvement of the site was delayed by this.

Tamesis: the Sailing Club had agreed to a renewal of our licence to use the office space for another three years from February 2022 including access for embarkation to our boats.

Barge Dock: the developers continue to seek planning permission for the site. They have not issued the Section 106 order for *Thames Venturer's* mooring but RBK was supportive of our position.

Kingston's proposals in relation to charging for moorings should not affect us.

Position of chair of the charity: Jon explained that Louise Sibley and Keith Knox had both done a great job as Chair but had been operating as Executive Chairs. He advised we are planned to revert to a more traditional Chair role, perhaps even rotating the role amongst the Trustees. Jon reported that Chris Deavin had agreed to take the role for the time being.

Any questions from the floor? None were raised.

Chris Deavin said he was looking forward to working with everyone and taking the Charity forward. He thanked Jon Chapman and Bob Darke for all they had done, steering the organisation through the Covid period and all the staff changes. He really appreciated what they had succeeded in doing.

Peter Finch proposed a vote of thanks to the Board and staff for all their work to maintain and develop the charity