

## FAVERSHAM CREEK CONSORTIUM MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of meeting held on 13 June 2013 in the Municipal Charities' Boardroom

Present:

Mike Cosgrove (Chair)  
Trevor Abram  
George Barnes  
Bob Berk  
Eric Green  
Jeremy Lamb  
Anne Salmon  
Bob Telford  
Susan White  
Brian Caffarey (Secretary)

1. Apologies for absence were received from Nigel Kay, Andrew Osborne, Alan Reekie and Geoff Wade. The Chair welcomed Trevor Abram, who was standing in for Nigel Kay.

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2013

2. The minutes were approved.

### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

#### (i) Operation of sluices in the Stonebridge allotments – paragraph 3

3. Bob Telford said that there was no progress to report at present but that he would be following this up since he understood that matters were now becoming more urgent. Eric Green said that it appeared that there had been some inflow of water from the other sluice but no one could throw any light on this. **(ACTION: BOB TELFORD)**

#### (ii) Festival of Sail – paragraph 5

4. Bob Berk reported that the event had been very successful. A few of the bigger boats had not been able to attend because of the weather beforehand but, overall, the numbers were probably about the same or slightly higher than last year, with the 'Orinoco' looking particularly splendid. Attendance too seemed to be on a par with last year. The experiment of having stalls on the Front Brents had perhaps not worked very well since they seemed to be a bit 'cut off' from the main activities on the Town Green, which included the much-appreciated Punch and Judy man. It was understood that the event had broken even, with a small donation being able to be made afterwards to dredging work.

5. The only major disappointment was that Medway Ports had failed, once again, even to respond to the request to open the gates. It was noted too that no representative from MP had attended.

6. The meeting acknowledged the huge amount of work involved in organising the event and passed a vote of thanks to Lena Reekie and those who had assisted her.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### (i) Reflections on the 7-8 June exhibition

7. The Chair invited comments from those who had attended the exhibition at the Alexander Centre. It was recognised that it the organisation of the exhibition had been a major undertaking and the general view was that it had been informative and well designed, although there were minor criticisms of the way in which some of the material had been presented or displayed. A number of detailed observations were made by members about the illustrative drawings for the various Creek sites but some of the common or main themes were: a perception that a number of those attending the exhibition failed to understand the importance of the Inner Basin and the bridge, simply focusing on a collection of buildings; there was also a lack of understanding about the Neighbourhood Plan process; concern that any residential development on Ordnance Wharf would be incompatible with planned activities at the Purifier Building; a view that calling the four Ordnance Wharf drawings 'options' had been misleading; concern that the residential development shown at Swan Quay and elsewhere was too dense, too close to the waterfront and out of keeping with the character of the Creek; and concern about the lack of open space at the BMM Weston site. George Barnes commented that Shepherd Neame had a major landholding in the Inner Basin but he was not aware that they had been consulted about the exhibition drawings.

8. Anne Salmon said that there had been 1006 'visits' to the exhibition. 79 general questionnaires had been collected at the exhibition and these were being forwarded, with others still to come, to Action for Market Towns, who would be producing an analysis of them. About 60-80 comment forms had been submitted for the various sites but with substantially fewer for Standard House. The closing date for responses was 29 June. A draft matrix had been devised to enable the collation of all the site responses but this would need to be modified in the light of those that had been studied so far. Both the AMT report on the general questionnaires and a summary of the responses re individual sites would be published, with the aim being to have these available for the next Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting on 25 July.

9. The Steering Group would need to consider all this information and then move towards the production of a 'pre-submission draft' of the Plan, which would be the responsibility of Faversham Town Council. The target for this was October/November 2013. There would be a six-week consultation stage, with possibly another exhibition. Subsequently Swale Borough Council would be responsible for preparing a 'submission draft', which would also be subject to a six-week consultation phase. The resulting draft Plan would then be submitted to a Planning Inspector. It was hoped that this could be done in March/April 2014 and that the referendum could be held on 22 May 2014 to coincide with the European elections.

10. In discussion the following main points were raised:

- Some concern was expressed that local businesses would not have any voting rights. It was noted that there was nothing to prevent businesses from submitting their views at any stage but it was agreed that the NPSG should be asked to consider whether any specific steps should be taken to ensure that business views were fully taken into account. (ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY TO REPORT TO NPSG SECRETARIAT)
- It was felt that it was not entirely clear at what stage organisations like the Creek Trust should best submit any collective view and what weight would be attached to their views as compared with individual comments. Anne Salmon said that the NPSG might well have to take advice from SBC about this matter since they had experience of handling large-scale consultation exercises
- It was suggested that it would be helpful if proposals could be on display for longer, perhaps via a 'pop-up shop'. It was recognised that this could prove difficult in terms of the volunteer help needed but it was agreed that the NPSG should be asked to consider this. (ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY TO REPORT TO NPSG SECRETARIAT)

## THE BRIDGE

11. The Chair said that there had been no response yet from Peel Ports to the letter sent by the Mayor following the meeting with the CE's of Peel Ports and Medway Ports (see paragraph 8 of the minutes of the meeting on 16 May 2013). He confirmed that this meeting had been attended by Hugh Robertson MP. Bob Telford said that he understood that the opportunity had been taken at the official opening of the Purifier Building to raise the issue of the bridge with MP representatives but he did not have details of the discussion.

12. It was suggested that a representative of MP should be invited to attend the Management Board to update it on what practical steps they were taking or planned to take re the Creek. This was agreed. (ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY)

13. In discussion concern was expressed that there should be closer working between the Consortium and the Trust on this issue. It was noted that communication had improved greatly following Chris Wright's election to the Consortium's Management Board and Bob Telford was asked if he would ensure that he was briefed on any developments so that he could inform discussion at the Consortium's Management Board meetings. Bob stressed the importance of the bridge to the Trust's objectives and indicated that he thought that the Trust might want to take some initiative in this area. In response it was suggested that the best channel of communication was via the Town Council since the latter had responsibility for the Neighbourhood Plan. While the Trust could obviously assist in making the case for action, the statutory bodies and Peel Ports and Medway Ports would understandably see the main channel of communication as being with official bodies.

14. Bob Berk expressed concern about any proposal to replace the present bridge by a new swing bridge or to simply repair the present bridge since he believed that this could not be done without continuing to impair the safety of pedestrians. In discussion it was agreed, however, that the Management Board did not have the

expertise to express a conclusive view on any of these matters. What was needed was for an independent expert to assess the options for the bridge and gates. It was mentioned that the NPSG had had a very helpful discussion with a bridge/gate consulting firm.

#### FAVERSHAM CREEK TRUST – UPDATE

15. Bob Telford reported that the official opening of the Purifier Building had been a great success. The trial apprenticeship scheme was due to start in August. Much work had been done on the building but there was still a lot more to do. Colin Frake had not officially moved in but was expected to do so soon.

16. Bob also reported Chris Wright's reply to the Mayor about the incident which had occurred at the Neighbourhood Plan exhibition.

#### THE WORK OF THE CONSORTIUM

17. The meeting noted the updated work plan.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18. The Chair invited Trevor Abram to give a brief update on the Front Brents Jetty Working Group. Trevor reported that work was proceeding to upgrade the jetty, including improvements to the lighting and water supply. The Town Council had also agreed that Eric Green and Bob Berk would carry out some dredging work.

19. Eric Green said that he felt that there was a lack of inclusivity about the Management Board, with some members knowing more about developments than others. It would be helpful if information could be shared more widely. It was acknowledged in response that this was desirable but it had to be recognised that some discussions took place 'in confidence' or were of a sensitive nature. Eric also urged that everyone in Faversham who cared about the Creek should work together: there was so much knowledge, talent and passion but much of the time people seemed to be pulling in different directions or against each other.

#### FUTURE MEETINGS

20. The next meeting would be held on 18 July 2013, subject to checking nearer the time that sufficient number of members could attend. There would be no meeting in August.

14 June 2013