

## Stour and Orwell Society Minutes of the First Annual General Meeting

Held at The Royal Harwich Yacht Club, Woolverstone

22nd of March 2007

In attendance were some 40 supporters

### 1. Welcome from the Interim Chairman

Tom Hill introduced himself and the other interim officers - Treasurer Stephen Clark and Secretary Rodney Chadburn - and reminded the meeting that the main purpose of the AGM was formally to constitute the Stour and Orwell Society (SOS).

Some 200 people had now registered their support for the proposed Society that is intended for those people who live in or near the AONB which covers the estuaries of the rivers Stour and Orwell and the associated Project Area. Tom Hill hoped that all who become members of the society would be proactive in the promotion of the object of the Society.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Griff Rhys-Jones, Patience Shone, Rev Pendorf, Mrs Pendorf, Penny Burgess, Mike Wilkie and Rosemary Raddon.

### 3. Minutes of Inaugural Meeting

Tom Hill proposed that the minutes of the Inaugural meeting be accepted as a true and correct record. The proposal was passed unanimously.

### 4. Matters Arising from Minutes

Tom Hill briefly outline what SOS will be able to do:

Be prepared to defend the area against threats – by writing to bodies responsible for or having an interest in the issues and liaising with local councillors. A specific issue over which he had already written to Suffolk CC concerns the published strategy for sand and gravel extraction in the county.

Gather information – by working actively to improve our knowledge of the ecology, landscape, history, archaeology and built environment of the Shotley peninsula and the estuaries. To this end SOS would liaise with and supplement the efforts of existing organisations such as the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Partnership, Suffolk Wildlife etc. Tom Hill suggested that SOS might start by sponsoring the publication of a paper that would survey existing resources within the area.

Improve communications throughout area – a start has already been made here by identifying the several magazines that cover the Shotley peninsula and adjacent areas; using email to contact supporters of SOS ; and by creating a new SOS website. The aim will be to put in place the facility to speedily raise the awareness of all statutory bodies, organisations and individuals throughout the peninsula to specific threats as soon as they arise. This will facilitate a co-ordinated and rapid response to issues of general and local concern.

Organise events – SOS will aim to hold perhaps three events each year to enable members to meet socially and to discuss informally current issues and the progress of SOS. Ideas floated so far include: a concert or musical event organised in conjunction with local schools and art societies; a garden party; and a farmers/craft market for producers on the peninsula.

## 5. Constitution

The draft Constitution was considered. Tom Hill drew the meeting's attention to certain key features: the object of the Society was in a form closely following that recommended by the Charity Commissioners as appropriate for environmental bodies; officers and committee members hold office for only one year and will be required to stand for election at each AGM; the draft Constitution was recommended for its brevity and simplicity but there would be opportunities to make changes to it at any AGM or Special Meeting should this be deemed to be necessary.

Tom Hill proposed that the meeting approve adoption of the Constitution of the Stour and Orwell Society in the form as presented to the meeting. Rodney Chadburn seconded the proposal. The proposal was passed unanimously

## 6. Election of Officers and Committee

Tom Hill said that all of the officers and interim committee members, apart from Geoff Sinclair (who is standing down for personal reasons), were willing to stand for re-election and had duly been proposed and seconded. He proposed that the meeting elect en bloc the officers and committee as nominated. They are as follows:

Post	Nomination	Proposed By	Seconded by
Chairman	Tom Hill	Michael Barlow	Oliver Paul
Honorary Treasurer	Stephen Clark	Jamie Norman	Patty Shone
Honorary Secretary	Rodney Chadburn	Peter Ward	Richard Hoare
Committee Member	Annie Eaves	John Wheals	Norman Sanders
Committee Member	Mike Wilkie	Rodney Chadburn	Annie Eaves
Committee Member	Rosemary Raddon	Susi Hines	Doug Selway
Committee Member	Tony Roberts	Wendy Sadler	Anna Long
Committee Member	Susanna Bishop	Jane Ingram	Peter Ward
Committee Member	Jeremy Pertwee	Henley Chancellor	Henry Huxley
Committee Member	Simon Marchant	Nick Angel	Anne Angel

The proposal was passed unanimously

The Chairman pointed out that there were no committee members representing the large population areas of Holbrook and Shotley but suggested that the committee should seek out and co-opt members from those villages.

## 7. Financial Matters – report by the Treasurer

The Treasurer reported that the interim committee had proposed subscription of £8 per annum for an individual member and £10 per annum for households. He also said that the Society was at an early stage and he did not feel that life membership subscriptions would be appropriate yet. The meeting unanimously approved the proposed subscription rates.

The setting up of banking facilities with the Royal Bank of Scotland was well advanced and it will be possible to complete the process now that SOS had formally come into being. A questioner from the floor asked if it would be preferable to use local banking facilities with an outlet on the Shotley peninsula and the Treasurer promised to look into that option in due course.

The Treasurer also said that he would welcome taking subscriptions from members at the AGM. There is no immediate need for expenditure and subscriptions will initially go towards building up a prudent working reserve.

The benefits of charitable status were being investigated and the committee will consider this matter as a priority action.

#### 8. Update on Stansted NATS consultation etc.

The Chairman said that BAA wish to expand the use of the existing runway to increase passenger throughput from 25m to 35m passengers a year. BAA will apply for a second runway in the near future. The Public Inquiry set up to consider these issues will be convened during May 2007. The Chairman pointed out that he had been instructed to make representations on behalf of the local planning authorities. Independently of this he indicated that the Committee will ensure that SOS makes a separate representation to the Inquiry.

There was some discussion and there were questions and observations from the floor:

NATS will not engage with individuals but will respond to representative bodies such as SOS.

Q. Why not join forces with the Dedham Vale Society rather than set up a separate society? The Chairman said that SOS and the Dedham Vale Society had common interests over certain issues and we will liaise closely over matters such as over-flying and the expansion of Stansted airport. However, there has not previously been a body whose *raison d'être* is to defend the specific area of the Shotley peninsula and its associated AONB's. That is SOS's object.

Q. Has there been previous consultation with local councils over the issues of over-flying and Stansted expansion? The Chairman said that yes, there had been, but the outcome has clearly proved to be unsatisfactory.

SOS is concerned with all matters that may represent a threat to the environment within its general area - not just aircraft nuisance. That said, over-flying had been one issue that acted as a catalyst in forming the Society.

Q. Will SOS become directly involved with Local Authorities? SOS is an organisation of individuals with no statutory role as such but it will work with and make representations to local councils and other bodies regarding issues within the Society's object.

Laurie Mayer said he believed that Shotley Parish Council might wish to become a member of SOS – would this be possible? The Chairman said that he could see no objection to this in principle, but that he would put this matter to the Committee at its first meeting. Also, in response to a question from Brian Fisher, he said that the Committee would consider similar requests from yacht clubs.

Bill Parker (Estuaries Officer, Suffolk Coast and Heaths Partnership) said that he was delighted that SOS had been formed and looked forward to a fruitful working relationship.

Councillor Dave Wood also welcomed the launch of SOS and hoped that the Society will consult and work together with Suffolk County Council. He wished success to the venture.

It was suggested that the Shotley Postmaster, Barry Powell, should be approached with a view to his becoming a co-opted committee member and, thereby, providing a voice for Shotley.

Q. Will the existence of SOS now be publicised? The formation of SOS will be publicised via the website and by emails and post to people who had already expressed support. This will be supplemented by placing short notices in magazines in due course. Details of ways to pay subscriptions will be publicised as soon as all the banking arrangements are in place.

Q. How will parishes be able to bring issues to the attention of SOS? The Secretary said that as the website is developed it is the intention that parishes should have access to pages into which they will be able to insert information on issues of local concern to them and, thereby, speedily raising the awareness of people throughout the peninsula.

Q. Will SOS look into the matter of noise nuisance from helicopters operated by the military and emergency services? The Chairman replied that the MOD had been consulting over this matter and that the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Partnership was already involved. SOS will be happy to join forces in these consultations.

The Chairman thanked the members of the interim committee for their efforts in bringing about the formation of SOS and the Royal Harwich Yacht Club for providing the facilities for the AGM.

There being no other business the meeting was declared closed at 20.32 hours.