

Stour and Orwell Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club, Woolverstone

18th of March 2010

In attendance were some 20 members including:

Chairman Tom Hill
Honorary Secretary Rodney Chadburn

1. Welcome from the Chairman

Tom Hill welcomed the supporters for taking the trouble to attend the Stour and Orwell Society's third Annual General Meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Stephen Clark, Jacqueline Anthony, Alan and Liz Otterburn, Jonathan and Clare Martin, Carol Barbone, Angela Fleming-Brown, Paul Simmons, Alan Barker, Keith Backhouse, James Christopher, Simon Quantrill, Tony Roberts, and Laurie Mayer.

3. Minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting

Tom Hill, seconded by Rodney Chadburn, proposed that the minutes of the 2009 AGM be signed as a true and correct record. This proposal was passed unanimously and the minutes duly signed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 2009 AGM.

5. Chairman's Report

Tom Hill thanked the officers and members of the committee for their efforts during the year. Three Newsletters had been sent to all members in order that they might keep up to date with SOS activities. He also thanked the staff of Churchmanor Estates who had provided valuable back-up services throughout the past year.

The SOS Committee had met on five occasions with the agenda dominated by certain key issues:

Expansion of Stansted airport

SOS has consistently opposed the proposed second runway at Stansted. BAA had submitted an application in 2008 but the process was halted when the Secretary of State suspended the Public Inquiry during 2009. The Tribunal decided that the original decision was flawed and the Competition

Commission had been advised that the proposal was very unsatisfactory. John Denham wrote to BAA in February seeking clarification of its intentions. BAA's response was that it intended to proceed but that it would need some eighteen months delay during which time the submission would be updated. This lengthy delay means that there could well be revisions to Government policy in the interim – especially given that an election will take place shortly. The SOS Committee will continue to monitor the situation closely.

NATS - Changes to Flight Paths and Airspace Management

SOS continued to press for action by NATS in the period since they withdrew their latest proposals. These had included some improvements but NATS had been surprised by the strength and extent of the opposition to its plans throughout East Anglia. It has now stated that it will not resume consultations until autumn 2010 and, whatever the outcome, implementation would not take place before Spring 2012. SOS will continue to 'play the long game' and seek to avoid concentration of flight over AONBs.

Boundary Committee Proposals for Restructure of Local Government

The Boundary Committee had proposed two unitary models for Suffolk: a single whole of Suffolk unitary; or Northaven Unitary plus a Rest Of Suffolk Unitary. Unfortunately, under Northaven the Shotley Peninsula would have been lumped together with Ipswich and Felixstowe – mainly urban areas and with expansionary objectives. Throughout the piece SOS supported the 'whole of Suffolk' unitary but, if there was a need for two unitary authorities then the Shotley Peninsula should be included in the 'rest of Suffolk'. In the event, there was a 'no decision' – a typical Whitehall fudge. All stakeholders in Suffolk are now urged to form a Constitutional Convention to agree a form of local government restructure that would receive broad support. SOS believes that the efforts of our members did influence the outcome. We accept that there is a case for improving the structure of local government in our region - but the proposals made so far would, we believe, have had an adverse effect on the Shotley Peninsula.

Ganges

The developer, Haylink, is trying to force through the original outline planning application for 404 retirement homes. There are two main issues here: can Babergh Development Committee lawfully consider the reserved matters application in view of the length of time that has passed since the original application; and if so, should they approve them?

From the floor Simon Hewitt said that he had attended two meetings of the Babergh Development Committee on behalf of SOS. At the first meeting the decision on the application was delayed and it was refused at the second. It is not yet known what the developer's next move will be. SOS wishes to act in concert with the local Parish Councils. We accept that something will have to happen at the site but SOS wishes to see a closer dialogue between Haylink, Babergh PC and the local communities in order to protect the local environment and ensure road safety. We expect to hear more soon in this regard and we will continue to keep our members informed of our actions.

Other issues that the Committee considered were:

Mistley Free The Quay Campaign

Rosemary Raddon lives close to the site of the controversy and she has been very active in this campaign. Simon Bullimore who spearheads the campaign had been invited to speak to our committee meeting in November 2009. SOS has offered support where we can.

Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit

We are continuing to develop our working relationship with SCHU and we see it as a very useful ally when defending the environment on the peninsula. Members attended the public launch of the SCHU Management Plan.

Alton Water

SOS is keeping an eye on proposals to develop the Alton reservoir. We would wish to see low-key development that retains the tranquil nature of the area rather than to see it turn into a commercialised 'theme park'.

Litter

We have noted the increase in litter that has been strewn unthinkingly on many of the road verges on the peninsula. There has also been an increase in fly tipping. SOS cannot take this on single-handedly and we are working with the Highways Authorities and the local councils to improve the situation.

Christmas Party

This year we moved the venue to the northern boundary of our area - to the Orwell Park School. As usual your committee members organised a show of local artworks and members were also able to look through the twelve-inch refracting telescope. Despite a hectic Christmas-time schedule our patron Griff Rhys-Jones was able to attend at the last moment – confirming his wholehearted support for SOS.

SOS Summer Party

Riding on the success of our Christmas parties, we will hold a summer party in June. Oliver Paul has kindly offered to host the event at Freston Lodge. Details will be circulated to all members.

The Stour and Orwell Shoreline Management Plan is to be launched shortly. Committee members will attend the event. We will consider the plan and respond as necessary.

The Chairman reminded members that SOS is a voluntary society and that any further help would be welcome. There are vacancies for committee members and we are looking for someone with an ecological background. There was a suggestion from the floor that Tessa Paul would be an appropriate person to approach in this regard. In response to a question, the Chairman said that SOS now had some 200 members but he urged all present to encourage others to join because the strength of our voice in local affairs will be all the stronger with an increased membership.

One member asked if it would be possible to publicise SOS activities in ways other than email. The Secretary replied that members without computers were kept in contact by letter post but he promised to revive the use of local parish and community magazines for the purpose.

6. Treasurer's Report

Copies of the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 18th of March 2009 to the 18th of March 2010 were circulated amongst the members present. In the absence of the Treasurer the Chairman

reported that SOS finances were in a healthy condition and that the bank balance is currently standing at £5,846.03. Peter Ward asked how SOS proposed to dispose of this relatively large sum. The Chairman responded that it is financially prudent to retain a healthy reserve to guard against an uncertain future. We are currently co-operating with the SPPA regarding Ganges and there may be a need to support them with a contribution towards what might be substantial legal costs. There is no intention to increase the level of annual subscriptions.

Tom Hill, seconded by Rodney Chadburn, proposed that the financial statement be accepted. This was approved unanimously.

7. Election of Officers and Committee

All existing officers and committee members were prepared to stand for re-election. There are now two vacancies on the committee following the resignations of Simon Marchant and Geoff Sinclair but no nominations to fill the vacancies have been received. Details are shown in the table below:

Post	Nomination	Proposed by	Seconded by
Chairman	Tom Hill	Michael Barlow	Oliver Paul
Honorary Treasurer	Stephen Clark	Jamie Norman	Patty Shone
Honorary Secretary	Rodney Chadbury	Peter Ward	Richard Hoare
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	Henry Chancellor	Henry Huxley
Committee Member	Simon Marchant	Nick Angel	Anne Angel
Committee Member	Oliver Paul	Tom Hill	Stephen Clark
Committee Member	Charlotte Stewart	Rodney Chadbury	Rosemary Raddon
Committee Member	Simon Hewitt	Susanna Bishop	Rodney Chadburn
Committee Member	Geoff Sinclair	Rodney Chadburn	Stephen Clark
Vacancy			
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Tom Hill, seconded by Rodney Chadburn proposed that the officers and committee members be elected en bloc. The meeting approved the proposal unanimously.

8. Update on Ganges, Stansted and the Boundary Committee Report

The Chairman asked if any member had further questions regarding these matters. There was none.

9 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Chairman thanked the Commodore of the Royal Harwich Yacht Club for providing facilities for the SOS AGM and declared the meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

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