

MINUTES OF THE 14th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held on 19th NOVEMBER 2005 at STAFFORD BOAT CLUB.

Present: Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair, Geoffrey Rogerson, vice chairman, Carole Sampson, general secretary, Gordon Reece, treasurer, four other Council members and 27 members.

Apologies for absence: received from Merlene Watson, David Hart and Mike Smith.

Minutes. The minutes of the 13th AGM held in 2004 were distributed. Proposed by Stephen Peters, seconded by Chris Boxall, and with all that were present in favour, they were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising from the minutes.

1) Has Sustrans been contacted? If so, what was the outcome?

The chairman replied that although pressure has been applied, and a representative has been invited to attend National Meetings, no-one has attended. He feels that it is an organisation which has no control over its 'members'.

2) A member pointed out that John Darlington is in fact, a Jon, short for Jonathan. The secretary apologised.

Chairman's Report.

Stuart explained that his main efforts this year have been to try to improve the consultation process, that so much aggravation and sleepless nights might have been saved if only BW had followed the Cabinet Office consultation guidelines and consulted us before anything was committed to paper. NABO wants to help rather than to bicker. He has also learnt never to underestimate the power of the trade lobby, whose interests are not always compatible with ours.

He went on to describe NABO's achievements this year. Formal responses have been made regarding the Transport & Works Act Order, and to BW on the recent licence review and the Towpath Mowing Criteria. The red diesel issue has been raised in parliament and letters sent to the treasury.

Stuart has sat on the British Waterways Advisory Forum inauguration committee. BWAFF itself has already held two meetings, but he feels it is still early days to judge its effectiveness. Similarly with EA's Harmony Forum, as the powers being discussed haven't yet been granted!

NABO has also taken the initiative on the subject of Cutcrime, and he personally thanked Tony Haynes + Eugene Baston and Peter Wade of BW for their work on this.

NABO is also pressing for BW to honour its pre-1995 Act promise to provide a mix of durations at visitor moorings, and have invoked the complaints procedure, and we await the Ombudsman's ruling.

Tony Haynes is now on the BSS Technical Committee and also involved with the Marine & Coastguard Agency. Louis Jankel represents NABO on the Thames RFERAC and navigation

group. Carole Sampson has been asked to liaise with ISIS (BW's development partner), and BW's Director of Regeneration to look after boaters interests in Leeds, Loughborough, and Sheffield.

As a service to members, a discount with RCR has been arranged, and Carole organised a trip down the tidal River Severn.

Our show stand attended Crick, Saul, and the National rallies, made possible by Ken and Iris Bennell's offer of transport. We are indebted to them.

Stuart went on to talk about the Waterway Reports Board - urging members to use it. The appropriate waterway office automatically receives a copy of every posting, so it a really worthwhile facility.

Finally, he thanked Celia Kennedy for all her contributions whilst on Council. We will miss her input.

And to anyone he had forgotten to mention, THANK YOU!

Stuart received a round of applause, once everyone realised he had stopped!

Financial statement.

The accounts had been distributed to the members present. Gordon Reece, treasurer, explained the ongoing problems of members paying the wrong amount, too much and too little. He thanked members for help at shows, and Jon and Melanie Darlington for their work with the book-keeping and accounts. Members were then invited to ask questions.

- Why is the rallies expenditure so much lower than the previous year?

We either did not attend Crick in 2003 or we were never billed for it.

- Why are printing and stationery costs lower?

Carole explained that she and Stuart are printing off stationery at home to use up old-style paper, and this is much cheaper than having a large amount printed externally.

- A member commented on the healthy bank balance, and wondered what could be given back to members. He asked if NABO News could be distributed electronically to those who requested it. Carole S. responded by saying that as the current editor is also chairman and webmaster, he really does not have the time to do the not inconsiderable extra work to do this. Melanie continued by saying that NABO had lost money a couple of years ago, and the status quo was just being restored, and for some members to receive the magazine electronically would be an administrative nightmare.

- The same member thought that Council should use legal consultation cautiously, as he felt that often, by the time the advice had been received, the cause has often been lost.

Geoffrey Rogerson responded by disagreeing with this, and that from time to time, advice is needed. Those present agreed with his sentiment.

- The non-use of direct debits was noted. It seems that the TSB will allow small clubs to use this system.

Proposed Chris Boxall, seconded by Peter Foster, and with everyone in favour, the accounts were accepted.

Annual subscription fees.

Proposed Stuart Sampson, seconded Peter Foster that subscription fees should remain the same. Everyone present was in favour..

Appointment of the auditor.

Stuart S explained that the present auditor, is prepared to continue in 2005-2006. He proposed that Alan Davies be NABO's auditor, all were in favour.

Stuart Sampson asked if members were in favour of continuing with the liquid honorarium for the auditor: all agreed.

Constitution changes.

- a) to 4.1 classes - **ADD Life Member**, entitled to attend and vote at general meetings and **Joint Life Member**, entitled to attend and vote at general meetings.
- Concern was expressed that taking up this category of membership when the fees are lower might lead to insolvency later on.
 - It was suggested that such money raised should be invested to provide an income rather than just be absorbed into normal funds.
 - The question of what would happen if a life member sold his/her boat: would he/she still be entitled to a vote? And, if owning a boat is a criteria for NABO membership, an anomaly would exist.

Generally, it was thought that this would be a technicality, as someone who had sold his/her boat would have lost interest in boating and would not bother to travel to an AGM to vote.

- Finally, a member pointed out that, looking around the room at the average age of those present, there would not be many taking up the option of this category of membership!

Proposed Stephen Peters, seconded Jerry King that the motion be carried:

For 27, against 0, abstentions 8.

The motion was carried.

Proposed Stephen Peters, seconded by Carole Sampson that Life and Joint Life Membership be set at ten times the existing Full Member and Family Member rates.

For 32, against 0, abstentions 3.

This was carried.

- b) to the end of 8.1 -

'The treasurer is authorised to be the single signatory on debit card transactions for expenditure with advance Council approval only'.

- Melanie Darlington had strong concerns about security should the debit card be lost or misused, and that strict controls would be necessary. There could be considerable funds at risk.
- Carole S explained the problems of Council members having to personally shoulder the

expenses, to the point of subsidising NABO, until reimbursement.

- Concern was expressed about on-line card fraud.
- A member pointed out that the card would be used on the current account - i.e. the working account - only.
- Members felt that a credit card offers certain guarantees, but that it is unacceptable that individuals should be subsidising the association.
- Another member pointed out that such a contingency is already covered in the Constitution, whereby cheques and other withdrawals can be *authorised* by two Council signatories.

After considerable discussion, proposed Peter Foster, seconded Simon Angel, that the matter should be deferred back to Council and the new treasurer. All were agreed.

The proposal was NOT carried.

c) a new clause: 8.4 -

'Members claiming expenses, which should have the prior approval of Council, should submit the claim by the end of March for the financial year in which they have been incurred'.

Geoffrey R. commented that if an expense was incurred on 31st March, it would be very difficult to get the claim in on time.

Melanie Darlington said that the claim should be *dated* on 31st March: this was the date entered in the accounts and the date on the cheque was not relevant.

An amendment was proposed by Stephen Peters, seconded by Peter Foster:

'Members claiming expenses should submit the claim no later than one month after the end of the financial year in which they have been incurred.'

For 33, against 0, abstentions 2.

This was carried.

Election of Council Members.

Eleven people are standing for Council, namely, Aileen Butler, Andy Colyer, Peter Foster, Tony Haynes, Stephen Peters, Gordon Reece, Simon Robbins, Geoff Rogerson, Carole Sampson, Stuart Sampson and Merlene Watson. The chairman explained the absence of Merlene, stating that she had offered to stand down if members so wished. The offer was not accepted.

There being no need for an election, Stuart asked the meeting if it wished to elect them en bloc or individually. All were in favour of election en bloc, so the eleven were elected to Council for the year 2005-2006.

At this point, the new Council adjourned to elect its officers whilst members availed themselves of the new slogans and other free items.

Introduction of new Officers. For the year 2005-2006,

Chairman	Stuart Sampson
Vice Chairman	Tony Haynes
General Secretary	Carole Sampson
Treasurer	Stephen Peters

Questions from the floor.

Q - a member had heard a rumour that canalside suppliers were being told that they would have to have three pumps, for white diesel, red diesel, and propane.

A - This was thought to be unlikely. Adrian Stott (London Secretary) explained the issue. The current VAT rate is not due to end until the end of 2006, so nothing has officially been decided, although he felt that the cause was already lost.

· Another member had attended the rally/gathering organised by John (Stokie) in Sharpness, where the message was that the cause has definitely not been lost.

· Council was asked if it could produce a draft letter for members to use to lobby parliament. It was thought that block letters, all the same, would not be of much use, but it will be possible to list the arguments in favour of retention of present duty levels so that members can write their own letters.

· Another member asked what the key argument was. Adrian S, explained that a portion of the duty on car fuel was to pay for the maintenance of the roads. If marine diesel cost the same, then it is unfair that boaters should have to pay for that maintenance.

Q - could the chairman give an update on the Higher Band Licence Consultation.

A - Stuart explained that BW has totally backed down on the higher rate proposal for continuous cruisers, and that Council is awaiting the white paper for the next round of consultation. But, BW has stated that this will not be the end of the matter.

Q - could a reminder about the Waterway Reports Board be put in NABO News?

A - yes.

Q - could Council look at the timing of the AGM in order to give those who travel further more time to get to it.

A - Carole S explained that last year, members had asked that we start earlier in order for this question time before lunch, in order to accommodate Robin Evans in the afternoon.

Carole S, informed members of a membership drive, whereby, for each new member they recruit, they will receive £5, to a maximum of £15. Those who pay by standing order will still pay the full amount, but a refund will be sent.

The meeting then adjourned for a buffet lunch, provided by Stafford Boat Club members.

The meeting was joined by Robin Evans, Chief Executive of British Waterways, and Eugene Baston, External Relations Manager, BW.

Robin spoke for 10-15 minutes about his vision for the future of the waterways, which is to be

achieved by 2012. It costs £110 - 120 million to run the network. There are maintenance arrears costing £130 million, which BW is planning to eliminate by 2012. Indications show that the government will be adopting a tight-belt situation.

Upon conclusion, he received applause. There followed questions from the floor.

Q - What about rivers? Robin had spoken eloquently about canals and not mentioned rivers. He is concerned about the closure of the boatyard and drydock in Newark, as the alternatives will be going all the way to the Humber or expensive craning out.

A - Robin replied that of course river users are valued customers. The retention of the Newark dry dock is being looked at, and, if its closure would be detrimental to Trent users, then it is important to keep it.

Q - Why is the contract for new workboats being put out to private tender when there is so much expertise within BW staff? And have there been problems with amphibious craft?

A - Robin agreed as to the expertise of staff, but stated that it was not economic to keep workshops in all areas of the country. There have been problems with amphibious craft: they are good in the water and out of the water, but going between the two was not satisfactory. BW is looking at a 'pod' system, which can be lifted on/off workflats.

Q - Could we have an update on the restoration of the upper reaches of the Lancaster Canal?

A - Robin said that the feasibility study, into the ease of building and economic benefits, is currently underway.

The member was disappointed that in spite of this study being agreed some years ago, it is still not completed.

Q - The promise had been made of 'Waterways for All'. BW's continuing pressure on Continuous Cruisers, who are generally at the poorer end of the boating community, is forcing out those on a tighter income.

A - Robin spoke about the issue. BW values the genuine continuous cruiser, but others, liveaboards, give them a bad name. "BW recognises the value, both culturally and economically, of genuine continuous cruisers."

• It is not a continuous cruising problem, but a continuous mooring problem.

Q - what is BW doing about congestion. It is lovely to boat at this time of year, but dreadful at the height of the season.

A - BW is trying to encourage people to moor and cruise on the underused canals, such as the Leeds and Liverpool canal.

Q - BW does not value its customers, the people, having closed so many waterside offices.

A - An error had been made with the restructuring, and steps have been taken to remedy the situation. It costs £25,000 to keep smaller offices open, and BW must be more efficient.

Q - about BW's credibility and the value of consultation. In the Lee Valley, the vedge pledge and dredging policies are not being adhered to - who is in charge, headquarters or the local office?

A - Robin stated that he has visited the area and does not agree with what the local office is doing: he will tell them what to cut if necessary.

• The member had been aware of RE's visit, but there had been no discernible change in the attitude of local staff at the user group meeting afterwards.

Q - Why is there no central core of good ideas? The paddle gear on the Kennet & Avon Canal is

badly engineered, the gear paddle cogs do not mesh properly and they are impossible to lower quickly. The member had seen a design created by someone on BW's staff in the midlands which is brilliant.

A - This would be looked into. (Eugene Baston wrote it down.)

Q - What is BW doing to facilitate the private sector into providing moorings, and couldn't something like the connection charge be lowered/dropped to give encouragement?

A - Whereas before BW would think of reasons to *prevent* the building of new marinas, now they are approaching private bodies with a booklet which facilitates them doing so. The connection charge cannot be altered, as the BMI would complain about unfair trading.

Q - It had been noted that Robin had said that the current licence consultation was not the end of the story, and had hinted about consultation with outside bodies. The member suggested that BW should come to NABO *NOW* to consider the problems.

A - BW has been 'timid'. It is hoped that BWAF will discuss such things. BW had been disappointed in the first full meeting of BWAF, but hopes that the body will develop.

Q - The Basingstoke Canal is threatened by lack of funding after years of hard work by volunteers. Would BW consider taking it on to extend its network?

A - The choice had been given to BWAF: should £1 million be used to enlarge the system or to maintain the existing waterways. The answer was that both are wanted, and BW should ask the government for more money! BW could provide a specialist to manage the canal, someone with experience and know-how: as there are no career prospects in managing that canal, maybe the right person was not doing the job, but BW could still offer the promotion ladder to that person. Robin feels that not enough has been done to increase awareness about the economic value to the local communities.

Q - BW should be talking to farmers about creating small off-line mooring facilities rather than just developers. Not everyone wants full marina facilities, but just somewhere to park a boat.

A - There is very little difference in cost between the two.

Q - Has Robin spent time afloat without his BW hat on?

A - Robin replied that he can never switch off. He would feel a fraud going up to people and not declaring who he is.

* How long has he spent afloat?

Answer: four days.

Q - What is BW doing to support the retention of current duty levels on red diesel?

A - Not a lot.

Q - Why not?

A - The decision was taken that, as it has many ongoing battles with government, it didn't want to open another front.

Q - Regarding congestion, why doesn't BW move half of the Canaltime fleet from Sawley Marina? These boats cause the congestion when they come out at once. The hirers receive no tuition and the local boaters are sick and tired of having to show them what to do.

A - It is of great concern to BW when one of its operations is causing problems. This will be looked at. (Eugene Baston wrote this down.)

• It is unacceptable that people can hire a boat without a qualification.

Q - Why does BW continue to use terminology that is not used within the 1995 Act? For example, river registration certificates are not licences.

A - We will look into that.

Q - What am I? I pay for a winter mooring, so I am not cruising throughout the period of my licence. I only have a mooring during the winter: what am I?

A - Difficult.

Q - Why is £7 million being spent on the Leeds and Liverpool extension?

A - You might well ask.

At this point, it was suggested that the Canaltime boats be moved to the docks.

As the end of the allotted time had arrived, the chairman presented Robin Evans with some liquid thanks for giving up his time to attend our *Annual General Meeting*.

The meeting closed at 3.15p.m.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS
ACCOUNTS for the year 1/4/04 to 31/3/05

AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

31 MARCH 2005

I have examined the books and records of the Association and have verified that the Association's accounts are in accordance with them, and the information and explanations provided, and are free of material misstatement.

I have not carried out an audit as defined by the Auditing Practices Board of the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies.

November 2005

Alan C Davis (Chartered Certified Accountant)
9 Fryer's Walk
Tring
Herts. HP23 4AY

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31/3/05

		2004/5	2003/4
		£	£
INCOME			
	<i>Note</i>		
Membership Fees	1	21,050	21,055
Donations		957	1,162
Profit on Merchandise Sales		105	246
Advertising Revenue		14	470
Deposit Interest	2	0	0
Sale of "Boats on Show" Share		473	0
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		22,599	22,933
 LESS EXPENSES			
Printing & Distribution of Newsletter		6,586	6,661
Rallies & Marketing Expenditure		180	822
Printing, Postage & Stationery		1,612	2,100
Telephone and Office Expenses		547	1,577
Travelling & Conference Expenses		1,631	2,283
Room Hire & Meeting Expenses		270	311
Subscriptions & Donations		286	565
Insurance		1,136	1,202
Secretarial & Computer Support		1,714	1,656
Accountancy costs		300	300
Storage Costs		381	419
Legal Costs		0	3,643
Web Site Costs		316	97
Sundry Expenses		390	290
Depreciation of Fixed Assets		902	892
Write off of Investment		0	0
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		16,251	22,818
 EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		 <hr/> 6,348 <hr/>	 <hr/> 115 <hr/>

BALANCE SHEET

31 MARCH 2005

		2004/5		2003/4	
	Note	£	£	£	£
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	4		561		1,223
CURRENT ASSETS	5	41,401		34,498	
AMOUNTS DUE within 1 YEAR	6	(15,174)		(15,281)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			26,227		19,217
TOTAL NET ASSETS			<u>26,788</u>		<u>20,440</u>
RESERVES					
Reserves brought forward			20,440		20,325
Excess of Income over Expenditure			6,348		115
Reserves carried forward			<u>26,788</u>		<u>20,440</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees are shown net of a reserve for advance subscriptions. At any time the Association has a commitment to each member to provide a service for the length of time up to his or her renewal date. The reserve accounts for this commitment.

2. DEPOSIT INTEREST

Deposit interest is received gross. Provision for Corporation Tax has been made against this at 0% (2003: 10%) and included under current liabilities.

3. BOOKS OF ACCOUNT

All members are welcome to inspect the Association's financial records at any time mutually convenient to the member and the Treasurer. Please contact the Treasurer if you want to exercise this right.

4. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	TOTAL	Office Equipment	Other Fixtures
	£	£	£
Cost Brought Forward	7,973	7,205	768
Additions	240	240	0
Disposals	0	0	0
Cost Carried Forward	<u>8,213</u>	<u>7,445</u>	<u>768</u>
Depreciation Brought Forward	6,750	5,988	762
Charge for Period	902	896	6
Disposals	0	0	0
Depreciation Carried Forward	<u>7,652</u>	<u>6,884</u>	<u>768</u>
NET BOOK VALUE at end of year	<u>561</u>	<u>561</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Book Value Last Year	<u>1,223</u>	<u>1,217</u>	<u>6</u>

	<i>Notes</i>	2004/5	2003/4
5. CURRENT ASSETS		£	£
Stock of Merchandise		716	657
Stock of Promotional goods & Stationery		500	500
Membership fees owing		820	0
Debtors & Prepayments		914	876
Bank Current Account		38,451	32,465
Bank Deposit Account		0	0
		<u>41,401</u>	<u>34,498</u>
6. AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN 1 YEAR		£	£
Trade Creditors		369	1,265
Accruals		3,709	1,855
Advance Subscriptions		10,500	11,565
Corporation Tax	2	427	427
Capital Gains Tax		169	169
		<u>15,174</u>	<u>15,281</u>