

The 23rd Annual General meeting of the National
Association of Boat Owners held on 15th November 2014
at Stafford Boat Club

Minutes

1. Apologies for absence

Received from: Andy Soper, Louis Jankel, Alan & Cath Fincher,
Bernard & Anne Hughes, Graham Paterson, John and Fiona Slee, Simon
Robbins, Andy Colyer, Julie Henderson, Margaret and Peter Lloyd, Geoff
Wood, Ed and Sarah Rhodes, Stephen Foote, Sadie Dean.

2. To agree the minutes of the 2013 AGM

The minutes of last years AGM were approved. Proposed by David Fletcher,
seconded by Peter Fellows

3. To receive the Chairman's Report

Full notes attached. Proposed by Geoffrey Rogerson and Seconded by Helen
Hutt

4. To receive the Treasurers report

The report and review of audit was presented by the Hon Treasurer and
accepted unanimously – proposed by Trevor Rogers and seconded by Peter
Fellows. There were no proposals to increase fees following the new uplift
earlier in the year. There were some general procedural questions from the
floor following the change of responsibility for Membership fees collection
and administration. These were to be reviewed by the next Council and
recommendations made for the future following this review.

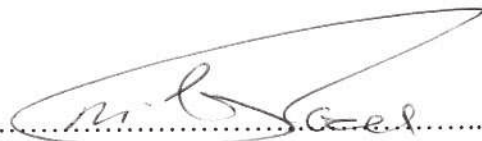
The Treasurer indicated that our Auditor Alan Davis had retired after
preparing the Audit and Accounts for the financial year ended March 2014
and had indicated that this would be the last year he could undertake the job.
It was agreed that the new Council would seek to appoint a new auditor in
good time for preparation of the Accounts for year ended March 2015.

5. Nominations were read out for Council as follows Mike Tizard, Mike Rodd,
Peter Fellows, Stephen Peters, David Fletcher, Geoffrey Rogerson, Phil
Goulding and Trevor Rogers. As the numbers were below the constitutional
level permitted it was proposed that they be elected on block, this was voted
unanimously.

7. AOB – Mike Rodd agreed to continue to Chair the meeting until the new Council meet to appoint officers.

A proposal from the General Secretary that at any future AGM – the afternoon session was taken up with a shorter than usual Council Meeting that AGM attendees could remain to observe was generally well received. His argument was that Council Members had to attend the ASGM and within one week travel to meet again as a Council creating lots of costs and demands on their time. It was agreed that the new Council would look at this and make recommendations.

The AGM took its normal course and received a presentation from CRT's Dean Davies discussing Mooring Strategy which was warmly received. This was followed by a presentation from representatives of River Canal Rescue on their work and processes.

Signed..........

NABO Chair

14/11/15

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO AGM 2014

1. Introduction

Having admired the work of NABO ever since we bought our first boat some 16 years ago, I was delighted to be invited to join the Council. I didn't quite tumble to what David had in mind, though, when I soon discovered that he was planning to stand down after five years as the Chairman! His are huge boots to step into, but what a pleasure and huge privilege it has proved to be, being able to work with such an amazing bunch of totally committed and highly professional boaters! I must start by thanking David for his wonderful support and for always being there - not only to give sage advice but to continue to participate in everything we do. I will refer to this further as we look at activities through the year.

Being perfectly frank, having been involved in establishing the very first trial CRT Waterways Partnership, I realised right from the start that my major contribution should be to try to ensure that NABO was fully engaged with, and respected by, CRT and its senior staff. I realised this was potentially dangerous as we might well sometimes be seen as having become CRT's puppets. Nevertheless, I felt very strongly that we had a vital role to play in helping the new CEO, Richard Parry, to transform BW into an organisation that accepted its responsibility not only to the waterways it was established to protect and maintain, but to its prime customers/users – us, the boat owners. Without boats, the canals and other waterways will simply be ditches and rivers instead of the unique, vibrant places of historic importance that now offer a unique environment for living and relaxation. As a boat owner and active trip boat operator, I had truly felt alienated by BW's senior management, although I was always able to work well with their excellent local staff. This attitude at the top of the organisation badly needed to change if CRT was to succeed, and I believe we are being instrumental in working towards bringing this about.

2. Focus of NABO's work this year

NABO has established itself as a well-respected organisation, fiercely independent but always basing its activities on the input of many committed and knowledgeable professionals. As members, you will know that we have invested heavily in recent years in obtaining the best possible legal advice on matters to do with licensing requirements. We have been almost unique in this, and it has put us into a strong, and indeed leadership, position in countering many of BW's excesses.

With the changes from BW to CRT, we as your Council felt that it would be appropriate to make much of our legal advice publicly available, and this has largely been welcomed by the boating community. The resulting lead article in the *Towpath Talk* and the reports in *Waterways World* and *Canal Boat* were widely read and commented on. As a significant percentage of our members are continuous cruisers, we have naturally also been active in issues affecting this important community. For most of them, there is no problem – they understand the 14-day rule and do move from one “acceptable” or “sensible” place to another, as part of a true navigation. Of course, we fully appreciate that there are overcrowding issues on sections of the K&A, and even more so in the London area. However, these are fundamentally problems to do with congestion and enforcement, which are issues that needs to be tackled in their own right.

For these reasons we have monitored the progress of the experimental mooring project run during this year on the western end of the K&A; Geoffrey will be reporting on this.

From my own experience on the K&A and Mon & Brec, I am also aware that many of the overstaying boats are indeed not liveaboard boats, but simply boats left moored on the towpath – largely because the owners do not have a home mooring. As one said to me recently, “Why should I pay £3500 for a home mooring when all I do is leave my boat on the towpath and when someone puts a notice on it, I move it to the next bridge?” Another boater I spoke to does have an in-line home mooring but can’t get on it anymore because it needs dredging!

We are, above all, absolutely convinced that these issues (and others such as those related to overstaying) will only be solved by proper and effective, visible enforcement. We continue to press CRT, asking that consistent, even-handed enforcement action should be taken against boats that do not move. It is, after all, for CRT to decide (and then for the courts to rule on) what constitutes ‘bona fide’ navigation. However, we also believe strongly that enforcement should not be carried out by volunteers, but by properly trained staff, or someone is going to get hurt or end up in court!

As a result of our well-publicised work in the above areas, I am sure that NABO’s profile is now higher than ever. We naturally hope that this will result in increased membership – the more members we have, the more credibility we gain.

I must say a huge thank you to Geoffrey for all his painstakingly detailed work on the legal issues, and to Mark for his bull-terrier-like approach to all the moorings issues.

3. Boat Safety Scheme work

An important role that NABO has been playing for some time has been its detailed and professional input into the work of the various committees of the Boat Safety Scheme. Here, we believe, we can offer high quality and well-informed advice; we can also – and indeed must – ensure that the requirements that are imposed on our community are both fair and proportionate. As a direct result of my colleagues’ work, we are now have active NABO representation on both the Advisory Committee (David and Trevor) and the Technical Committee (Chaired by David with me as the NABO person). The revised requirements for private boats came in last year, and we are presently all engaged in revisiting the requirements for hire boats. Whilst this might seem a bit odd for NABO to be caught up in, of course we are all impacted (sometimes literally!) by this important industry, contributing as it does to the use of our waterways. Also, we know that any new “hire boat” requirement might well, in time, trickle down to affect private boats!

4. EA Waterways

Whilst the Council has been largely focused on the CRT waterways, we have also had excellent input into the EA activities, especially on the Thames and related waters, by our three actively engaged representatives - Louis Jankel, Graham Paterson and Dennis Hill. There have been massive changes in the operational structures of EA and especially in how it supports its navigational responsibilities. NABO vigorously opposed the initial proposals for increases in its charges of CPI plus 2% and we were pleased that these were dropped down to CPI, as are CRT’s. We have also continued our opposition to the taking over by CRT of the EA’s navigational

responsibilities, at least until CRT can prove it can manage its existing obligations effectively. There are also funding arrangements that need to be resolved in order to make it viable for CRT to operate waterways that are so fundamentally different from those it presently runs.

5. Communicating with members

NABO News goes from strength to strength and is clearly welcomed by its members, being both informative and entertaining. From comments received, it is clearly also reaching many places within CRT, EA and indeed, local and national authorities. Whilst we are making increased use of the various social media, it is clear to us that there is a strong demand for the printed version, which seems to end up on many important people's desks! A massive "thank you" to Peter Fellows and his team of copy editors, and to Chris Pink for all the very high-quality work on the layout. A new deal on distributing the *News* was negotiated; this included putting the magazine into the envelopes and labelling them. I would like to thank Ruth Field and Frances Westwood for their wonderful work in the past, including many painstaking hours doing this task.

It is also appropriate to report on our increased use of Facebook and Twitter and their integration with the website. Mark, especially, is ensuring that we have a continued presence on Facebook and the amount of resulting traffic is most significant and provide us with continual feedback, which is vital to our relevance. So, for example, Mark's recent survey of members' (and others') experience of visitor moorings and overstaying proved to be an instantaneous success, providing both us and the media (and, we hope, CRT) with a very valuable insight, in which most respondents told us that they found few problems, except for the need for additional dredging and vegetation control!

I would like to add that the coverage we get through the on-line *NarrowboatWorld* website/forum is very important, given its ever-growing viewership – we very much appreciate the work of Tom Crossley and his team, especially Allan Richards.

6. Administration

The retirement during the year of Melanie Darlington as our administrator, after many years of great service by her and John, required us to take a far-reaching look at all aspects of our administration. Here David has played a huge role in cleansing, integrating and automating far more of our membership data base, with the support of past chairman Sue Burchett, and more recently, the recruitment of Helen Hutt. David has also been working endlessly to ensure our increasingly popular website is fully-functional; and I also should thank John Slee for all his support in this area.

The whole administration process has been overhauled and is now fully-volunteer run. Helen's role as our bookkeeper is proving to be exceptionally valuable, and I feel much happier that the Council is well informed as to our financial situation; this has also made Steven Peters' job as the Honorary Treasurer far easier and more effective.

I would also like to thank Richard Carpenter for all his on-going work as our General Secretary – he really does make sure we meet all our constitutional requirements and he makes my life so much easier – especially when I complicated matters regarding the holding of Council meetings by asking that we hold them in different boat clubs round the country!

Steven will report on our finance but I would like to confirm that we are holding our own – the increased membership fees did result in a slight decrease in membership but this was largely offset by new members joining. Like all similar bodies, these are not easy days and we have had to make sure that we reduce costs wherever possible and work as efficiently as we can. The advertising in *NABO News* is vital as we strive to keep the cost of producing this as low as possible. At the same time, though, we know our readers do not want to see endless pages of ads, and hence we have concentrated on attracting a few, high quality and relevant, advertisers.

7. Submissions

As one would expect, the arrival of CRT has resulted in a series of important surveys, etc., and we have managed to respond to all those that we feel are crucial to boaters. These include the recent ones on Sharing Towpaths, the Auction of Towpath Moorings, and the proposed Water Resources Strategy. There was also Mark's survey on Visitor Moorings and Overstaying that was given to CRT and taken up by *Towpath Talk*.

8. Pleasant surprises

One of the interesting, if time-consuming, aspects of the Chairman's role, and one which took me completely by surprise, has been the numbers of enquiries that come in totally out of the blue. Be they issues relating to obtaining a mooring in London, an argument with mooring owners, a query as to whether it is possible to sail a 90' ocean-going yacht from Bristol to London along the K&A, or "how do I fix my alternator?", we certainly seem to attract a lot of interesting questions! The answer is often, "I don't know but I know a person who does!" but this certainly does mean that people are finding us!

It also has struck me how often we are consulted on matters to do with the canals and rivers – from the new sewer through London to the re-development of land along the old canal track in the Swansea valley, we have clearly made our mark as an organisation that carries both weight and authority.

9. Looking ahead

We have a strong and committed Council and I am delighted that we continue to have new folk coming forward and standing for election. Nevertheless, I have to say that – like so many similar bodies – we have to be concerned by our ageing profile. This is, of course, reflecting what we see on the cut – most new boaters are coming on mainly in search of what is perceived as a cheap way of living and we are all seeing a decline in younger active boaters. NABO, and hence our Council, does need to attract a broader membership. On the positive side though, the most positive change we are seeing though is in the steady increase in the use of our Facebook and Twitter presence, and the number of folk who are being drawn to our website. One of the challenges is to convert many of these contributors to becoming paid-up members – whilst our finances are sound, our activities are totally dependent on our subscriptions, driven by feedback from our members.

In conclusion, a huge "thank you" to all members of the Council and to our many regional representatives. As a totally-volunteer run organisation, we can only be as good as our members make it possible for us to be!

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 MARCH 2014

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 MARCH 2014

	Note	31.03.14		31.03.13	
		£	£	£	£
INCOME					
Membership Fees	1	13,993		12,802	
Donations		616		702	
Loss on Merchandise Sales		0		-54	
Advertising Revenue		1,250		2,250	
Deposit Interest	2	7		8	
Other Income	3	154		180	
		<u>16,020</u>		<u>15,888</u>	
LESS EXPENSES					
Printing & Distribution of Newsletter		6,777		9,858	
Rallies & Marketing Expenditure		593		931	
Printing, Postage & Stationery		814		892	
Telephone and Office Expenses		8		138	
Travelling & Conference Expenses		5,132		2,679	
Room Hire & Meeting Expenses		610		522	
Subscriptions & Donations		250		0	
Insurance		1,308		1,501	
Secretarial & Computer Support		2,344		1,424	
Accountancy costs		361		363	
Storage Costs		0		0	
Legal Costs		0		2,400	
Web Site Costs		192		208	
Bank Charges		37		25	
Bad debts		250		0	
Sundry Expenses		2		14	
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	4	338		618	
		<u>19,016</u>		<u>21,573</u>	
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME		<u>-2,996</u>		<u>-5,685</u>	
Corporation Tax		0		-2	
		<u>-2,996</u>		<u>-5,687</u>	

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

BALANCE SHEET

31 MARCH 2014

		31.03.14		31.03.13	
	Note	£	£	£	£
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	4		764		1,103
CURRENT ASSETS	5	20,283		20,764	
AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN 1 YEAR	6	-16,054		-13,878	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			4,229		6,886
TOTAL NET ASSETS			<u>4,993</u>		<u>7,989</u>
RESERVES					
Reserves brought forward			7,989		13,676
Excess of Expenditure over Income			-2,996		-5,687
Reserves carried forward			<u>4,993</u>		<u>7,989</u>

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

31 MARCH 2014

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. The reserve for advance subscriptions is shown in note 6.

2. DEPOSIT INTEREST

Deposit interest is received gross. Provision for Corporation Tax has been made against this and other profits at the appropriate rate and included under current liabilities.

3. OTHER INCOME

Other income includes £280(2013: £180) of credit balances on Members accounts which arose prior to 31 March 2008 (2013: prior to 31 March 2007).

4. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	TOTAL	Office Equipment	Other Fixtures
	£	£	£
Cost Brought Forward	11,456	8,239	3,217
Additions	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0
Cost Carried Forward	<u>11,456</u>	<u>8,239</u>	<u>3,217</u>
Depreciation Brought Forward	10,353	8,061	2,292
Charge for Period	339	178	161
Disposals	0	0	0
Depreciation Carried Forward	<u>10,692</u>	<u>8,239</u>	<u>2,453</u>
NET BOOK VALUE at end of year	<u>764</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>764</u>
Net Book Value Last Year	<u>1,103</u>	<u>178</u>	<u>925</u>

	31.03.14	31.03.13
	£	£
5. CURRENT ASSETS		
Stock of Merchandise	0	0
Stock of Promotional goods & Stationery	200	460
Membership fees owing	1,150	338
Debtors & Prepayments	560	1,815
Bank Current Accounts	5,622	4,407
Bank Deposit Account	12,751	13,744
	<u>20,283</u>	<u>20,764</u>

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

31 MARCH 2014

	Notes	31.03.14	31.03.13
6. AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN 1 YEAR		£	£
Trade Creditors		190	102
Accruals		4,589	4,613
Advance Subscriptions		8,136	6,204
Members Credit balances		3,129	2,949
Corporation Tax	2	10	10
		<u>16,054</u>	<u>13,878</u>

7. 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.