

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS**

held at Tamworth Cruising Club Saturday 12th November 2022 at 1045

PRESENT: Mike Rodd (chair), Helen Hutt (treasurer), David Fletcher, Peter Fellows, Peter Braybrook (minutes), Anne Husar(Zoom), Phil Goulding, Ken Hylins (Zoom), Andrew And Alison Smith, Paul Monahan, Howard Anguish, John Sadler and Sharon Wells, Andy Soper

1. **APOLOGIES were received from** CJ Green, Peter Braley, Michael Stimpson, Alan Pestell, Julie Henderson, Charlotte Fleming Frances Fearon, Alan Douglas, and David Cowslip,
2. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING** held on 13 November 2021 were **agreed** as a true record
3. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** The chair gave his report which he said he would circulate in full. (See Appendix 1). He highlighted that for NABO it has been a good year with new members on the Council and encouraging increase in membership numbers. He highlighted that we are one of the few organisations to challenge CRT. He described the structural changes in EA. He said he believed that our pressure has resulted in some heritage buildings remaining in the care of CRT. He also described NABO's involvement in the Boat Safety Scheme and issues that require watching carefully such as the period of inspections. He thanked Anne Husar as Vice Chair and David Fletcher for the outstanding work he has done as chair of the BSS Technical Committee as well as the website, monthly updates and technical matters. He also thanked Peter Braybrook for the articles in Towpath Talk.

He welcomed comment and Paul Monahan and Andy Soper made comments on the EA situation. The main one was that the importance of navigation is being lost.

4. **TREASURER'S REPORT** The accounts had been circulated (see Appendix 2) Helen Hutt reported income and membership is stable. We have a small excess of income over expenditure. Helen invited questions. Andrew Smith asked why the distribution of NABO News was higher than the membership. Extra copies are issued to boating organisations and clubs and other interested parties that raise our profile and reach.

Acceptance of the accounts were proposed by Paul Goulding and seconded by Peter Fellows. The auditor was also thanked for his work.

The chair commended Helen's work and clarity in the finance.

5. **APPOINTMENT OF THE AUDITOR FOR 2020-21** Agreed
6. **ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS** The current Council all put themselves forward for election with the exception of Matt Thompson, who has never appeared.. Nominations have been received from Alan Douglas and John Sadler. This brings the Council up to the full compliment.

Mike Rodd, Anne Husar, Helen Hutt, Peter Braley, Peter Braybrook, Alan Douglas, Peter Fellows, David Fletcher, Paul Goulding, C J Green, Ken Hylins and John Sadler were **Elected** en bloc.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY.** Mike Tizzard resigned earlier in the year as he sold his boat. There are no nominations. Peter Fellows, who has been caretaker will keep it going until he leaves for Ireland. A nomination is requested from the Council for this important role.
8. **NABO NEWS.** Peter Fellows is leaving this role and a new editor is required. He will continue for the next two issues.

9. CLOSING DISCUSSION.

DEFRA Grant

Anne Husar reported that the review has been postponed and no-one knows when it will be published. Anne has Tweeted the Chair of the APPWG to find out the situation. This has led to interest from ITV News. She will try to remain positive about the canals and CRT's custodianship. She tried to get hire boat companies involved in the programme but could not get a hire boat company interested, apparently because they are afraid of CRT.

Maintenance and Winter Stoppages. Phil Goulding, our rep on the external group who analyse the stoppages, was surprised by the 26 changes to the agreed programme that have been made since the programme this year was devised. Some changes are just dates and some have been influenced by HS2. Late changes are not unexpected and occur every year. Phil confirmed that the protocols on where and when have been kept and movement will be possible throughout the winter. The need to plan a route is always necessary in the winter. He noted that this is part and parcel of being a boat owner on a 200 year old system. He emphasised that there is a need to do as much winter maintenance as possible. He believed that Sophie Green does a very good job of co-ordinating. Paul Monahan asked whether the decision making process on changes is now behind closed doors. He was concerned by the number of cancellations. He pointed to the obvious need of work for the project to be in the list in the first place. Postponement is always a risk. Phil replied that most are third party works that have been cancelled by that party including HS2, a county council and the Wendover Arm Trust. These are, in general, postponements rather than cancellations. The chair asked whether dredging is included in the stoppage programme. Phil responded that dredging, generally does not close the canal. They do have an effect on trip boats etc. Anne Husar commented that there was little notice of changes to the programme that affected cruising plans.

Paul Monahan made thanked NABO for being the only organisation campaigning for boaters and for the work of Peter Fellows in NABO News.

The chair thanked all for their attendance and contribution.

The meeting closed at 1215 pm

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Chair's Report,

2021-22 NABO CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

There is a vital role for NABO in these times when the continuing state-funding of both CRT and the EA is coming up for review – right in the midst of a totally chaotic time for our government! As a result, we have been more active than ever, and fortunately our very active council has risen to the various challenges.

For the Council, we seem to be settling down to a mix of face-to-face and virtual meetings – the latter working very well and certainly reducing our costs. We have also been encouraged by another small increase our membership numbers – largely, I am sure, because of the issues that we have been tackling, which have a direct impact on most boaters. We are clearly being seen by many as probably the only active boater representative organisation willing to act as a critical friend of both CRT and the EA, giving praise where praise is due, but also not holding back when a hard line is required.

On the CRT front, I recently attended an on-line parliamentary “All Parties Political Waterways Group” meeting. Sadly, very few MP’s were present – but so many other people wanted to zoom in that the system couldn’t cope! The CRT CEO, Richard Parry, made it very clear that the CRT would not be able to sustain its present level of service without receiving continuing government funding. This must be seen against the original government policy under the Cameron-era concept of “let’s get rid of the government quangos”, which stated that when BW (then part of Defra) became CRT, it would no longer require government funding, after an initial 15-year transition period. As NABO said at the time, that whole model – of turning BW into a “National Trust for the Waterways” – was highly flawed. Despite their best efforts over the past ten years, CRT have not been able – and never will be able – to replace its government funding by finding money from other sources. This is neither surprising nor illogical, for a host of practical reasons. Nevertheless, CRT is responsible for maintaining one of this country’s most popular, unique and valuable assets – the cornerstone of the industrial revolution and a potent symbol of the country’s international leadership at that time – and is therefore deserving of national support.

We continue to meet with CRT on a regular basis, which is very valuable, in that it provides us with the opportunity both to input our views and to gain an insight into CRT’s priorities. We are not always sure that are they listening, however, as at times they don’t seem even to bother to consult us before making serious decisions that affect us and our members. So, for example, the second increase this year in our licencing fees was suddenly thrown at boaters without any prior discussion. Given the present financial situation, we would probably have agreed that a small increase was logical, and we could have helped them to introduce it with our support. Consult first, though? No ways.

We have also repeatedly had to bring to CRT’s attention the horrendous problems right across the system with the (non) vegetation cutting back – with some canals not being touched for up to three years. We eventually understood that new contracts were being drawn up, but why at such a late stage? It almost looked like a way of reducing expenditure by stalling for time. On the K&A, for instance, I have had to help the K&A Trust cut back offside trees so that we could operate our trip boat (run solely for the purpose of funding the maintenance of canal-related buildings and structures, especially the wonderful Crofton Pumping Station)!

Our relationship with EA has also continued to be of great concern, especially when we became aware that the Agency was planning to change the whole structure of the way it managed its waterways. We had reasonably early insight into the proposals (generated internally by the EA), which strangely and maybe not surprisingly were very similar to CRT's! We worked with a group of most of the other interested boating organisations involved, and tried to enter into meaningful dialogue with the EA folk responsible. In the end, however, we failed miserably, and our inputs have simply been totally ignored. Clearly, the EA was just not interested in the views of those who are literally its only fee-paying customers.

The resulting first meeting of the new National Waterways Forum was a lamentable and totally one-sided exercise. We were able to introduce ourselves to our new 30+ colleagues, but this process – along with EA introductions – took up over half of the two-hour meeting. Forty-five minutes were then devoted to EA presentations, most of which simply involved reading material presented on the accompanying slides. For serious issues to be moved forward on the basis of a farcical ten-minute break-out, with participants brutally cut off whilst actually speaking, was disgraceful. And the intention to have one-to-one meetings (with over thirty different groups?) was not clearly established until late in the meeting. The EA clearly do not understand that group dynamics are a key benefit of group discussions. Many of the non-waterways groups now attending this very broad church seemed blissfully unaware of the stark realities that we, as the prime user-funders of the waterways, could identify. With only one meeting per year, some attendees did, fortunately, support our plea for a “real” inaugural meeting!

Our NABO Council always tries to take advantage of opportunities to represent our members on issues that might affect them, and this often requires us to prepare lengthy submissions to government and other statutory bodies. On the CRT front we have, for example, been active in objecting to their seeming willingness to sell off many of the assets that (in theory) they own as part of their present government contract. Many of these are of major historic value and NABO has been very active in bringing such cases to the attention of local authorities and other interested bodies.

We also remain as an active member of NINF, the National Inland Navigation Forum, which brings together representatives of most inland waterways organisations on a regular basis.

I need to express once again your Council's gratitude to our colleague Ken Hylins, who has a deep understanding of the requirements of boaters who are experiencing personal problems, and who works tirelessly to ensure that they are treated with respect, dignity and, when necessary, within the Equalities Act. Regrettably, such needs are not always satisfactorily met, and Ken's involvement is much valued by boaters who encounter problems. This all demonstrates that NABO is always – where this is reasonable and fair – fully supportive of its boater-members. Indeed, Ken's work brings in many new members!!

We continue to play an active role in the management and technical contents of the Boat Safety Scheme, and we have actively supported some recent changes that impact on our private boats, including the need for smoke alarms on all boats. We are also positively engaged in work that seeks to understand, and then respond appropriately to, the massive increase in on-boat electrics, especially the extensive use of high-current, high-voltage devices. A key issue here is how far the BSS inspections should go, and what expertise might be needed in inspecting such complex electrically

based systems. From a NABO point-of-view, what are the consequences, for example cost-wise, for our members?

I have personally been actively engaged with the Institution of Engineering and Technology (formerly the IEE) in preparing extensive guidelines for electrical installations on inland waterways boats. This is now at a very advanced stage, and will hopefully go into print early next year. It has been amusing to see some opposition to this, especially from some organisations who offer (expensive?) training courses and consulting in this area. The guidelines are aimed at those who have a good understanding of electrical matters, but they will still be readable by those with less expertise.

I would like to conclude by thanking all my council colleagues for their extensive support throughout a very busy year. I would especially like to thank my vice-chair, Anne Husar, for taking so much of the load off my shoulders. I would also like to thank David Fletcher, not only for his continuing professional activity on the BSS scene, for all his work on data security etc., and for keeping the website up and running so well, but also for his many years on CRTs' Operational Navigation Advisory Group. Sadly, he has had to step down from this role, and we thank him most sincerely for his contribution. We have not, as yet, had our nominated replacement to the Group accepted.

Can I also express our appreciation to Peter Braybrook for his extensive work as our Minutes Secretary, and also for his excellent monthly articles in Towpath Talk. And to Helen Hutt, our Honorary Treasurer, whose financial expertise ensures that we remain financially viable.

I could never conclude this report without expressing the appreciation of every member of NABO to Peter Fellows, who has edited NABO News for many years, and brought it to its current excellent professional state, so well received not only by members but also widely read by officials in government, CRT and the EA. Sadly, Peter is selling his boat and moving to live in Ireland! Peter, we will miss you so much, and you will be a very hard act to follow.

Thank you all.

Mike Rodd

November 2022

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31st MARCH 2022

NABO, 20 Oak Grove, Hertford SG13 8AT

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

| | Note | <u>31-Mar-22</u> | | <u>31-Mar-21</u> | |
|---|------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| INCOME | | | | | |
| Membership Fees | 1 | 8,990 | | 9,070 | |
| Unmatched Receipt | | 0 | | 35 | |
| Less Paypal Transaction Charges | | <u>-52</u> | | <u>-53</u> | |
| | | 8,938 | | 9,052 | |
| Donations | | 470 | | 585 | |
| Advertising Revenue | 2 | 250 | | 1,146 | |
| Deposit Interest | 3 | <u>159</u> | | <u>185</u> | |
| TOTAL INCOME | | | 9,817 | | 10,968 |
| LESS EXPENDITURES | | | | | |
| Council Meetings | 4 | -166 | | 0 | |
| AGM | | -73 | | 0 | |
| Membership | | -81 | | -86 | |
| Representing NABO | | -53 | | 0 | |
| NABO News | 5 | -7,413 | | -7,498 | |
| Website / Internet | | -161 | | -119 | |
| Subscriptions | | -4 | | -7 | |
| Accounts / Audit | | -186 | | -146 | |
| Legal Fees | 6 | -45 | | 0 | |
| Insurance | | -823 | | -706 | |
| Administration | | -85 | | -225 | |
| Donations | 7 | -200 | | 0 | |
| CO Monitor Trial | | <u>0</u> | | <u>-18</u> | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | | | <u>-9,290</u> | | <u>-8,805</u> |
| EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE BEFORE EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS | | | 527 | | 2,163 |
| Extraordinary items - Legal Advice | | | 0 | | -1,410 |
| EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE | | | <u>527</u> | | <u>753</u> |

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

| | <u>31-Mar-22</u> | <u>31-Mar-21</u> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| ASSETS | | |
| Current Assets | | |
| Barclays Bank Deposit Account | 4,623 | 4,623 |
| Barclays Bank Current Account | 3,013 | 2,313 |
| Redwood Deposit Account | 15,836 | 15,677 |
| Paypal Account | 109 | 186 |
| Debtors and Prepayments | 590 | 681 |
| Total Current Assets | <u>24,171</u> | <u>23,480</u> |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Deferred Income | -40 | -50 |
| Creditors and Accruals | -250 | -76 |
| Total Current Liabilities | <u>-290</u> | <u>-126</u> |
| Total Net Assets | <u><u>23,881</u></u> | <u><u>23,354</u></u> |
| RESERVES | | |
| Opening Reserves | 23,354 | 22,601 |
| Excess of Income Over Expenditure | 527 | 753 |
| Total Reserves | <u><u>23,881</u></u> | <u><u>23,354</u></u> |

REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

TREASURER

Enclosed are the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31st March 2022, Balance Sheet as at the same date and Notes to the Accounts.

Helen Hutt

July 2022

AUDITOR

I have examined the books and records of the Association and am satisfied from the information provided to me that the Financial Statements give a true and fair view both of the Association's Balance Sheet at 31st March 2022 and the excess of Income over Expenditure for the year ended on that date.

Colin Walker, FCCA

July 2022

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Membership fees

During the year membership fell by only 2, with the number of new members (32) almost matching resignations/deaths (34). Due to a technical error, two members were not sent renewal notices so, in effect, received one year's free membership. The total at 31st March 2022 was 349 excluding additional family members, compared with 351 at 31st March 2021.

2 Advertising revenue is for a full back cover advertisement in one issue of NABO News for River Canal Rescue. It is hoped that this arrangement will continue for the foreseeable future.

3 Deposit interest rates fell during the year, as expected.

| | £ |
|---------------|------------|
| Redwood Bank | 159 |
| Barclays Bank | 0 |
| | <u>159</u> |

4 Council meetings were split roughly 50/50 between virtual and real.

5 NABO News expenditure covers the cost of artwork, printing and mailing 600 copies. It is published six times each year.

6 Legal fees represent a contribution to the National Inland Navigation Forum's legal bill for advice on whether boats were classed as vehicles under the new Police & Crime bill.

7 Donations represent a £200 contribution towards The National Bargee Travellers Association's CrowdJustice campaign "**Protect boats that are people's homes**".

APPENDIX 3

Ken Hylins Report

This year has been a busy one for me I have been contacted for help on several occasions, be it for advice or to actually get involved to resolve a boaters issues and concerns .There has been a common theme to all of the issues I deal with , a boater will tell the respective welfare and support officer and there seems to be no resolution. Then I contact the same people tell them exactly what the boater has said but then we get to solving their problem with NABO intervention.

The other issues are a lack of trust by the boater of the respective officer etc where I on behalf of NABO advise them on the procedure of their issue and what resolution they should expect There has been a long case involving an eighty year old boater in my mind he was not treated with the dignity and compassion he deserved however this case has been successfully resolved and he getting the care and support he needs

The second case I have been supporting is still active and the people in question were treated badly and had lost all trust in the managing authority their health is slowly deteriorating i am active in monitoring there treatment and supporting them through each step

The strangest part of the year in that I represent other people was that it came to be I had to represent myself .This was a stressful exercise but it demonstrated to me how health can change there was a lack of compassion in my thoughts but again we have resolved the issues .

I still have concerns about the dual enforcement (the email keep moving)which I keep going on about and advise people to challenge as it become a marker on their record when they renew their licence

The other area of concern to me is the process off putting boaters on a six month licence when it is clear they are ill ,disabled ,getting old , this causes a lot of distress to the boater and they are often protected under the disability act in all cases I have got them a full licence again or on an ongoing case will do .

There has also been cases when a welfare officer will send the boater there is an issue about their cruising pattern etc then the the officer will be on two week holiday and the boater has to Wait adding unnecessary stress to the resolve the issue ? I have just raised this with the local welfare officer to tell his manager of this issue today 10/11/22.

I am also active with two new boaters issues and again I am supporting and advising them on these matters

I think that in the next coming months I will be helping many boaters on financial issues to which as you know I have produced documents on this subject and have kept up to date on the costs of boating so I can give accurate advice .

The other part of what I do is that I constantly keep up to date on benefits to help boaters if needed .
Regards ken

Appendix 4

Twitter Report: C J Green

As I write this we have 2230 followers on Twitter which isn't bad at all. Yes I know that not all of our followers are boat owners - such is the nature of Twitter – but we appear to have created a favourable online presence helping inform and entertain in equal measure. I think it's important to accept that Twitter is not the place to actively recruit but rather by raising NABO's social media profile & engaging with boaters we should see membership numbers gradually increase.

Recently I have noticed we are being tagged when boaters tweet CRT regions to report issues or express thanks if a problem has been resolved. This in turn has helped raise our profile with CRT & they appear to be responding quicker. There are also a lot of CRT volunteers & staff who regularly tweet & most comments we receive are positive.

I try to ensure the account remains politically unbiased & instead highlight environmental issues which impact the waterways. Other popular topics which our followers tweet include, but are not exclusive to, nature, heritage , public houses, food and lots of pictures of moored boats at sunset or sunrise.