

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 26th February 1994 at the Port 86, Hockley Port Birmingham commencing at 10.00am.

Present: Penny Barber, Phil Bland, Jon Darlington, Melanie Darlington, Roy de la Haye (part of time) Roger Hancock, Neil Hutchinson, Peter Lea, Collin Paillin, Stephen Peters, Pete Sterry & Nikki Timbrell

1. Apologies: Christine Potter, Harry Winter & Chris Barnacle,
2. The minutes of the meeting of 15th January were agreed an accurate record after amending the action on Coventry basin (4f) to CP
3. Matters arising.
 - a) 2. Council meeting venues. We had received an invitation from Lichfield Cruising Club which had all the facilities needed but was difficult to get to by public transport and was felt too far north. The invitation to be declined RH
Premises at Northfields were suitable but as Hockley Port was likely to remain available at no charge it was resolved to continue meetings there
Neil Hutchinson was to continue his survey of boat clubs to the SE of Birmingham.
 - b) 4f. Market Harborough toilets. BW had written stating that toilet facilities would be retained on the site. It was possible that they would be provided by Harborough Marine and the situation would continue to be monitored. PS
 - c) 4f. Bishops Basin Coventry. Collin Paillin reported that BW had confirmed toilet accommodation would be included and they were proposing the first coin operated pump-out should be sited there.
 - d) The possibility of use of toilets being charged for was discussed. This could occur where the facility was being provided by a private operator but BW were only considering charging for pump-outs.. The situation would be monitored. Neil Hutchinson was to ask for details of all facilities from BW NH
4. Stephen Peter's paper 94/12 on major issues to be faced was discussed and accepted with a few amendments, items mainly being deleted because it was either too late for us to do anything or enshrined in general legislation. NT
On VAT on fuel Nikki was to include a reminder in The Boater to buy before April 1st
Members were allocated topics to prepare a preliminary report for Council to decide priorities as follows: (using SP's numbers)
 2. BW General Powers Bill - PL & JD
 3. BW Byelaws - MD
 4. NABO's relationship with BW - PBland
 - 4a. Monitoring maintenance - NH
 5. Proposals for a National Navigation Authority - PL
 6. Moorings & Marinas - JD
 7. NABO membership - CP
 8. Restrictions on use of boats - PL
 10. Compulsory boat insurance - NH
 11. Boat Standards - SP
 12. Winter stoppages - NH
 13. Regional Representation payment - PennyB
 14. The Right of Navigation - RH
 15. Licence Charges - SP
 16. Past Legislation still current - PBland
5. NABO Policy Statements
Neil Hutchinson's simplified procedure for approval was accepted. It was agreed that guidelines needed to be flexible enough to be able to respond quickly to changed circumstances and that all policies should be reviewed regularly and at least every 3 years. Phil Bland agreed to undertake this.

- Penny Barber was looking through past minutes identifying internal and external policies and would discuss with the Chairman with a view to circulating proposals to Council. PB
 In the meantime a revised statement was agreed to include JD's original first paragraph, NH's formula and JD's general statement 94/11. The Chairman to draft for final approval next meeting. JD
6. Job descriptions. It was intended that these should be included in the Members Handbook which Chris Barnacle was producing.
 Penny Barber's suggestion of a general job description for all Council members was approved. Penny to draft for next Council PBa
 The description were discussed and some minor changes made. There was a need to revise the conflicts between the Boater Production and Distribution job with the Membership Secretary's. Melanie Darlington to discuss with Christine Potter and produce revised drafts. MD
 Regional Reps descriptions needed combining into a common one Neil Hutchinson agreed to amalgamate the job descriptions NH
 It was agreed that a new area was required to reduce the size of the SE area. It was agreed to create area E consisting of the east Anglian waterways beginning at the bottom of the Northampton Arm. Chris Barnacle was to be asked to look after that area pending co-opting someone on the Broads to Council. JD
 Melanie Darlington was to invite those with boats or living in the area to join Council and send out with the next Boater MD
 Navigation Officer. There was discussion over the standard proposed by BW to dredge to 4.5ft but only redredge at 3ft. There was a need to collect information on problem areas and members were to be asked to report these to their Regional Reps.. The Navigation Officer should report on and challenge stoppages and the maintenance programme generally. there should be added a need to identify lengths and dredging profiles and review BW and other navigation Authority's standards and recommend changes necessary. NH
 Final revisions to be collated by Roger Hancock (subject to technical requirements of Chris Barnacle who was to produce the draft membership Booklet). RH/CB
7. River Wey. Roy de La Haye reported on problems on this waterway. Things had improved considerably since a report had been commissioned on the activities of the maintenance foreman Locatelli who had been effectively awarding himself contracts and the running of the Canal generally. There was now a change in policy to improve navigation rather than make it look as rural as possible. there were still problems of neighbouring landowners having "acquired" parts of the towpath and banks but these were being tackled from Head Office. Problems were being experienced over night navigation and the size of outboard engines. Stephen Peters had tabled a question to the next users meeting on the subject. One problem was boaters travelling too slowly which caused difficulties with 2 stroke engines.
 Peter agreed to represent NABO at the users meeting on March 17th. and report to Stephen Peters RdLH
8. Publicity. Pete Sterry reported an opportunity to buy advertising space in the Nottingham Festival brochure. This was declined but Pete was to prepare an advert to go alongside the next article. PS
 There was discussion over the potentially adverse publicity in Canal & Riverboat where references to the RBOA conference had appeared and a couple of letters. These were to be responded to by the Chairman and an apology asked for in the case of the conference. JD
 It was agreed that Pete Sterry and Collin Paillin should arrange lunch on an informal basis with the Editors of both Canal & Riverboat and Waterways World with a budget of £20 a time.

9. BW Mooring matrix.
 The quantification of the facility part of the matrix was applauded as it provided some measurable certainty for these items. There were inevitably some factors which involved subjectivity and different priorities but it was a considerable improvement on the present position.
 Location factors were unlikely to be dropped entirely and the suggestion of Penny Barber that Council Tax values be used was also unlikely to find favour because of the political ramifications and variations.
 It was accepted that BW had a statutory obligation to maximise revenue, although this did not seem the case where they received only a fixed portion of marina etc fees (the marinas charging whatever the traffic would bear). With the exception of Residential moorers alternatives were available to boaters and BW were likely to take into account market forces and demand to apply location factors. The Monopolies & Mergers Commission report on BW significantly stated that 42% of moorers appeared to move off BW waters each year and as a result there was little scope for increasing mooring fees at present.
 After a robust discussion it was generally agreed that we needed greater objectivity and transparency in the moorings policy and we should also inform members of ways of reducing damage to them with details of alternative moorings and other options.
It was resolved to write to BW stating we approved of the objectivity of the Bollard system for facilities but we could not accept the subjectivity of the location part of the matrix. We were to urge that Waterway's managers should be required to justify to moorers the reasons for their decision on location factors and that there should be an appeal procedure to deal with disagreements by arbitration. They should consult with people already on the mooring and taking account of the MMC report the effect of introducing the matrix should be broadly neutral. We should also express concern that location factors may be different for people whose homes were their boats. JD.
10. IWA Policy on offside Moorings. IWA wanted all organisations to agree their policy (similar to NABO's but 15 months late) so they could represent all users. We to ask IWA to invite us to the meeting. The Chairman was to write as well as discussing it with them at a meeting on 13th march. JD
11. BW's response on Waterways standards. The correspondence was noted it seems we are unlikely to get further through the present channels and it was agreed the Chairman was to write to the Board's Chairman setting out succinctly why a Boaters' Charter was needed and to stress BW's statements on consultation and open disclosure in their own Charter. JD
12. Council Member's reports
 a) Treasurer. Penny barber's report was given by Roger Hancock in her absence. A copy is annexed.
 She also asked that claims for expenses and details of stocks held should be submitted to her before the next meeting as the year end was 30th March. which would enable her report next meeting to be nearly complete for the year. An expense form is attached ALL
 b) The Boater/newsletter. Nikki Timbrell was congratulated on the new look. The next edition would be a newsletter and would include correspondence she had received with replies where possible.
 c) Publicity & Public Relations. Pete Sterry having left after his previous report Nikki Timbrell reported she hoped at last to talk to the Waltham Abbey man on Monday. It was agreed we needed the same size stand as last time. NT
 d) Regional representatives.
 i) South East. Peter Lea reported on various meetings he had attended. Points arising were that the Dutch Barge Association were pressing BW to dredge to the Frankel Report depths. He had attended a meeting where canal depths were the subject of discussion but BW refused to provide information on both widths & depths! BW's cycling policy was in disarray and it was possible that permits might be issued. boaters would get them automatically.
 The Parliamentary Waterways Group had heard a plea from IWA that the obstructiveness

of the Dept. of Transport in failing to provide adequately for waterways affected by road proposals was causing enormous expense through appeal procedures unnecessarily and calling for provision to be included in all future designs.

Concern was also expressed over the proposal to merge the NRA with a new Environmental Agency as navigation didn't sit happily with environmental issues.

ii) North West. Neil Hutchinson reported he had received replies from most navigation authorities in the area but there were some gaps. he was making progress and had the names of members in the area to follow up. He was hopeful a member would attend a Stoke on Trent Boat Club meeting.

iii) Midland. Collin Paillin reported a request for help from the Derby canal restoration project where a new road threatened their work. It was agreed the Chairman should write in support of adequate provision being made in the road plans.

He had received 2 letters from members with problems. One where she had paid mooring fees to the farmer on whose land she moored and was now faced with a demand from BW as well. It was agreed we had insufficient information to form a view how best to help and it was agreed that Collin should design a proforma questionnaire for completion in all cases to give us the full facts.

CP

The other was from a man in Kidderminster where the local manager Roger Herington was proposing to upgrade the moorings. BW had undertaken to consult with moorers before doing this and again although there was insufficient information, if this had not been done then the complaints procedure should be followed. Collin was to ask Herington what his mooring policy was for the area.

CP

iv) North East. Pete Sterry had earlier reported that he had attended two meetings. At one Keith Boswell the Area Manager had shown his standards and was sending copies to user groups. it appeared this was his own initiative.. The Ash Tree Canal moorers are being required to move for up to 2 years by contractors. We to see if work can be done round them as at Hockley Port

PS

v) River users co-ordination. Stephen Peters presented his report (attached). He was to look at the proposed Environmental Agency and write an article for The Boater.

SP

v) Recruitment. Collin Paillin reported on his letters to members who had not renewed their subs. This had produced cheques from 4 out of 46 and provided other useful information. He was to continue writing.

CP

13. A.O.B.

There was insufficient time to consider this item.

14. Next meeting. Saturday 26th March, Port 86 Hockley Port. at 10.00am.