

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held at the Friends Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Northfield, Birmingham, on Saturday, 7th May, commencing at 10.00am.

Present: Jon Darlington (Chairman), Melanie Darlington, Chris Barnacle, Nikki Timbrell, Neil Hutchinson, Stephen Peters, Christine Potter, Pete Sterry, and Phil Bland. Val Sterry attended as an observer, and recorded the minutes.

1. **Apologies.** Colin Paillin, Roger Hancock, Peter Lea, Harry Winter, and Penny Barber.

2. **Minutes of the Meeting of 26th March.** These were agreed as an accurate record, after amending the spelling of 'Dyce' to 'Dice.' (6a)

3. **Matters arising.**

a. Penny Barber has resigned as Treasurer because of pressure of work in her new job. Chris Barnacle offered to take on the position, and was proposed as Treasurer by Jon Darlington, and seconded by Melanie Darlington. This was carried unanimously by the meeting. A Vote of Thanks to Penny for her previous work as Treasurer was proposed by Melanie Darlington, seconded by Christine Potter, and carried by the meeting. Penny is to continue as a Council member.

b. Neil suggested that the agenda should be re-ordered, so that item 9 -- 'To receive reports from Council members' -- should follow 'Matters arising', as some Council members needed to leave early. This was agreed.

c. Waterways Standards -- Jon has written to Brian Dice asking for confirmation that NABO will be involved in discussions regarding the re-drafting in September. It would be pointless to approach the Ombudsman until after this.

d. A letter from Stewart Sim indicated that there would be no change in procedure, and that copies of Standards would not be released.

J.D. suggested getting back to BW regarding amendments to waterways' depths, etc., and matters not covered by Standards, i.e. lack of supervision of contractors. In particular, the need for Standards availability should be stressed -- there was a feeling that Stewart Sim seems to regard Waterways Standards as an internal document. J.D. and N.H. are to arrange a meeting with Stewart Sim.

JD & NH

'Use of Sub-contractors' to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

RH

4. **Reports from Council Members.** (item 9 on the agenda)

a. **Funding.** No up-to-date financial statement produced, but NABO is still solvent. Chris Barnacle is to meet with Penny Barber to receive the books, financial details, and transfer of mandates, etc. **CB & Penny B**

b. **Publications.** There has been a favourable response to the current Boater. There is now a definite deadline for copy at the printers, but Neil pointed out that we must not fall into the trap of publishing out-of-date material -- the policy has been to publish information within a fortnight of Council Meetings.

Material is required for the next Newsletter, including User-group meeting reports (which will need to be edited), and reports of national interest. **ALL**

A list of 'forthcoming events' which NABO will be attending needs to be compiled.

The deadline for Nikki to receive contributions is **MONDAY, 16th MAY.**

c. **Publicity & Public Relations.** Handouts of 'Who Needs NABO?' are to be re-drafted. **NT**

Nottingham Boat Show. Car stickers and free admission tickets are not yet available, as there had been some delay in payment for the stand. Volunteers are needed to man the stand. Christine is compiling a rota and formulating guidelines. **Christine P**

Paid advertisements were discussed. It was decided by a majority vote that an advert for the NABO stand at the Nottingham Boat Show should be placed in the Nottingham Herald & Post at a cost of approximately £40. Neil reported that AWCC appear to be having 6 free Boat Show tickets per area, which might be an incentive to members to help man a stand. We need to start asking for volunteers, via Newsletter or Boater, earlier next year, perhaps offering a similar incentive.

Neil suggested putting publicity window posters in with the next Newsletter. **NT**

d. **Regional Representation.** P.S. had attended two User-group meetings. At Long Eaton, deputising for Colin Paillin, he had volunteered to take the Chair, which was a useful opportunity to put forward the NABO viewpoint. He will compile a report as soon as he has received the minutes of this meeting. **PS**

He circulated a report of the meeting of the Aire & Calder User-groups at Ferrybridge.

Colin P. had arranged a meeting with Hugh Potter, editor of Waterways World, with a view to furthering press relations. Colin & P.S. had attended the agreed venue, but not H.P.. Colin is to investigate possible confusion. **Colin P**

A meeting with Norman Alborough has been arranged, and will take place during the Nottingham Boat Show. (n.b. These meetings were proposed at the Council meeting on Feb. 26th.)

C.B. reported on problems concerning new toilet facilities at Braunston, which had been situated opposite a member's mooring. The member has now been offered alternative moorings.

C.B. has received correspondence from Eric Brunger, with regard to the specific problems of yachts on the Norfolk Broads. There is the potential for member recruitment here, but also possible snags -- a regional sub-committee might be appropriate. Eric Brunger is to be invited to the next Council Meeting. **CB**

The report from Peter Lea was circulated by the Chairman. The South East Stoppage list is not yet available.

e. **River Users Co-ordination.** A report from Stephen Peters was circulated. He is to contact Peter Lea regarding a meeting with the Cruising Association. **SP**

S.P. is to work on a Safety Report, including hazards not necessarily involving boat safety, such as navigation, cycling, suicide, accidental drowning, etc. **SP**

A research paper on charges for licences by different Waterway Authorities was circulated. It was agreed that this should be listed as a publication for sale.

f. **Navigation.** N.H. to co-ordinate all areas, clarifying boundaries, to ensure that all BW Managers are contacted. **NH**

Council requires Area Reps. to send copies of the draft Stoppage Programme from either Waterways Managers or Area Managers to N.H. as soon as possible, and certainly before July. **ALL AREA REPS**

Peter Lea's draft policy statement -- 'Channel Depth & Width' -- was circulated. N.T. questioned paragraph 4, which she had re-worded in the Boater, with P.L.'s approval. It was agreed that the amended document be accepted as a starting point to be discussed at the next meeting. **RH**

N.H. circulated copies of Operation & Maintenance charts. He is to collect as much information as possible from all sources, regarding dimensions. Area Reps to seek out information. **NH & AREA REPS**

g. **Membership.** Christine P. reported that her computer was malfunctioning -- this is to be rectified. Membership seems to be 'going downhill'; not as many renewals or new applications have been received as were expected. Out of 7 returns received by the Recruitment Officer, only 2 had been renewals. There was no report from the Recruitment Officer. It was agreed that there should be a membership policy and plan of action. C.B. is to look into the feasibility of using Standing Orders. **CB**

Phil Bland volunteered to recruit members by targeting people to talk to. **Phil B**

J.D. suggested recruiting new Council members (two places are available), as it would be useful to have a Co-ordinator, and someone with marketing experience would be particularly appropriate.

C.P. suggested approaching Boat Clubs with publicity material, as not all boat owners read the waterways publications. This is to be on the agenda for the next meeting. **RH**

It was agreed that every Council member should produce a written report if unable to attend a meeting. **ALL**

5. **Moorings.** (item 4 on the agenda).

Papers on 'Moorings -- Legal Considerations' and 'Proceedings by BW for Unpaid End-of-Garden Mooring Fees' were circulated and discussed.

Draft copies of a questionnaire for NABO Members' problems were circulated by Stephen Peters. It was agreed that this would not be generally distributed but would be sent to members with mooring problems, on request. It would also be incorporated in a Council Member's Handbook.

A 'D-I-Y' kit for legal procedures had been suggested, but the general feeling was one of caution, and NABO should stress the need for proper professional legal representation. NABO cannot offer legal advice. It was considered preferable to prepare 'Guidelines', to avoid the need for legal action. This is to be further pursued. Mooring problems should be dealt with through the complaints mechanism.

6. **Jim Kelly's Letter.** (item 5 on the agenda).

Two particular points need to be followed up:

a. 'Anglers '50 feet away'' refers to the same side of the canal, and was not intended to mean the opposite bank. It was agreed that anglers directly opposite a boat create more problems than those alongside.

b. It was felt that User-group meetings should be minuted by BW as they need to follow up the consultation.

7. **Price Rises.** (item 6 on the agenda).

It was agreed that NABO should suggest that BW freeze charges, following the imposition of VAT on diesel fuel, and gas. **JD**

8. **Previous NABO Council decisions.** (item 7 on the agenda).

This item was not discussed.

9. **Parliamentary Waterways Group Meeting, 19th April.** (item 8 on the agenda)

The report on this meeting formed part of the South East Rep's report, circulated earlier in the meeting.

10. Any Other Business.

A letter from Mike Stimson, offering discount insurance, was circulated. This will be considered at the next meeting, along with N.H.'s. survey of other insurance companies. J.D. will inform Mike Stimson. JD NH & RH

A letter from Brian Young asked for support for a new canal between Bedford Great Ouse, and the Grand Union. It was agreed that we should write to Brian Young, offering our moral support only. JD

BW have reviewed cycling policy, without consultation with NABO. They propose to issue cycling permits which will be free of charge and available on request.

N.H. quoted from the Birmingham & Black Country Canals Standards Programme -- a great deal of money appears to have been spent on items of no benefit to boaters,

Val Sterry was thanked for acting as minutes secretary.

Next meeting -- 18th June, 1994.