

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 18th June 1994 at the Friends Meeting House, Northfields, Birmingham commencing at 10.00am.

Present: Penny Barber, Phil Bland, Jon Darlington, Melanie Darlington, Roger Hancock, Neil Hutchinson, Peter Lea, Collin Paillin, Stephen Peters & Christine Potter

1. Apologies: Nikki Timbrell, Harry Winter, Chris Barnacle & Pete Sterry

2. The minutes of the meeting of 7th May were agreed an accurate record

3. Matters arising.

a) 3c. The letter had been sent to Brian Dice but no reply had been received after three weeks. It was agreed that Waterway Standards were a national issue and should not be dealt with locally. It was now time to take the final step and appeal to the Ombudsman as all other processes in the appeals procedure had been followed through. It was agreed that the application should be drafted by Jon Darlington, Peter Lea & Roger Hancock. **JD, PL & RH**

b) 3d. No meeting had yet been arranged with Stewart Sim. Neil Hutchinson to pursue this. He also raised the apparent policy of divide and rule being adopted by BW with a proliferation of meetings which would be impossible for us to cover. These were often on topics which were linked. He cited one on 21/6 on stoppages and another 9 days later on dredging. We were to press for this to be changed and dealt with properly together on a national basis. **NH**

c) 3a. Chris Barnacle had agreed at last meeting to take over, but had subsequently indicated that he wanted things sorted out properly first. Jon had been unable to make contact subsequently and Melanie had acted as Treasurer in the interim. Melanie was willing to continue in that role for the rest of the year if necessary but it was agreed that she should not be a signatory for the bank account and the present mandate should stand. Jon was to contact Chris and ask him whether he still wished to remain as Treasurer in the light of his other commitments. If he did then the meeting confirmed his appointment if he did not the Melanie Darlington was appointed Treasurer for the rest of the year. **JD**

d) 4c. There was some confusion over how the posters mentioned should be produced. After discussion on the merits of producing a NABO sticker which would fit a porthole it was decided that if Nikki Timbrell could produce from the data she had on her computer a simple A5 poster containing both the logo and the name in full with an address for contact this should be printed on blue card and distributed free with the next Boater. Jon was to speak to Nikki. **JD NT**

Collin reported that he had had much success with persuading chandlers to take stocks of leaflets and asked all to approach chandlers and boatyards in their area. **ALL**

e) 10. Neil Hutchinson reported he had sufficient information to produce a best buy guide on insurance for the Boater. However no one company stood out as there were such a variety of terms to be considered by each owner. It was agreed that he would complete his report and Jon Darlington would reply to Mike Stimson thanking him for his offer of a discount after speaking to him on the phone. **JD**

f) 5 of minutes 26/3/94. Roger reported he was still awaiting job descriptions for Editor, Engineering Officer, and General. **JD HW & PENNY**

4. Council Member's reports

a) Membership Christine reported current membership of 1266. New members had come from Nottingham and 1 from the advert in Canal & Riverboat.

b) Treasurer. Melanie Darlington's report is annexed. It was agreed that potential liability to members for Boater etc should be included.

The invoice for the June advert in Canal & Riverboat should not be paid until Melanie had spoken to Pete Sterry as there had been a mistake in the first advert and no one was sure whether the extra adverts had been placed. **MD**

It was agreed that funds were adequate but an eye should be kept on expenditure generally.

An expense claim form is annexed. **ALL**

c) The Boater/newsletter. No report but there had been responses to the letters in the Newsletter.

d) Publicity & Public Relations. Melanie reported that sweatshirts could now be produced with the logo embroidered and carrying a boat name. It was agreed that sweatshirts in this style should be sold at £15 each.

Pete Sterry reported in writing confirming that the stand had been booked at Waltham Abbey but a tent would have to be hired at a cost of £55 which satisfied the fire regulations. The Nottingham Boat Show had been a great success with 59 new members obtained. He had handed out 1000 copies of the leaflet and it was agreed to reprint a further 5000. **JD**

Norman Aldborough had commented that the recent articles in Canal & Riverboat had been somewhat negative in tone and requested something more positive next time, possibly reporting on what NABO had achieved in the last 3 years.

There was a discussion over manning of the stand at Nottingham and for Waltham Abbey. Christine Potter commented that she had rung round the committee and had little response but it appeared that some members had been told by Pete Sterry that their help was not needed. It was agreed that a Council member should be on a stand at all times and that any volunteers should read the briefing notes beforehand.

More planning was required to do a proper job at rallies and a longer time frame was needed. When it appeared that only Penny was going to Waltham Abbey it was agreed that NABO would cover her expenses including accommodation and that a co-ordinator was needed. It was agreed that Pete Sterry should do this and liaise with Penny appropriately. Volunteers should be requested in the Boater who should contact Pete or Jon indicating the time they had available. Jon was to write a piece for the Boater. **JD & PS**

It was agreed that the possibility of setting up a rallies and shows sub committee to deal with the organising and running of our stand should be considered at the next meeting.

Neil commented that where members were of no fixed address there could be problems over renewal notices not reaching them. Particular care was needed where members were generally travelling.

e) Regional representatives.

i) North West. Neil Hutchinson's report was mainly contained in the last Newsletter. He had subsequently attended meetings on the Leeds & Liverpool where the western end reported no requests for residential moorings whereas the eastern end was developing a policy of providing them.

ii) North East. Pete Sterry reported he had sent the stoppage list to Neil

iii) Midland. Collin reported things were quiet the next regional meeting was on 30/6. He had not had reports from two people who had attended meetings for him and it was agreed that anyone attending a meeting must produce a report for the Boater and the regional rep.

iv) South East. Peter Lea reported on the Oxford canal mooring scheme where 8 miles above the electric bridge had been designated 72 hour moorings with the last one & a half 24. He had persuaded the manager to alter things and with effect from 24/6/94 the restrictions would now be 14 days on the first six & a half miles with no charge and 3 days without charge on the rest. It was agreed Peter should continue his good work to get a mix of mooring restrictions on the last part in accordance with BW's undertakings and their Leisure and Tourism Strategy. It was agreed that the 24 hour restriction at The Boat at Thrupp was reasonable. **PL**

The Parliamentary Waterways Group meeting had not been very relevant but the next two with the Chairman of BW and Audrey Lees would be.

The BW Bill. The select Committee still had not produced its report.

IWAAC. A reply had been received from the minister saying nothing.

Medway User Group. Peter could not attend and asked Melanie to provide a list of members in the area. **MD**

Lee & Stort Forum. This was a private body with a membership fee. If we wished to attend (and there was no other forum because of the mixed nature of the waterway between BW & NRA) we would have to pay £15.75. It was agreed 5 - 2 we should do so. Not for the membership as such but in order to obtain copies of the minutes. **PL & MD**

It was also agreed on the same basis that payments of £5 should be made for the minutes of the Worcester Waterways Forum and the Gloucester & Sharpness. **SP & MD**

y) East Anglian. No report.

vi) River users co-ordination. Stephen Peters presented his report (attached). It was agreed that David Bolton should have a free copy of Stephen's paper. **SP**

vii) Navigation Neil Hutchinson stated he had all stoppages reports except the South East. The national consultation on June 21st was next. It appeared there might be a way to Manchester over Christmas using the Ship Canal. There was still confusion over what was happening at Lapworth and whether there would be any Christmas window.

BW had produced "A Boater's Guide to British Waterways" This contained dimensions of all canals and depths and all members should contact Chris Port at Watford for a copy. BW were not publicising its existence. The latest version is dated June. Tel. 0923-226422. **ALL**

#### 5. Issues for NABO Council.

Peter Lea spoke to his paper and stated we need to be seen as a campaigning organisation and not to rest on what we had so far achieved.

The main issues affecting boaters were:

i) Dredging. This was the most major issue reported in boaters answers to our questionnaire. The difficulties of budgetary constraints and dumping regulations were acknowledged but we should press for a greater share of the budget being spent on dredging rather than some of the more peripheral action BW undertook. Targets should be set against which progress could be measured and if we did not complain it was likely that nothing would be done to increase dredging. The present standards were inadequate and not in accordance with the Frankel Report. Despite that report's authority under the 1968 Act BW did not accept it.

NABO should adopt a policy and it should be raised at all user group meetings. Peter to draft and arrange circulation to members for approval as agreed. **PL**

ii) Maximum boat width. The redesignation of the Grand Union between Berkhamstead and Birmingham as a narrow canal was an indication of how easy it was to change boat specifications. It appeared that concessions would be made for boats over 7ft (provided they were not to be used as a residence) which made a nonsense of the change. It was agreed that this was a local issue at the moment and Peter should pursue the basis and the authority on which the action has been taken.

iii) Visitor Moorings. The general principle was that anyone could moor for 14 days without charge except where there was a high demand for moorings and where an obstruction might be caused. The present signed 14 day sites were at inaccessible places and of little use for weekending. It was felt there may be a hidden agenda to charge for moorings in the future and this should be resisted. The HNBOC had already written to all managers asking for details of all mooring sites and their duration and the results would be passed to NABO. When received all area reps should write protesting about restrictions not being in accordance with the undertakings and the Leisure & Tourism strategy. This should be raised at user group meetings as well.

The Leisure & Tourism Strategy report was now issued and all members should ask Watford for a copy. **ALL**

It was agreed that Neil should draft a letter to all managers asking for details of all water points, sanitary stations & winding holes in their areas, pointing out that unless the last was known the agreement to notify stoppages at the last winding hole was meaningless. It was also suggested that the NABO document on moorings should be looked at again. Neil to bring copies to next meeting. **NH**

iv) Cycling. HNBOC had written to BW concerning the confusion over whether lockwheeling was exempt from any restriction. The results of their survey was published in their newsletter. Peter to supply copies to members. There appeared to be conflict with a letter Jon had received from Ian White at BW who was supposed to be co-ordinating BW policy. Jon would reply in the light of the survey. **JD**

v) Environmental Agency. The proposals could be a threat to boaters as there was a possibility of the 1968 Transport Act being repealed in part or whole. This would need to be monitored carefully. **ALL**

vi) Jon agreed to prepare a précis of the 1968 Act for members. **JD**

6. Maintenance and use of subcontractors. It was agreed that although work was not well done on occasion it was up to BW to monitor the quality of work but that any bad workmanship should be reported to the local manager.

7. Stephen Peter's paper on VHF was considered to be very helpful.

8. Meetings with other Waterways bodies. It was agreed that we needed to keep in touch with them and co-ordinate our activities for increased impact. These need not be formal but a common voice was needed on occasion to get things done. We were meeting IWA on 16th July. RBOA were completing their code of practice which we would discuss with them when ready. Davis Daynes of HNBOC would attend the next Council meeting.

9. A.O.B.

a) BW Licence refund policy had been changed following our pressure. A revised policy was circulated at the meeting.

b) Next meeting must decide dates of rest of meetings for the year and AGM. Also changes in the rules and procedures should be considered.

c) Fishing within 50 ft of a moored boat on the opposite side would now be considered by BW

d) Audrey Lees had replied to Jon's letter offering a meeting but otherwise being unrepentant.

e) Penny reported she had been appointed Vice Chair of RBOA. This was window dressing for an application to the Charity Commission.

f) Penny reported that despite excellent consultation at Hockley Port, when her lease arrived it was all wrong (1 year not 7 etc) and they wanted her to sign within a week. Plus ca change....

10. Next meeting. Saturday 23rd July Friends Meeting House, Northfields, Birmingham.

rmh 20/6/94