

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 23rd July 1994 at the Friends Meeting House, Northfield, Birmingham commencing at 10.00am.

Present: Penny Barber, Jon Darlington, Melanie Darlington, Roger Hancock, Neil Hutchinson, Peter Lea, Colin Paillin, Stephen Peters & Pete Sterry.

In attendance David Daines (member, & chairman hNBOC)

1. Apologies: Nikki Timbrell, Harry Winter, Christine Potter, Chris Barnacle & Phil Bland
2. The minutes of the meeting of 18th June were agreed an accurate record after the following changes had been made. Neil Hutchinson objected to minutes being changed after the event.

9e. Delete last sentence & insert " her duties would be on more onerous than her present ones with RBOA"

4d Pete Sterry indicated that the emphasis was wrong. He had said there was no need to make a special journey as his rota was full although low in Council members.

It was agreed that if a Member of Council could not attend a meeting, or had to leave early, a written report should be supplied and circulated with the minutes in future.

3. Matters arising.

a) 3b. No meeting had yet been arranged. NH to pursue. NH
b) 3c. Chris Barnacle's position was still not clear. In the meantime Melanie would continue to act as treasurer.

c) 3e. Jon had now spoken to Mike Stimson.

d) 4e(iv). Peter Lea had had no reply to his letter to Simon Ainsley suggesting a mix of mooring restrictions on the last 1.5 miles to Oxford. He would chase and also raise it with Peter Coyne. It was noted that the statement in BW's Leisure & Tourism Strategy document 3.4.2 was not quite what had been agreed and PL would remind them of what had been agreed in our letters of intent. It appeared the strategy was to be reviewed in 1996 and they were "committed to consult". PL

e) 5(i). Peter Lea had circulated the dredging policy paper and asked all members to write to local managers in their areas pressing for this standard. Neil Hutchinson reported he had collated information of depths of canals in the Warwickshire area comparing today's depths with historical data and intended to cover the whole system. He would make the information available to Council. ALL

f) 4b Pete Sterry confirmed that only one advert had been commissioned but it had appeared twice. He would speak to C & R and advise MD whether any payment was due for the second one. As only 5 members had been recruited from the exercise it would be abandoned. NH

4. BW's Licence & Mooring refund policy.

BW had agreed to drop their admin charge of £25 but no change had been made to the licence refund policy so that effectively any period over 6 months was ignored. The mischief BW were addressing was the deliberate purchase of a 12 month licence which would be surrendered after 5-6 months in order to get the cheaper price. Little sympathy was held for this activity and it was felt that as long as BW acted reasonably where someone with a history of 12 month licences asked for a refund there were more major issues to be tackled and that only a few people might suffer from this. It was agreed to accept the current proposals.

On Houseboat certificates it was felt that this was a matter for RBOA to pursue but it was noted that if a boat was used to cruise during the summer and used as a static place to live in winter it appeared not to be within the definition of a Houseboat.

BW had effectively climbed down on mooring permit refunds and their proposals were reasonable they should be accepted with thanks. JD to reply to Jim Kelly accordingly. JD

5. NABO/RBOA code of practice. This had not yet been received from RBOA where there was some admin problem. It was agreed that working party of JD, PL, Penny & RH would consider the paper when it was complete. JD PB PL RH

6. Meetings with other bodies.

JD reported on the meeting with IWA. David Stephenson appeared to have softened his attitude towards NABO and felt that we could say things he would like to say but couldn't politically. It appeared that both organisations appeared to get different versions of information from BW and there was some element of playing one off against the other. It was agreed that we needed to liaise together to share information and to avoid the divide and rule trap.

It was proposed that a Boater's forum be set up under the aegis of NABO & IWA to bring together representatives of all boating interests within the various organisations. It was felt none should be excluded from the invitation especially APCO who appeared to have other means of communication with BW as it appeared that only they had been consulted on a paper on Stoppage notification policy of which NH had obtained a draft.

The forum was intended as an opportunity to exchange information between organisations. It was accepted that all may not agree on everything but it would allow differences to be discussed and explained and negate the opportunity of BW to exploit disagreements.

The idea was approved. JD to contact Michael Stimson before IWA meeting next week to confirm. JD David Daines confirmed his approval on behalf of hNBOC. Initial invitations to be sent jointly by NABO & IWA who would share venue costs of first meeting. Subs to be agreed at that meeting but it was felt that the same should be paid by all and costs should be kept as low as possible. Action was likely to be taken by individual organisations so costs could be kept modest. Chair and secretariat should be from different organisations and rotate. 2 reps per organisation were thought to be the right number. It was essential that information was disseminated to all very quickly and this should be regarded as paramount when considering secretarial provision.

JD to contact David Stephenson before his meeting

PL to arrange liaison with hNBOC

Penny to arrange liaison with RBOA

Pete Sterry to arrange liaison with AWCC

JD
PL
PB
PS

It was agreed that correspondence on matters of mutual concern should be exchanged with IWA and also to share information on what meetings each were being invited to as there appeared to be considerable discrepancies.

7. Council Member's reports

a) Funding. Melanie Darlington's report is annexed. There were 145 new members since April

b) Membership Melanie reported current membership of 1292. Christine was unable to attend to matters until end September and Melanie would hold the fort and install the new database on the computer. MD

c) Recruitment. There had been no time for response to the item in the Newsletter yet. Nikki was congratulated on the blue advert enclosed. Colin asked if members had approached chandlers in their areas. Those that had not to do so. The response was generally favourable. ALL It was agreed that there should be one person responsible for control of stocks of leaflets. Pete Sterry agreed to do this. All requests for more to go through him. PS ALL

c) The Boater/newsletter. It was agreed that now the newsletter was so informative it was better to retain it as the main vehicle as the Boater cover added considerably to the cost of production. It was agreed the name The Boater should be retained for the proposed annual yearbook which would include reports of the previous year's activities, Chairman's speech at AGM details of Council members and a look forward to proposals for the coming year. JD to contact NT to see if she could handle its production and next meeting to discuss the possibility of advertising in it.

d) Publicity & Public Relations. Pete Sterry reported arrangements for Waltham Abbey. We had to hire a flameproof tent and the possibility of acquiring our own ought to be considered. Penny asked for photos which could be displayed on the stand to be sent to her. It was agreed with 3 against that if member number 1500 joined at the rally this should be marked by suitable publicity and a free T shirt at the discretion of Pete & Penny.

e) Regional representatives.

i) North West. Neil Hutchinson had nothing to report.

ii) North East. Pete Sterry reported the minutes of the user group he had chaired were now available. He had dealt with complaints of a Mrs Crossley concerning the Aire & Calder but would monitor the situation as there was some scepticism whether the proposed work would be done in time. PS

iii) Midland. Colin's report attached. In addition he reported the Rochdale canal was due to open next spring with the connection at Sowerby Bridge completed ahead of schedule. He would arrange for Stephen Peters to have a full copy of the report on safety referred to in his report. CP
There was a working party of Council officers being set up to discuss canal strategy for the West Midlands for the next 10 years. CP to find out how we can feed them ideas, including the improvement of the back ways into Birmingham from the north. CP

A planning application to regularise residential moorings at Factory 3 was being opposed by environmentalists. Agreed we should write in support of the application especially if visitor moorings could be included in what was not a very safe mooring area. JD

iv) South East. Peter Lea attended the Lee & Stort Forum and reported that NRA had stated they could not guarantee water supplies to the top of the Stort because of abstraction levels and were unwilling to discuss the matter. Epping Forest DC have adopted a policy of allowing no residential boats in their area. PL to write to oppose and copy Penny for RBOA to follow up. PL
David Daines commented that hNBOC were collating information on mooring policies from all waterway areas and would make the information available to us when complete.
There was a publication called "Research Matters" obtainable from BW at Watford which had useful information and on which BW based their decisions. All should get on the mailing list. ALL

v) East Anglian. No report. Chris Barnacle was not well and there was concern over what had been done in the area. Nothing appeared to be achieved and there were some major clashes with environmentalists looming. The Broads were a critical area and it was known that IWA, RYA & BMIF were seeking judicial review of the appointments to the Broads Authority. It was agreed: JD
JD to contact CB and find out what had been done and CP will go and see him and collect the JD
Broads Yearbook and any other useful information, on the assumption that CB was unable to give CP
the necessary attention to the area in view of his current difficulties. SP would write to clubs & SP
organisations offering help and all members agreed to attend a meeting on a one off basis as ALL
needed. Pete Sterry was happy to attend a rally in the area which was likely in Sept./Oct. Neil PS
was to be kept informed of the outcome.

vi) River users co-ordination. Stephen Peters presented his report (attached). It appeared that despite undertakings the River Avon catchment policy had been produced without consultations with us. SP to pursue. SP

vii) Navigation Neil Hutchinson stated that BW had failed to provide through routes during the winter stoppages. He felt there would be less of the system navigable than in previous years. There was still no national dredging policy with some areas being controlled at regional level and others at local.
The draft stoppage notification policy was to be discussed at the next meeting and would be discussed at the proposed meeting with Stuart Sim. He was very concerned with the potential impact on boaters.

8. A.O.B.

a) NH was concerned that Policy & Job description matters had been forgotten. It was agreed they should be resurrected but we needed to prioritise our activities. The most important were the Forum, East Anglia & the Ombudsman at present.

b) PL to write objecting to the proposed development of Tooley's Dock in Banbury which would destroy its character. PL

9. Next meeting. Saturday 10th September Friends Meeting House, Northfield, Birmingham.
Following: 15th October, Northfield

AGM 26th November, venue to be decided.

David Daines thanked the meeting for allowing him to come and he was thanked for his contribution.