

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 10th September 1994 at the Friends Meeting House, Northfield, Birmingham commencing at 10.00am.

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

1. Apologies: Nikki Timbrell & Christine Potter. The non attendance of Chris Barnacle and Harry Winter was discussed. They both had difficulties in attending and it was agreed that Chris Barnacle's telephone number should be removed from the Council member's list but he should remain on Council for the rest of the year. NT

A nomination was likely for Nigel Parkinson to stand for Council as an alternative to Harry. It was essential we got up to date on Standards and technical issues.

Jon to write to Chris Barnacle appropriately and to BW asking that all technical information should be sent to him for the time being. JD

2. The minutes of the meeting of 23rd July were agreed an accurate record.

3. Matters arising.

a) Generally. 3d. Peter Lea could not recall he was to contact BW over Leisure & Tourism strategy. It was agreed he should review it generally and take up areas where there were deviations from their statement of intent. PL

Neil asked that those attending user group meetings should clarify local policy on visitor moorings. In some areas it appeared that bollards and rings were being provided, bollards indicating shorter term moorings than rings. This was potentially dangerous as the provision of facilities could allow BW to charge under the 1962 Act. It was agreed that action was needed where there had been an alteration of mooring facilities contrary to the statement of intent. Jon to write to BW at senior level to seek assurance that local managers were aware of the terms of the statement of intent. JD

There seemed to be a tendency to make changes ahead of the BW bill becoming law. Roger to consider whether the Bill only affected actions after its passing and effectively approved what had gone before. RH

b) 3a. Neil was now arranging the meetings. NH

c) 3d. Peter had received an acknowledgement from Simon Ainsley who was taking things up with his lengthsman and would review the position.

d) 3e. Neil was continuing his work on historical data.

e) 5. Penny commented that the draft code of practice was expected in 2/3 weeks and would be circulated to the working party as soon as it was ready. Penny

f) 7e(iii) Colin Paillin to contact West Midlands Consultancy group and find out what was required by way of input from NABO. CP

Stephen Peters had not been invited to a meeting of the safety committee being set up by Stuart Sim. Stephen to ask to be invited. SP

g) AOB. Policy and job descriptions needed to be completed. It was agreed that this must be completed before the AGM. There was a need to prioritise each member's activities and all were to provide a written report for each meeting of Council, **of no more than 1 page**, indicating briefly what they had done since last meeting and their priorities for the next period for approval at the meeting. ALL

h) Ombudsman. Jon had produced a draft but it had yet to be considered by the working party. JD,PL,RH

4. BW's Consultation procedures.

The exchange of letters between Jon & Jim Kelly was circulated. There having been no movement by BW and in the light of their statement that other organisations had agreed the procedure was to be tested by Jon taking the matter up with David Stephenson of IWA. If IWA have not agreed (it being thought they would not have had time to do so) Jon to write to Ken Dodd stating that the letter was not correct and that if what we wanted added nothing to what was already in the code then including it would not hurt them and give us confidence in the process. BW should (and usually did) take notes of meetings as without them they could not consider the JD

representations made properly. The possibility of asking the other Forum members to support this view was raised.

It appeared that IWA were reluctant to push forward with the Forum until after their AGM and the appointment of a new Chairman. However there was nothing to stop the current Chairman taking steps and Jon was to pursue this.

JD

A rumour had been circulating at the National that BW were to set up their own user group "Friends of the Waterways". This was thought to be as a result of pressure from the DOE as a source of income. It would be locally based and provide club activities for all users including anglers and walkers. IWA had been asked if they wanted to run it. If they did they would forfeit their independence which could benefit NABO, if they did not they were likely to be more antagonistic towards BW as they would be in direct competition. It was felt that IWA did not represent any more boaters than NABO.

5. BW Moorings matrix. The criteria were handed out by BW in July. They were handed out at 1pm and approval was expected by 3pm. There was still no arbitration provision and the complaints procedure was inadequate as the local manager was both judge and jury. There was no opportunity to take matters further but the practice should be monitored. Attached to these minutes is a letter from Stephen Goode indicating how the matrix would be applied in his area. Phil Bland complained that BW were trying to grab land unreasonably. We could act only on specific complaints and Phil was to see if there was evidence of BW acting unreasonably which we could pursue.

PB

6. Advertising.

It was essential we did not compromise our independence. There was a policy against advertising at the moment and members should decide in accordance with our policy procedure. It was not a matter for the AGM but the membership as a whole. The suggestion by Penny of a fighting fund was a good idea but should be kept separate from the principle of advertising. It was noted that advertising would increase the cost of production of the Newsletter and there would be technical issues of production to consider.

It was agreed papers should be produced for consideration at the next meeting under the policy procedure. By Penny on the fighting fund; Peter Lea pro advertising, Neil against and Penny linking with the fighting fund.

Penny, PL, NH

7. BW Bill. The latest information had been received from RYA not direct. This disclosed a lack of procedure to keep up to date. This was also apparent over standards and the Broads. There was need for a regular scrutiny of what was going on. This could ideally be done by the proposed Forum for all bodies as individually they lacked the resources to do it. It was felt the BW will accept the changes of the Committee and the Bill will be passed in the New Year. There was a need to advise members of the timetable under the Act and also a need to collate all undertakings given by BW to each organisation. This was a matter for the Forum and one of urgency. It was unlikely IWA could deal with calling the Forum until November when the new Council was elected but it was felt that there were representatives who would not change and they could be asked to take action now. Jon to speak to David Stephenson it was desirable that there was a joint invitation but it could not be delayed. RYA to be invited to attend.

JD

Jon was to consider drafting a layman's guide to the Act for members.

JD

8. Insurance. Eagle Star were offering a discount to Michael Stimson to produce a NABO discount of 10% plus 5% commission to NABO. If this was to be pursued then income generated must be held separately from general funds so we are not dependent on it. We should also be given details of members taking up the insurance. On these conditions it was agreed to publicise the discount in the Newsletter with a disclaimer indicating NABO did not recommend the policy and members should consider others carefully and also disclosing the commission paid. The situation would be monitored carefully. Other insurers contacted in the survey were to be written to by Peter Lea thanking them for their response.

PL

9. BW's Pricing Policy for 1995. An inflationary increase as at July of 2.3% was noted.

10. Council Member's reports

a) Funding. Melanie Darlington's report is annexed. There was a net profit of £150 plus 50 new members from The National.

b) Membership. Melanie reported current membership of 1345. 34 due to renew in June had not done so but some were still coming in, having been away. She was progressing with the new database which revealed that 50% of the members were retired.

c) Recruitment. Colin reported only 2 responses out of 11 to the non renewal letter. Neil commented that our highest priority was keeping membership and expanding it. He volunteered to act as recruiting officer for next year provided he did it exclusively. Chris Boxall, a new member was keen on Navigation and he was to be encouraged to stand for council. Melanie was to provide Neil with a list of members in NW to see if a couple of volunteers could be obtained to attend meetings. If this could be done it would be possible to monitor the region from outside. Peter Lea to provide Neil with the wording he had used in the South effectively. The blue handbills seem to be working and should be repeated.

d) The Boater/newsletter. It looks very good and is liked by members. There was doubt whether Nikki would be prepared to continue next year. She was to be written to and thanked for her excellent work by Jon.

e) Publicity & Public Relations. Pete Sterry reported on Waltham Abbey. Penny's report to go in Newsletter. She commented that the use of a duplicate book for problems allowed them to be recorded and passed to the appropriate member of Council and that we ought to be on the water as well. The stand attracted non boaters. It was agreed we should attend Nottingham, Braunston & the National (Chester) next year. Permission for leafleting of boats was to be obtained before each rally. Tents to be hired as required and a boat should attend. One Council member should co-ordinate each event.

e) Regional representatives.

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

ii) North East. Pete Sterry reported the Aire & Calder work was due to start in October.

iii) Midland. Colin commented that Authorities on the Thames appeared anti boater with high mooring charges and charging at new sites. We should consider preparing a list of cheaper or free sites for members. Jon had been invited to the digging of the first sod of the Derby Canal restoration.

iv) South East. Peter Lea had written opposing Banbury Wharf development but it had been approved. He had a reasonable reply from Epping Forest Council on mooring policy which they indicated they would reconsider.

He had received a copy of the map for the Southern region from David Daines on mooring and would get the others in due course.

v) East Anglian. Jon reported that he had recovered the information Chris Barnacle had. There was a need to keep links open until we could find someone to take the area on. Melanie would check database for members living in the area. It was agreed we ought to attend a meeting of the Yare user group being set up. Peter Lea to make contact with NRA.

vi) River users co-ordination. Stephen Peters' report attached.

vii) Navigation. Neil Hutchinson stated he had full stoppage details and that he would continue his work on historical statistics. Copies when available to be sent to Peter Lea.

8. A.O.B.

a) Phil Bland suggested he write an article for Canal & Riverboat on the law for boaters who moved around the system but agreed to hold it up until the Bill had been passed and the houseboat code of practice agreed.

b) Concern was expressed over the proposed Environmental agency which was unlikely to be friendly towards boaters. This was another matter for the Forum to provide a united front.

c) Parliamentary Waterways Group. It was agreed that the subscription should be renewed for a further year.

d) AGM 26th November Friends Meeting House Northfield. Nomination forms to reach the Secretary by 15th October. One received from StanleyHibberd.

9. Next meeting. Saturday 15th October Friends Meeting House, Northfield, Birmingham.