

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 24th June 1995 at Northfield, Birmingham commencing at 10.00am.

Present: Jon Darlington, Roger Hancock, Neil Hutchinson, Nigel Parkinson, Mij Lambert, Christine Potter, Phillip Ogden, Stephen Peters & Chris Boxall

1. Apologies: Melanie Darlington, Penny Barber, Nikki Timbrell, Peter Lea, Pete Sterry & Phil Bland.
2. The minutes of the meeting of 13th May 1995 were agreed an accurate record.
3. BW & NRA Review of Navigation Functions  
The position paper having been circulated had been submitted. It was accepted that the ideal long term solution was that proposed by AWCC but that it was unlikely to find favour in the present political climate. The present greatest threat was to personal freedom to use the system. NRA were saying the present legislation was antiquated and wanted to remove rights of navigation. There was a need to emphasise the contribution made by navigation to the other non boating uses BW was expanding.
4. BW Craft Licensing review  
The paper had been submitted as circulated with minor amendments. The danger of allowing BW information to see whether a canal was an economic proposition had to be avoided. It was agreed it would be useful to compare costs of boating now with 10 years ago. It was felt the information was available from commercial sources and that whilst interesting the main issue was freedom of navigation.
5. Angling  
Chris Boxall reported no further progress had been made but the attitude of the Labour party was noted as encouraging angling in their Angler's Charter despite its objection to other blood sports. All to take up with their local party office.  
The benefits of a joint policy agreed between the main boating associations and the Anglers were agreed and it was more likely that BW would accept an outside code if it could be shown to have the agreement of both sides. It would also be helpful to show to defaulters that his association had agreed it. There would still be problem areas as at Kinver where BW laid out moorings having previously leased the fishing. BW would have to sort this out but were prepared to ban fishing in some areas (Fazeley moorings).
6. Boat Safety Certificate  
Nigel reported on correspondence with BW and showed problems over consultation. He was attending a meeting on Wednesday and had not received an agenda yet. The date for implementation was announced at Nottingham despite an undertaking to consult the technical committee beforehand.  
The Technical committee was happy that new boats built after 16th June 1998 should comply in full but was not happy about existing boats. There was confusion as well with BW & NRA requiring compliance on a different basis. The need to establish a clear cost for the Certificate was paramount as was the cost of obtaining the qualifications to test boats.  
There was discussion on the enforceability of standards where small breaches occurred and the possibility if boats were granted licences without the certificate that on renewal there would be refusals to renew. Much would depend on what actually happened but there was a danger that NABO members would be picked off individually. ~~It was revealed that the new Act allowed a group to propose an exemption for any category of boat and we should consider an application for all existing boats built before 16/6/98 except for sections (eg gas) which were clearly of benefit to safety.~~ The next meeting to consider the standards in detail. All to bring their copy of the Grey Book to decide which sections should be complied with. Gas installation caused confusion still and it was essential to refer to the proper statutory instrument before making any statement to BW.  
There was a need to identify areas where boats regularly failed the test to consider particular exemptions in the future.

A discussion on liability for testing considered the owner must have the responsibility of the safety of his boat but the liability for negligent testing could well be a problem and price the scheme out of the market if professional indemnity insurance was required (or even desirable).

At present there was no complaints or appeals procedures or method of dealing with failures and retesting.. It was felt the number of testers may not be sufficient by 1/1/96 which would cause additional problems as well as bad press for BW.

It was agreed that Standards were the number one priority for NABO in the foreseeable future. The ideal would be to make it easily workable and easy to get at little cost.

7. Council Member's reports

a) Funding. Jon reported the accounts were reasonably sound. There were still only 10 Standing Orders. £523 was earned at Nottingham & Braunston for a cost of £390. The economics were doubtful.

b) Membership Christine reported 1359 members. A small increase net of non renewers of 40 since January. There was a need to increase members (IWA still falling despite their publicity)

There seemed to be a shortage of the new leaflets anyone with a supply to contact Jon. He would reprint in the meantime.

Agreed to accept family membership application for boaters mooring at Watford Caravan Centre but not to be a precedent and they were to be asked to renew at the full rate.

Consideration should be given to including the standing order on the application form.

Chester Rally. It was not clear what had been arranged and doubts were expressed over the benefits. It was essentially a matter of personal commitment from members to run the stand and leafleting of all boats was felt to be of greater benefit than a stand. However a presence was essential to raise the profile of NABO. Leafleting 24 & 48 hour moorings was felt to be very useful especially if done on a regular basis. There needed to be some co-ordination of that effort to avoid duplication.

Alan Adams a waterways photographer wanted to join, agreed although not a boater.

c) Marketing. Mij will ask next time where each council member can leaflet regularly. Mij produced NABO Cruising logs and stickers and issued initial supplies at the meeting. She felt there ought to be a better quality sweatshirt available. A5 cards used last year were successful and should be repeated regularly with different messages. She would speak to Nikki about selling log books instead of other commercial products through hire companies. It was essential that they made the same profit.

The lapsed member chasing system was working well.

Jon reported the results of Pete Sterry's enquiries about a tent. Agreed he should get alternative quotes but was authorised to spend up to £500 plus VAT. We should attend as many rallies as possible and use Helium balloons as a flagpole.

Jon to chase Penny over the Chester arrangements.

d) The Newsletter. No report.

e) Regional representatives.

i) North West. Neil Hutchinson reported all meetings had been held. Autumn meetings to discuss winter stoppages for 2 winters' time. All reps should raise this.

ii) North East. Pete Sterry had produced a written report.

iii) Midland. Chris circulated BW's response to his questions. BW were alert to the problem of crime and vandalism. Fibreway had been postponed pending reconsideration by the contractors.

BW have undertaken to respond in writing to questions concerning lock failures and collapses.

Restrictions on lock usage during summer months were discussed and considered ineffective at saving water. NABO would question the practice and fight it. What evidence is there that these restrictions are effective? All reps to ask for reasons and facts to justify the action.

iv) South East. Peter Lea had circulated his report.

Waterway Manager GUC(S) had written threatening letter to unauthorised residential moorers referring to BW undertaking not to refuse licences unreasonably. Jon to check the actual wording.

PL had produced a suggested list of Newsletter recipients. Agreed only one person per organisation should receive the free copy plus Labour & Lib Dem environment spokesmen.

f) River users co-ordination. Stephen's report circulated. IWAAC had welcomed NABO Prospectus & asked for more copies. SP to reply none remained from the initial limited print run. SP to produce an updated list of available guidance papers for permanent inclusion in Newsletter as a service to members.

g) Navigation. NH reported that 1995/6 stoppage programme had been finalised by BW. Consultation meetings had revealed that "window" in stoppages were not looked on favourable by BW. Draft only received from SE Region and felt there had been inadequate consultation generally. He would produce a Newsletter article on the use of waterways 365 days a year.

8. BW Consultation Procedure.

Jon introduced the amended draft from BW. Changes had been made but not all NABO amendments had been accepted. Provision for written responses and extra time for consideration had been included. It was felt some matters of national importance might not fall within the national consultation procedures and Jon was to ask that Boat Safety matters be included.

The practice of BW attending other organisation's meetings rather than run their own was unacceptable. Jon to write to BW.

CB & NH to prepare a suggested format for BW consultation meetings to assist Midlands Region.

9. A.O.B.

Christine Potter reported an offer from Stephen Goldsborough to address a NABO meeting on Boat standards, boatbuilding etc. CP to thank him & his offer would be borne in mind.

10. Next meeting. Saturday 5th August 1995, Friends Meeting House, Northfield, Birmingham.

rmh 26/6/95