

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 27th January 1996 at Northfield, Birmingham commencing at 10.00am.

Present: Jon Darlington, Roger Hancock, Nigel Parkinson, Nikki Timbrell, Peter Lea, John Glock, Neil Walker, Denis Smith, Andrew Sherrey, Neil Hutchinson & Chris Boxall.

1. Apologies: Penny Barber, Stephen Peters, Pete Sterry, Phil Bland, John Griffith & Phillip Ogden
2. The minutes of the meeting of 9th December 1995 were agreed an accurate record Nigel had the name of the man at the Cabinet Office in charge of the Chartermark. No threat of Judicial Review had been included in Jon's letter on BSS. Richard Branson to be invited to become a member. JD
3. Council Structure. Chris Boxall had drafted a paper suggesting ways to improve the running of Council. This was to be circulated before next meeting for consideration as a discussion paper. Agreed we needed to be as efficient and effective as possible. ALL
4. Landfill Tax Peter added to the information circulated previously and reported that the BMIF drafted amendment exempt dredgings had been raised in the House by Winston Churchill MP. The lobbying which all posed had carried out had borne fruit and the Government agreed to introduce their own amendment exempting dredgings later. There was an indication this would also include restoration projects. The BMIF amendment was withdrawn. It would appear that although possible the Government amendment might not include everything we wanted a victory had been achieved. In addition NABO received good publicity in the House with the MP for Ellesmere Port quoting extensively from Peter's letter. It is recorded in Hansard. Lobbying of MPs. It was agreed that lobbying of one's own MP was more likely to be successful the lobbying of a list of some 50 known to be interested in the Waterways was also effective.
5. Update on Boat Standards The acrimonious meeting reported on by Steven did not appear to have given the right impression of NABO's stance. It was agreed that the complaints procedure should be continued with and that Jon, Peter, Nigel & Stephen should co-ordinate the complaints into a single paper but keeping the complaints separate. This would be necessary for Lady Ponsonby (who had asked to receive copies of the Newsletter) in due course. Agreed NABO should respond to the article in Waterways World setting out our position on Standards as although the last press release was used extensively the article left a feeling that NABO were being entirely negative and wanted to kill the scheme. This view seemed to be prevalent at the Forum meeting as well and had appeared in IWA papers. At the Forum meeting RYA and AWCC were pro standards IWA sat on the fence (although they seconded the appointment of the RYA man to the Technical Advisory Committee knowing this), NABO & hNBOC were against RBOA & CNOA would follow them. JD PL
NP SP
The Forum had allowed the appointment of not the best person to represent boaters interests as he had a huge boat and had no interest in canals at all. It was felt a lot of RYA members were dinghy sailors and the figures stated therefore were somewhat erroneous. It was necessary to project NABO's position separately and be seen not to be negative. By fighting BSS we obtain publicity which if we win will enhance our position, if we lose we are needed more. Apart from our position statement a meeting of all who might support our views should be called to co-ordinate opposition, not necessarily to act together but to ensure mutual support on common ground and the avoidance of opposition to matters not considered major and to identify areas of disagreement. These should include Malcom Braine and Trent Boaters and any others we hear of. The meeting should take place before an invitation to Brian Dyce and NRA equivalent to a meeting to discuss the situation. The benefits of going it alone or some joint approach to be agreed at the previous meeting. It was necessary to make clear we have maintained our opposition to the BSS for a long time and the following statement was agreed:
" In order to prevent any further misunderstanding, we feel it would be useful to state NABO's long term position clearly.
NABO's council believes that a Boat Safety Scheme has the potential to make the waterways a safer place for all users. We therefore fully support the principle of the joint BW/NRA scheme. However in order to deliver its potential benefits the scheme must :
Be Based on clear, precise and reasonable standards which can be understood by all boaters.

Be available to boaters at reasonable cost.

Be introduced only after adequate advance information is available about all aspects of the scheme. Recognise the differences between new boats and existing ones and allow for the effects of differing design criteria.

Our input to the Boat Safety Scheme Advisory Group and the Technical Committee has been based on these principles. We think it particularly important to strike a balance between the costs to the boater and the improvements in safety which are achieved and will continue to work for our members in the way"

6. Marketing Strategy

Before producing his marketing plan Peter sought approval for various ideas which could be included. PL

Those approved included: regular press releases; reprint stickers and send free to all members; round stickers - subject to payment possibly; incentives for introducing new members; discounts for members at museums, chandlers etc; merchandise including, carrier bags, mugs, plaques, balloons, pencils bookmarks, traditional Christmas cards; 5th birthday celebrations including profile in Waterways World, membership promotion linked to number 5, prize competition aimed at making mailing list, NABO BSS clinic (reluctantly at IWA rally); Council members blitz on the track- to replace July meeting - but not mandatory; look at NABO rally feasibility for 1997; speakers for boat clubs; include standing order form with membership application redesign if possible; redesign application form for river users; regular low cost advertising in Waterways World; leafletting - must be properly recorded to avoid duplication; attend BW Getting Afloat days; NABO awards for good boatyards etc; handbook for boaters; helpline; Internet site; revise/reprint "Why NABO"; widen circulation of Newsletter.

It was agreed more help would be needed to achieve this and the Survey which had not been sent out for lack of space in the Newsletter should be sent out now separately with the Freepost address.

Newsletter. Discussion over change of format to A4. Agreed to retain A5 for this year as time for development limited but to include photos/drawings and other ideas. NT

7. Matters arising from last meeting

a) Robert Jones Minister in charge of Waterways asked for our views on the future of IWAAC. Jon to respond. JD

b) Environment Agency are considering its consultation procedures and how navigation fits with its general operations. SP to follow up. SP

c) Marine Safety Agency. Little known but thought to relate to commercial craft only. Ask Forum to pursue.

d) Rallies. Agreed to attend Nottingham. Braunston only if volunteers willing to help as only broke even last time. Request to be made in Newsletter. IWA - yes book now, also pay £50 donation for free site last year. DS

Rewrite IWA handout instructing people on stands how to do it. DS

8. Additional items from Reps. not circulated.

Navigation. Water problems and the Caldon area in particular discussed. Agreed not appropriate to complain about closures when threat of standpipes still imminent. Local manager there had been open over the problems, others were adjusting stoppages to achieve the same results. Agreed PL to write to Stuart Sim on general terms asking for consistency of approach between managers on the basis of keeping canals open as long as possible, giving as much advance notice as possible and posting notices over as wide an area as possible warning of closure/restrictions. Any particular views ALL to be sent to PL.

9. A.O.B.

i) Agreed Harry Winter to attend PLA meetings as NABO rep.

ii) Missing page from IWAAC comments on BW's strategy previously circulated, attached. NP to draft response generally. NP

iii) BW Code for Anglers. Copy draft attached comments to Chris Boxall for collation. ALL

iv) Copy letter re intimidation attached for discussion next meeting. ALL

10. Next meeting. Saturday 2nd March 1996, Friends Meeting House, Northfield, Birmingham