

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at Northfield on the 7th September 1996  
commencing at 1000hrs

1. Apologies received from John Griffiths, Nigel Parkinson, Nicki Timbrell, Andrew Sherrey, Roger Hancock, John Glock.

The **Chairman** reported that he had received notification from **Neil Hutchinson** tendering his resignation from Council due to personal commitments. It was proposed and agreed that a letter be sent to Neil expressing the Council's appreciation of all his work on behalf of NABO and wishing him well in the future.

2. Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Boat safety Standards: update

The **Chairman** reported that **David Fletcher** had rejected all complaints regarding the scheme that had been made by the Association in the letter of the 28th March. Council resolved to continue with the complaints already in formulation to the Ombudsman.

It was noted that there were now 75 surveyors and 63 examiners reported as being on the BSS panel.

- 3A. Status of undertakings made by BWB to NABO

A letter was circulated from Messrs Shakespeares Solicitors advising that undertakings given by British Waterways to NABO were - as a matter of law - worthless as NABO was not incorporated. Shakespeares also advised that should problems arise with matters covered by the undertakings, then they should be pursued if possible through the Ombudsman.

Council discussed the implications of this opinion, in particular the fact that Legal undertakings cannot be made by the Association. The situation was to be investigated again.

Concern was also expressed about the likelihood of legal action should any articles in the Newsletter be considered libellous and the consequent liability of their respective authors. There would appear to be no protection for individuals and this problem would have to be examined later. The Newsletter disclaimer was to be reviewed as to whether it was still adequate.

4. Moorings

The **Chairman** reported that the NABO draft moorings policy was still being formulated. In this context it was reported via the Gloucester and Sharpness User meeting that disabled moorings were not sacrosanct to their intended beneficiaries.

- 4A. BWB Customer Charter

British Waterways Customer Charter was in the process of being revised. The old Charter with the proposed amendments was circulated to Council members present. The **Chairman** requested comments on the changes be made to **Penny Barber** within one week.

5. Towpath Cycleways

Council discussed the problems of cycling on towpaths. BWB policy on cycling was explored. Council resolved that NABO policy was that whilst casual use of the towpaths by cyclists was acceptable they were against the use of the towpath for organised cycling events. John Griffith's letter was discussed in the light of this and the **Chairman** was to forward an amended draft to John accordingly.

- 5A. Leisure and Tourism strategy

This BWB document is being reviewed and BWB were requesting comments by 30th September. Council members were to send their comments on the present document and suggestions for inclusion and/or deletions to **Peter Lea** by 20th September.

6. Recruitment  
Peter Lea reported on recruitment activities carried out by NABO throughout the summer and circulated a Marketing report. Council agreed that a formal vote of thanks be made to Christine and John Denton for their magnificent efforts in recruiting members and that they should both be presented with NABO sweatshirts in recognition of these efforts.  
It was also agreed that the suggestion of Day Star Theatre sponsorship should be further investigated by Peter Lea in terms of potential cost and effort.
7. Training programme for volunteers  
In view of Neil Hutchinsons resignation it was agreed that this project would need to be reviewed. Council expressed concern that NABO was not represented in the NW. Philip Bland agreed to provide temporary cover. Discussion on area representatives and their tasks followed and Council agreed that as a matter of principle, area reps should always be drawn from the Council.
8. BW Licensing  
It was reported that the likely increase in licence fees could be as much as 30% over the next three years. This probable increase and the ability of NABO to counter it provoked discussion of the general effectiveness of NABO as a representative organisation. Dissatisfaction was expressed with the general effectiveness of the Association. Council agreed that further efforts will have to be made to reduce apathy and increase participation by other members. More focusing of limited resources was required, with issues and effort clearly identified.
8. Water Resources  
Closures without notice were deplored, as in two current cases, Knowle Locks and South Mills Locks. Council were reminded that at a National Forum meeting, the BWB operations director promised adequate notice for all stoppages other than in real emergencies. Peter Lea was to co-ordinate NABO response to complaints about these two occurrences.
10. River Wye : Enquiry  
Input to the enquiry was required by 31st October 1996. Council discussed the logistics of making a statement of case, as a written statement. In view of the Councils decision in item 8 of the Agenda a written statement would be made.
- 10A Environment Agency Matters  
Discussion centred on the EA Customer Charter. Comments had been asked for on the membership of Regional Fisheries Advisory Committees (REFACS). A letter on this subject by Stephen Peters was endorsed by Council. Council also expressed their appreciation of all Stephen's efforts in dealing with a massive volume of paperwork generated by the EA.
11. Annual General Meeting Arrangements - 23.11.96  
The following times were agreed.  
AGM start 1045  
AGM finish 1245  
Boat trip 1300 - 1500  
Boat trip tickets would be sold on a 'first come first served' basis. Details would be in the Newsletter. This would be together with the formal notice of the AGM, requests for resolutions, agenda items and nominations for the committee as per the Rules. Council noted that there would be 4 vacancies on the Council to be filled, and agreed that this should be emphasised in the Notice to encourage more nominations.
- 11A. Special General Meeting - 12.10.96  
22 requests for this meeting had been received so far. It was agreed that it would be held at 1400hrs on the 12th October at the Friends Meeting House.
12. Matters Arising from minutes of last meeting not previously covered.  
There were no matters arising.

13. Additional items on reports circulated by Council members

Prior to individual reports under this heading, the responsibility of Council members to make reports was discussed. Council agreed that individual Council members should report on their particular responsibilities at each meeting. It was also agreed that it was most important that the financial situation of the Association was assessed at Council meetings. Council proposed that the Treasurer be asked to provide a budget as soon as possible to enable long term finances to be considered.

(a) EA Reports

**Stephen Peters** reported that the BSS Technical Manual was not available at all regional offices of the EA despite assurances previously given. Council agreed that the Chairman of EA should be informed of this totally unsatisfactory situation, and in the event of no response from this quarter, Council would take up the matter with the DOE.

(b) Rally Reports

Council agreed that a NABO Rally was not feasible at this time. Council expressed their deep appreciation of the work done by **Denis Smith** in canvassing and attending Rallies on NABOs behalf throughout the year.

(c) Accounts

The draft accounts submitted by the **Treasurer** were accepted by the Council and recommended for audit.

(d) Newsletter

A letter from the **Editor** was noted.

14. AOB

Press Releases

Council agreed on the importance of releasing regular statements to the press. It was also agreed that NABO should in principle and when considered necessary employ a professional in the writing of such releases. should a satisfactory candidate be found.

The Ombudsman report was reviewed. It was noted that a definition of 'maladministration' had been included in the report

It was agreed that the Association should be represented at the forthcoming National Conference of Waterway Societies. **Denis Smith** would attend.

**Denis Smith** wished to record his dissatisfaction with the lack of response from most Council members to individual letters and requests from other Council members.

A sum of £25 was to be sent to the Staffordshire Boat Club in recognition of assistance given to the Association.

**Peter Lea** requested that a prize of two tee-shirts be substituted for a balloon ride made at the Rickmansworth Rally. This was agreed.

Council agreed that all donations received by the Treasurer should be acknowledged with thanks. This would also apply to those received by the **Chairman**.

IWAC Meeting - 24.9.96

**Chairman** would not be available. **Peter Lea** or **Denis Smith** would attend.

15. Next Meeting

12th October 1996 at Friends Meeting House, Birmingham.

The Council meeting ended at 1700 hrs.