

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Oak Tree Farm Nr Atherstone on 7 Jun 97.

1. Apologies. Nikki Timbrell, Penny Barber, Phil Bland, Neil Walker.

2. Accuracy of Minutes of Council Meeting on 12 April.

3d. NABO page was 'under construction' and not yet complete.

4d. Council Members were requested to provide the details of stretches of BW waterway in need of dredging.

6. Lady Knollys would be spending a day afloat with the NABO Chairman.

Andrew Sherrey noted that whilst he understood sherry at mid-day to be excellent, his name contained an extra 'e'!

3. Matters Arising not covered by the Agenda.

a. The chairman reported a constructive day out with Lady Knollys, who was already aware of many issues. Lady K was confident BW would not repeat their errors in failing to consult.

b. Chartermark correspondence with the Cabinet Office had been circulated and the question was now whether to oppose the renewal of BW's Chartermark for the new Charter. After a long debate Council agreed to let the matter rest but to continue to use all opportunities to press BW for open management.

c. Complaints were progressing:

The Ombudsman would soon pronounce on our BSS complaint. It seems unlikely that the NABO position will be upheld.

The Licence and Moorings conditions complaint has been overtaken by a new consultative process so would not need to be pursued. The Chairman had already replied to BW as a part of this new consultation.

d. BSS. A draft of the Questionnaire was circulated and, with minor amendments, agreed. R Davis would send it out immediately to members with standing orders and to others as they renewed.

e. New MP's. The chairman had now written to the 200 MP's with navigable waterways in or near their constituency, and had circa 40 replies, nearly all favourable. Two MP's wanted more details of their constituents. N Parkinson and R Davis agreed to provide this if possible.

4. NINF Meeting. The chairman reported on the NINF meeting on 31 May. Major points were:

The Forum had agreed to request 2 National User Group meetings every year.

A discussion on waterway maintenance standards had agreed that target channel dimensions were needed. These should be absolute, numerate and as far as possible based on original construction standards.

NABO had agreed to coordinate a factual briefing paper for MP's and to act as the focus within NINF for maintenance standards. A paper would be prepared covering maintenance standards for endorsement by the Forum.

5. Newsletter and Press matters.

a. The newsletter Editor had indicated her intention of retiring from the post and from Council at the AGM. Pressure of an expanding business and an increasing newsletter made it impossible for her to provide the time needed. Council agreed that the Chairman would ask Nikki to draw up a Job Description and estimate the time required for the job before setting out upon the difficult task of finding a volunteer to replace Nikki. (Also unanimously agreed to be a hard act to follow.) In the early stages this would be by advertising the post in the Newsletter.

b. Canal And Riverboat Monthly had offered NABO a free half page advertisement in each issue. Council expressed its thanks and gratefully accepted.

6. Rallies and Marketing.

a. Christine Denton reported:

Little Venice was a success.

Sutton Stop had been a busted flush.

The Ashby Canal Association was now a saturated market so attending their rally was useful but not likely to produce many new members.

Braunston had been a Very Good rally from the NABO perspective. There was evidence of the start of a 'snowball effect'.

We had not been able to arrange attendance at Tent Lock. (shortage of time/volunteers.)

b. Roger Davis said that Wendover had been valuable with some new members and lots of publicity.

c. Peter Foster undertook to investigate whether we could attend the Nottingham rally in August. Dennis Smith would arrange attendance at Evesham. Peter Foster and Stephen Peters agreed to make the arrangements to attend the Farndon Boat Club Rally on the River Trent in September.

d. After discussion it was agreed that the Chairman would make available the list of new MP's with navigable water in or near their constituency and that Stephen Peters would write a short note for the newsletter announcing its existence and availability to all members.

e. Council gratefully accepted the proceeds arising from the sale of Christmas Cards by a well known Waterway artist and considered whether to purchase more for sale at rallies etc. The price was felt to be a little high and the Chairman agreed to see if the artist was amenable to negotiations.

f. Newsletter advertising rates were confirmed.

g. The Raffle was going very well, with about £1400 taken so far. The response from members was overwhelmingly positive. Christine Denton was congratulated on this successful initiative. The Draw at Henley needed to be made by someone with 'profile' and various names were put forward. Eventually, Audrey Smith as Chairman of the hosts, IWA, was proposed, and agreed. Christine Denton accepted the task of persuading her to make the draw.

h. Rotating the AGM venue was again debated. Council decided to go away and think about it and make a decision at the next meeting.

Rallies and Marketing Continued.

i. Coordinating our marketing effort with other groups was discussed. **Christine Denton** undertook to draft proposals for consideration at the next Council meeting.

j. There would be a Council Lock Day at Stourport on 2/3 August. **Dennis Smith** said he would organise the event.

7. Chief Executive of BW. David Fletcher attended in place of Bernard Henderson who was not available for personal reasons.

a. Mr Fletcher explained the BW desire to work with voluntary organisations and suggested that assistance in canal repairs, operation of some structures and help with lock-keeping would be welcome. Council felt that it was not NABO's purpose to help with canal restoration and repair as this was well covered by other organisations, but that assistance with lock-keeping and other operational tasks might appeal to members. **Philip Ogden** would write for the news letter and co-ordinate the response with BW.

b. There was general discussion of waterway maintenance and DF explained the thinking behind the new maintenance policy being developed by BW. He accepted that, if the Users wanted, channel dimensions could be based on original dimensions whenever practicable but stated that it was BW's intention to develop a set of standards for every kilometre of waterway and corresponding data on its actual condition. A sonar survey of channel dimensions was in progress. A user group meeting might be the best way to formally agree the standards. The standards and the actual condition of waterways would be publicly available.

c. DF explained BW's funding position in broad terms and set out the alternative sources they were trying to tap. Money other than Grant-in-Aid was now ring fenced and escaped the annual guillotine which often meant spending Government money in order not to lose it,

d. The K&A cycling proposals were going ahead with the full support of the Minister. Mass trespass would be resisted and alterations needed for cycling would not affect the use of the waterways by others. Railings at bridgeholes would specifically be opposed.

e. A Question and Answer session followed. DF undertook to investigate what had happened over the Waterway Code for Anglers, where the NABO input had been ignored and the whole thing watered down to the point where it was no use.

8. Severn Navigation Restoration Trust. Council agreed that it was not NABO policy to join other organisations, but that SNRT would receive a complimentary newsletter and Press releases. NABO would lend its support to SNRT when needed to progress particular issues.

9. Water Supply and Lock Volunteers. Covered with D Fletcher.

10. Accounts and Budgets. The Treasurer presented the Accounts.

11. Membership figures were presented by the Membership Secretary. Membership form and banking procedures were discussed and agreed. As membership form stocks were low a reprint was agreed. **Christine Denton** and **Roger Davis** accepted the task of reviewing the form and making any amendments before their next print run.

12. Reports on Meetings. The Stourport basins continued to be a live issue. **Dennis Smith** had met with the new MP and would write for the Newsletter. A concerted campaign was likely to be needed to prevent destruction of the heritage value of Mart Lane basin.

13. AOB.

a. An advertisement had been received from Video-Active and a proposal for NABO to obtain free publicity with each video. Council did not wish to take up the offer but was prepared to sell advertising space in the newsletter at the agreed rates. Chairman to convey this to Video Active.

b. Council agreed to support a BW bid for Lottery Funding for Wooton Wawen aqueduct, though with reservations about 'interpretation material'.

c. An offer of a free listing by the Parliamentary and EU News Service was accepted. **Nigel Parkinson** would complete the forms.

d. A member had proposed we establish a Code For Good Boaters. Council agreed the idea in principle and **Peter Lea** would write to the member and ask him to produce a first draft for consideration.

e. A request to join in opposition to a canalside development was turned down as the development was not likely to have any adverse impact on NABO members' boating activity.

14. Next meeting at Northfield on 19 July.

Council Record.

Peter Lea

Chairman.