

## NABO Council

Minutes of meeting held at Northfield, Birmingham on Saturday 3rd October, 1998

1. Apologies for absence

Penny Barber, Geoffrey Barnett, Sue Burchett, Christine & John Denton, Peter Foster, Nigel Parkinson, Geoffrey Rogerson, Denis Smith

2. Accuracy of the minutes of 25th July meeting

Delete second "about this" in second paragraph AOB.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 Frankel update: Peter Lea has written to the DETR requesting that Frankel & Ptners be asked to update their report on channel dimensions. No reply received so far.

3.2 Waterways code: fresh draft now printed and circulated to boaters with stoppage info. No opportunity to circulate to cyclists and anglers, so again, only boaters likely to be aware of the code.

3.3 Channel dimensions: "Pinch points" have still to be identified by BW. Peter Lea wrote to Angela Eagle objecting to BW's new channel dimension proposals. Reply came from Alan Meade (new Minister) - DETR are studying the proposals, and the matter could go to public enquiry, probably in conjunction with enquiry re Sheffield and South Yorks.

3.4 Franchising: Peter Lea wrote to Angela Eagle in June, asking to be consulted on plans. NABO does not object to the concept of franchising, as long as the system is not split up into private hands and there is still a system-wide licence.

3.5 Middle level: Sue Burchett wrote to the Middle Level Commissioners. Stephen Peters to provide Sue with copies of past correspondence. NABO wants to know what net financial gain is expected from proposed changes. **Action SP**

3.6 BW National user group meeting: BW were pressed to release info concerning the mooring matrix, as there is concern that some Waterway Managers are charging too much. Now have table of 1997 and 1998 fees.

3.7 Winter stoppage meeting: Denis Smith wrote to John Lancaster with queries about stoppages. BW responded in detail to all points raised by users. They have looked at the objections and made some modifications.

3.8 Other meetings: Peter Lea and friends had a row with Matthew Routledge at GU(S) meeting about installation of gate paddles in replacement top gates, as promised by two previous managers. Three sets are now to be installed this winter. However, one is on top lock at Stoke Bruerne, where the gates are also used as a crossing for the public. Holes for the paddles will be made, but the paddles cannot be installed until problems of safety modifications on a listed structure in a conservation area can be resolved. Thames-style washer boards could be a solution, but a footbridge would be preferred. Funds will be available for the bridge in two years time.

- 3.9 Web site: the annual subscription fee was due about a month ago, and has been paid. New members have been recruited from the site, cost approx £100 pa.
4. Affiliated members proposals
- 4.1 Two objections raised following last Council meeting:
- a. Sue Burchett was against membership from boat clubs, fearing that individuals would not become members in their own right
- b. Penny Barber noted that the market strength of NABO is in its individual members, and that non boat owners can join with the approval of Council.
- However, the principle of putting these resolutions forward was agreed at the last meeting, so only modifications can be considered now. Peter Lea to reply to Sue and Penny's objections, and ask them to bring them to the AGM. **Action PL**
- 4.2 Wording: Peter Foster questioned the use of the words "inland waterways" in the resolutions, and suggested "rivers, canals and other navigations" instead. However, the Constitution refers to "Britain's inland waterways" (using lower case), and it was agreed to keep to this to be consistent.
5. High intensity cruising licences
- 5.1 Current situation: BW claim we have misunderstood, and that the high intensity cruising licence was intended for those away from their moorings for more than 30 weeks in a year. They announced the issue was being postponed for further consultation, following a joint press release by NABO, IWA, RBOA and AWCC.
- 5.2 September 18th meeting: minutes from BW not yet forthcoming. BW are conducting an ongoing licence review, identifying users who are getting benefits from the waterways without paying for them. High intensity licences attacked by the user groups. Then Adrian Stott (Dutch Barge Association) suggested the idea of a roving mooring permit, with benefits such as a free winter mooring, extra time on unrestricted moorings and perhaps preference at restricted sites. BW liked this idea, although it was rejected by them a few years ago when suggested by NABO and the RBOA. It was agreed to consider this: RBOA have subsequently decided not to support the proposal, as can now buy moorings as needed.
- 5.3 Definition of "continuously cruising" needed. BW wants a mutually acceptable definition. It will eventually be decided in law, but guidelines agreed by the user groups would help. Some criteria or examples would be useful - suggest BW be asked to produce some. NABO should follow RBOA lead on this.
6. NINF meeting
- 6.1 Channel dimensions: all Waterway Managers should be asked to specify any areas they know of which cannot be dredged to their original profiles. Regional reps should ask this question. **Action Regional reps**

## 7. Other political issues

- 7.1 David Fletcher: rumour that he will not be re-standing when appointment renewed in August 1999. This may depend on future of Trust proposals. Rumour denied by Paul Wagstaffe. Bernard Henderson retiring early next year, in advance of possible change of Chief Executive.
- 7.2 IWA: Audrey Smith standing down. Richard Drake is a possible successor.
- 7.2 New Minister is Alan Meale. He is a friend of John Prescott. He is considering Trust and franchising options for BW. Both are likely to be dropped in favour of the status quo with a few changes. User groups are seeking a joint meeting with the Minister, and he has also suggested this. Likely to be in the autumn.
- 7.3 Yardley Gobion: BW and land owner in dispute over the building and connection of a new marina. In the course of piling and unpiling the entrance, three boats were put into the marina. Two remain. Apparently BW threatened the boat owners involved, telling them they were performing an "illegal action". This is a cause for concern.
- 7.4 Boat Safety Scheme: BW issued a press release announcing increased charges for surveyor/examiner fees, pads of certificates and new charges for failure certificates, with immediate effect. Nigel has started a complaint about lack of consultation, and a press release has been issued denouncing the huge increases.
- 7.5 Fibreway: All four contractors installing Fibreway cables have gone bankrupt. This leaves a potential problem over towpath reinstatement: the contracts provided for full reinstatement over a period of time. This will presumably now have to be provided by BW. Peter Lea to write article for Newsletter. **Action PL**  
There is a problem in Birmingham as a consequence of Fibreway operation - a tunnelling machine is stuck and blocking the canal. Andrew Sherrey to find out details and write a story for the Newsletter. **Action AS**
- 7.6 Cycling: Info from Paul Wagstaffe indicated that Sustrans want towpath cycling along many lengths of the GU, Worcester & Birmingham, Coventry, T&M, Mon & Brec, Sheffield & S Yorks and River Don. Peter Lea to write to David Fletcher re the funding for this: neither Sustrans or local councils are paying. **Action PL**

## 8. AGM arrangements and nominations

- 8.1 Saturday 14th November in Gloucester, starting at 11am, Discussion afterwards, then tea and rolls provided.
- 8.2 14 nominations, therefore no election. 2 resolutions, as discussed.

## 9. Other meetings and developments

- 9.1 Waterway character project: BW are evaluating the special characteristics of each canal, together with buildings and structures, presumably with resoration and funding from local councils etc in mind. They have started with the GU and L&L. Peter Lea obtained a questionnaire of 20 pages for the GU, but found it complicated and the canal too large to be considered as one. He has sent a letter in reply, suggesting that BW try to restore locks using the right lock furniture, paddles, bollards in the right places, correct brickwork under the lock beams etc. Also mentioning overcrowding, dredging, and cycling.

- 9.2 Linton lock: BW have applied to have the lock transferred to them from the Linton Lock Commissioners. Unlikely to be any objections.
- 9.3 Denis Smith and coverage of meetings: John Denton also co-ordinating meeting attendance. Problem with Roger Herrington's next meeting: Andrew Sherrey will try to go. **Action AS**  
Denis' relations with BW are sadly at an all time low, and he is resigning from Council. He will be available for special projects if required.
- 9.4 Environment Agency: Eileen McKeever is taking over from Craig McGarvey as Head of Recreation and Navigation.
10. Regional reps meetings: item dropped as John Denton not present.
11. Rallies and marketing: item dropped as Christine Denton not present.
12. Finance and accounts
- 12.1 Income: membership has increased, and with it the subscription income. This can be attributed to Roger Davis' hard work. Lots of subscriptions are paid by standing order, together with a quarter of the donations received this year. The generosity and encouragement from these gestures is much appreciated. Most of the merchandise income is from sale of windlasses. Advertising revenue was significantly up on last year, and the raffle was a great success.
- 12.2 Expenses: the March Newsletter was printed in April, and these figures are not included, making the yearly distribution of costs uneven. Rallies and marketing expenses included the making of some signs. Increase in postage and stationery cost reflect the increased activities of the membership secretary. Travelling expenses are increased as Council members are coming from greater distances.
- 12.3 Assets: Roger Davis has a new computer and software. Central holding of merchandise stock is leading to better accounting for same. As the reserves are increasing, need to check out rates of interest in Building Societies. **Action AS**  
Amounts for advance subscriptions are changing as the pattern of membership renewal is changing, i.e. moving from November to the summer.
- 12.4 Stephen Peters proposed that the accounts should be accepted, subject to audit. Seconded by Roger Davis. They will be agreed at the AGM.
13. Membership
- 13.1 Number of members up again, 1770 in total. The Castlefield rally was effective for recruitment, giving new members from the north.
- 13.2 Over a third of members are retired, about 40 are continuous cruisers.
14. Press matters
- 14.1 Deadline for next Newsletter is 12th October.

15. AOB
- 15.1 BW/EA squabble over the waterways of Esat Anglia rumbles on, as reported by "Boating Business".
- 15.2 Sponsorship: NABO sponsored WRG entertainment at Castlefield. Sue Burchett sent program with NABO logo and thanks printed thereon. NABO's sponsorship of Day Star is reported to be plugged by them at performances.
- 15.3 CO/LPG detectors: a new company has been set up by one of the people involved in negotiating preferential terms for members before. New details and price list to be supplied for Newsletter. **Action PL**

Next meetings:

AGM at Gloucester on 14th November, followed by Council meeting to elect officers.

New Council meets on 28th November at Northfield.

*Fleming*