

MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon & Horses, Oldbury on SATURDAY 8th MARCH 2003

Present:	Sue Burchett	(SB), chairman, in the chair		
	Trevor Rodgers	(TR)	Peter Lea	(PL)
	David Harle	(DH)	Geoff Rogerson	(GRo)
	Carole Sampson	(CS)	Paul Herbert	(PH)
	Stephen Peters	(SP)	Peter White	(PW)
	Adrian Stott	(AS)	Aileen Butler	(AB)

Apologies for Absence: received from Gordon Reece, Stuart Sampson, & Peter Foster.

1. MINUTES

- a) Proposed PW, seconded PL, with all present in favour, the minutes of the January 2003 meeting were accepted as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.
- b) Action Reports from the previous minutes.
- 3d - Michelle Harris is not willing to accept an Honorary position within NABO and has written a letter for NABO News.
- A Post Office box would cost £40 per year to set up + £40 to have the mail sent to our Freepost address. If this should change, then the box would have to be set up again. It was thought this was not totally satisfactory, so the matter has been deferred.
- 4b - An auditor needs to be found for 2004. The secretary is to write directly to members who are known to be accountants, explaining that the requirements are for "not a real audit" - a "review" in professional terms. CS
- 5b - As a result of the appeal in NABO news, one person has contacted TR. He would not be available in the summer months, so, proposed SP, seconded by GRo, it was agreed to ask Graham Freeman to represent NABO on the BSI GME/33 committee. TR
- 5e - SP has been called for an interview for the midlands RFERAC committee, Peter Foster has not been short-listed.
- 6c - The press release was sent out - BW have noticed! It was agreed to try to advance the campaign by arranging a meeting with Colin Jones DEFRA prior to meeting Alun Michael. SEE LATER ITEM 6f. TR to arrange this. TR
- 7a - PL has contacted John Redmond (EA). The registration proposal document will be sent out this week.
- 7d - SB has received past paperwork from James Mason, but nothing obviously pertains to the OFT. PL thought an opportunity had been missed. AS felt that we could approach the Office of Fair Trading to clarify whether BW have a monopoly over moorings at any time. Vaughan ^{WELCH} Walsh, chairman Birmingham IWA, is already pursuing this, but it was felt that there would be benefit in NABO doing likewise. SP is to write to the Office. SP
- 7g - PL has received a reply from IWA in answer to his request for an explanation why they have broken rank over the agreed dredging policy. It says nothing at great length. He thought IWA were unlikely to change its standpoint. AS felt NABO should try to embarrass IWA. SB to include comments in her next Chairman's Column. SB
- 8a - No re-print of the Thames Ring booklet will be possible. Stuart Sampson, in his

absence, was asked to contact Alex Jenkins as NABO would like some input into the content of the next booklets.

SS

8b - Penton Hook Rally - three people have contacted AS, + one more to SB, but no applications have been received to date. As time is short, AS proposed that the event be abandoned. It was decided that he should send a mailshot to our members who moor on the Thames, and to go ahead this year as a learning curve for the future.

AS

9a - Regional matters

- 1) EA Anglian have hopefully been dealt with. Mike Smith is prepared to help, he just needs to be asked and told which hat he is wearing.
- 2) A reply had been received in response to NABO's query regarding a reduction in staffing levels at the Standedge Tunnel. Gordon Reece is to monitor the frequency of passages, and if there is a decrease in numbers due to "operational reasons", then we will write and complain.

GRe

- 3) The Cruising Association can meet with NABO at any time during the week beginning 24/3/03. SP will arrange this, SB and AS will attend.

SP

SB

AS

11 - CS explained the difficulties that Stuart is having after the 'upgrade' of our website. As council@nabo.org.uk is unreliable, she explained how each member could set up their own mailing list. It was deemed unacceptable that any Council member should not be on the council@ list, Stuart to make sure that everyone is.

SS

Insurance. This has now been organised. CS reported that Council members are now insured for personal accident when they travel on behalf of NABO.

2. TREASURER'S REPORT.

• DH took possession of the books ten days ago, and found them to be three months in arrears. However, we have a balance of £32,000 in the bank, and the new signatories (the four officers) are now in place.

• NABO needs to purchase a copy of Sage software for the treasurer's use - Andrew Sherrey used his own. This would cost £360, although a reduced package is available at £140. PL stated that the cheaper package would not be suitable, and that we need to continue with the system that we've always used. The purchase at £360 was approved.

DH

• Last year's audited accounts were still awaited, but due shortly.

• DH had looked into the setting up of a high-interest account, but the difference in interest rates is so minimal as to be not worth having. AS informed Council that he uses Tesco banking, finds it satisfactory, and it pays the best interest rate. DH will look into this.

DH

• DH informed Council that the end of the financial year falls at the end of this month, so members should submit any outstanding expense claims. (Stuart Sampson to send out the claim form electronically.) Also, anyone holding any NABO merchandise or equipment should let DH know.

SS

ALL

3. DEFINITION OF THE AUDIT.

"The Council defines the work it expects to be carried out by the auditors appointed under paragraph 9(e) of the Constitution to be: An examination of the books and records of the Association, and verifying that the Associations accounts are in accordance with them and the information and explanations provided, and are free of material misstatement".

This was accepted by all present.

4. MEETING REPORTS.

a) BSS. The three BSS committees - technical, advisory and management - each have a secretariat. The Technical Committee has suggested a re-organisation of the committees, and this is now under discussion. There is a problem over agreement about gas fridges, which may delay re-launch of the scheme in January 2004. PL felt that a degree of leakage is necessary. Proposed PL, seconded SP, that a piece should be written for NABO News. TR to provide the bare bones, SP to write the article. TR SP

b) Awareness on the Waterways, which used to be called Crime on the Cut. (This was deemed too emotive, hence the change of name.) This group has been talking about the problem for years, and is still talking about it. The Waterways Trust are looking for volunteers to man locks in troublespots. n.b. from April 1st, all 'phone calls to BW Watford will be recorded and logged. (This is not an April fool!)

c) NINF. Our chairman chaired the meeting and couldn't remember what had been discussed. TR reported that the representatives attending the meeting felt that NINF should continue to press for the implementation of the items identified in BW's own review of the BSS.

d) RYA Inland Navigation Panel. TR reported that discussions took place about BSS, The True Value of Navigations, after which there were some glossy presentations. TR felt that the RYA is behind NABO with regard to knowledge/expertise regarding inland waterways. CS asked if there is any mileage to be had in working more closely with RYA in this area, to the exclusion of IWA. It was thought possible. The booklet "Inland Cruising" is being revised, and SB has been asked if they can use NABO's logo on the front. TR wondered if it could be seen as an endorsement of RYA's training courses, PH felt an explanation as to what NABO is should be included, and would we be endorsing the contents, but generally thought to be a good idea. SB to request a copy of the review issue. Next meeting: 17/05/03 SB

e) Grand Union South User Group meeting. AS had submitted a comprehensive report in advance. The proposal of limiting mooring at any ONE location of 2 days in any 42-day period was thought not to be unreasonable, although GRo felt that if a town only had one mooring, it could present problems.

f) Parliamentary Waterways Group. SB had asked whether the budget for The Waterways Trust would be increasing in future years, or whether the organisation would become independent. Answer: budget increasing. PL felt that boaters are subject to large increases in licence fees to cover BW's increased costs, the biggest of which is the budget to The Waterways Trust, who use the money for restoration etc.. This is in contravention of one of the 60's Waterway Acts. This to be raised in the meeting with Colin Jones.

5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION.

a) EA, The True Value of Navigations. SP had received input from SS and AS, which he will include in the response. PL agreed with his comments about the River Wye. SP

b) Overstaying on Visitor Moorings / Continuous Cruising. AS put forward a proposal: "that NABO's policy on the management of public moorings be as follows:
1) No boat should use public moorings in a single place for more than 14 days in total out of any 42 days

- 2) Each place should be a defined length of waterway, the boundaries defined through local consultation and clearly marked on the towpath
- 3) Boats should not be penalised for overstaying if movement is restricted by floods, stoppages, etc.
- 4) There should be an effective appeal procedure, applicable to the enforcement of overstay regulations

This was seconded by SP

PL proposed an amendment: that after 'stoppages' in 3, insert 'or other bona fide personal or mechanical cause'. This was accepted by AS.

- AS identified public moorings as being anywhere for which no charge is levied.
- GRo disagreed with the proposal as it does not conform to the BW Act.
- AS + PL stated that this was to be NABO policy only for ALL waterways.
- SB felt that this proposal would make it impossible for some people (including our members) to live on their boats.

PL proposed a further amendment. That 'public moorings' should be changed to 'Visitor Moorings'. This was seconded by PW.

- SP - shouldn't we wait for BW's proposals to come out, and then respond to them, and he wouldn't want it to apply to the River Severn.
- AB felt that if someone wants to moor miles from anywhere with no facilities, they should be able to do so, it should be up to the individual.

The vote on the amendment: in favour 5, against 3, abstentions 2.
The amendment was carried.

The vote on the proposal: in favour 1, against 9.
The proposal was not carried.

PL then proposed: 'that the amended policy be adopted by Council, subject to consultation with members'. This was seconded by AS.

The vote on this proposal: in favour 2, against 4, abstentions 4.
The proposal was not carried.

PL and AS felt that NABO might be seen to be avoiding the issue and we need a policy soon.

d) Railway & Transport Safety Bill. PL explained that this bill has clauses re the consumption of alcohol by boaters. SP thought this was meant to apply to professional boaters, such as the Skipper of the Marchioness for example. CS and SB thought that such regulation would be unenforceable. GRo and SP stated that such by-laws already exist.

e) Grey Water. It seems that EA have had some influence over the agreement between BW and marinas, which includes a clause stating that some arrangement must be made for grey water. SB felt that it is an issue that Council should keep an eye on. It seems that the clause can be removed upon request to BW Watford. CS felt that taken to the logical conclusion, whereby all boats would have to have an extra tank fitted to hold such water, would be impossible to implement.

f) Business Barges. It appears that BW are gleefully allowing more and more of such vessels in order to increase revenue, but they take up valuable waterspace. It was agreed that it is NABO policy to oppose the principle. A proposal needs to be formulated to be voted on at the next meeting. CS to put the item on the agenda. CS

g) Moorings Obstructing Navigation. AS proposed: "that it be NABO policy that no boat be moored where its presence restricts the width of the channel to less than twice the gauge beam of the waterway concerned".

The vote: For. 8, Against 2.

The proposal was carried.

6. COUNCIL PROCEDURES.

PL had distributed electronically a document outlining his suggestions for improving the efficacy of Council meetings. Proposed by PL and seconded by SP that the proposals be adopted.

- AS offered to set up a Council ^{NEWSGROUP} Forum on the website, and will liaise with Stuart about this.
- CS hoped there would be scope for leeway in the implementation of the modus operandi.
- PL said we should try it out and take it back to Council if anything needed changing.

7. A. O. B.

a) It was agreed that the extra copies of NABO News requested by BW were a good 'investment'. CS to contact Melanie Darlington to add to the concessionary list. CS

b) It was unanimously agreed that a case of wine should be sent to Roger Davis as a mark of Council's appreciation of all his hard work to effect the changeover of membership secretary duties and to save NABO money in the future. A budget of £100 was agreed, PL to attend to this. PL

c) Events.

1) We have given a grant to Day Star Theatre in the past, and £150 was agreed this time.

2) Federation of Bridgewater cruising Clubs, 23-26 May: Gordon Reece will be attending this.

3) IWE has been cancelled this year, although there might be an outdoor event.

4) A discussion took place re Crick Boat Show. As the IWE is cancelled, our other shows are in the south, so it was decided to attend Crick in spite of the cost. Mark Burt, Boaters' Mobile 'Phone Company, has offered to share a stand with us - this

to be explored, together with the possibility of having a larger one. AB

5) Sauf Boat Rally. SB will be going to this.

6) We have stands booked at Penton Hook and the IWA National Rally. Staffing for these events to be discussed next time. To be placed on the agenda. CS

It was thought that we should try to get NABO information into boaters' packs at rallies. Regional Secretaries were asked to inform AB of rallies in their area, together with a contact if possible, so that she can pursue this. ALL REG SECS

d) PH felt that we should have a pack of information to give to new Council members when they are appointed. This to be placed on the agenda next time. CS

e) The Wooden Canal Boat Society. PL informed Council that although this society is a registered charity, they are to be moved to a different mooring and charged mooring fees for their boats, in spite of the heritage value in them being given an incentive to preserve

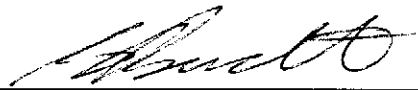
the vessels. The society is in discussion with BW to reduce the fees, as they will be hard-pressed to find the funds. It was agreed that PL will write in support of their cause. PL

f) APCO are in dispute with BW, who want to grab a percentage of their turnover. It was felt that this is the concern of APCO.

g) GRo informed Council that BW had completed a pilot scheme on the K & A to charge boats for staying put on ordinary on-line moorings against the towpath. This is to be implemented on the Grand Union South.

The meeting closed at 4p.m.

Signed

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'G. R. O.', written over a horizontal line.

Date

26-4-03