

**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon &
Horses, Oldbury on SATURDAY 7th JUNE 2003**

Present: Sue Burchett (SB), chairman, in the chair
Trevor Rogers (TR) Stuart Sampson (SS)
Carole Sampson (CS) Stephen Peters (SP)
Adrian Stott (AS) David Harle (DH)
Gordon Reece (GR) Celia Kennedy (CK)
Peter Lea (PL)

Apologies for Absence: received from Peter Foster, Peter White, Paul Herbert, Aileen Butler and Geoff Rogerson.

1. MINUTES

- a) With an amendment to Item 4, paragraph 2, proposed AS, seconded SP and all present in favour, the minutes of the April 2003 meeting were accepted as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.
- b) Action Reports from the previous minutes.
- CS (i) Done
(ii) Ongoing
- SS (i) Done
(ii) Done
- GR (i) Delivered late - SS will check its relevance for the next issue
- AB (i) Done
- SB (i) No contact with Melanie Darlington as yet
(ii) Contact has been made with Colin Jones, but no meeting has been arranged: one meeting has taken place with Robin Evans, second still to be arranged
(iii) Done
(iv) Done
(v) Done
- TR prefers not to be allocated tasks in his absence
(i) After a lengthy conversation with John Stevens, TR did not feel that it would be useful to involve him in further work on the Boaters' Handbook
(ii) Done
- SP (i) Done
(ii) Done
- PL (i) Not done, will do!
- DH (i) Done
(ii) Has investigated, Tesco will not allow us to bank with them as we are an organisation

2. PROPOSALS

- 1) that it be NABO policy that a minimum of 25 metres should be kept clear of moored craft at designated water points, and where there are several, one should be a designated water point.

Proposed PL, seconded SS

The vote: In favour 7, Against 0, Abstention 3 - proposal carried.

- 2) that Melanie Darlington be asked to take over dealing with the mail orders.
Proposed AS, seconded SP
The vote: In favour 6, Against 1, Abstention 3 - proposal carried.
- 3) that NABO attend the London Boat Show 2004.
Proposed PL, seconded SP
After discussion, the vote: In favour 0. Proposal NOT CARRIED.
- 4) that NABO does not attend any shows.
Proposed PL, seconded SP
PL felt that some shows, such as Crick, are extremely rewarding, we need to choose which shows very carefully.
CS felt that a vote in favour of this proposal would in effect be lumbering someone else with the work for it.
The vote: In favour 0. Proposal NOT CARRIED.
- 5) that NABO hold further rallies (subsequent to Boats on Show).
Proposed AS, seconded SB
SS felt that they would be better called 'boat gatherings' rather than rallies, and that perhaps support should be gauged from members first.
AS replied that the aim was not to limit them to members only.
The vote: In favour 7, Against 0, abstentions 3 - proposal carried.
- 6) that NABO rallies be at sites which already have the required facilities.
Proposed AS, seconded SB
AS explained that the idea is to piggy-back at another event, which means that items such as marquee, toilets, and marking out would be done by others, thus reducing the work for NABO.
The vote: In favour 7, Against 0, Abstention 3 - proposal carried.
- 7) that NABO rallies usually be on river navigations.
Proposed AS, seconded CS
An amendment: 'usually' be substituted by 'preferably'.
Proposed PL, seconded AS, all were in favour.
The vote: In favour 1, Against 8, Abstention 1
Proposal NOT CARRIED.
- 8) that NABO hold one rally in the south and one in the north each year.
Proposed AS, no seconder, proposal abandoned.
- 9) that NABO investigate other waterway events in the south with which it could associate its rallies.
Proposed AS, seconded PL, with the removal of the words 'in the south'
The vote: In favour 5, Against 2, Abstentions 3 - proposal carried.
- 10) that NABO undertake its own full publicity of future rallies, and not depend on that issued by the organisers of the associated event.
Proposed AS, seconded SB
The vote: In favour 7, Against 0, Abstentions 3 - proposal carried.

- 11) that NABO consider the location and timing of possibly competing events when deciding where and when to hold rallies in future.

Proposed AS, seconded SB

The vote: In favour 7, Against 0, Abstentions 2, Absent 1.
Proposal carried.

- 12) that NABO try to negotiate a lower mooring charge for future rallies, so that it can charge a lower entrance fee.

Proposed AS, seconded PL

The vote: In favour 8, Against 0, Abstentions 2, Absent 1.
Proposal carried.

There followed a short discussion about the Boats on Show event. TR wondered, if the show had made a loss, whether NABO, as a shareholder, would be liable for any outstanding debt. PL replied that it wouldn't be the case, as Boats on Show Ltd is a public limited company.

- 13) that the Regional Secretary areas be changed to correspond with the new BW areas.

Proposed SB, seconded GR

CS didn't think we could have ten regional secretaries as there wouldn't be enough places on Council. PL thought that there could be one Council member each for the north, south, London, and Scotland - the others need not be Council members. SS thought that 'divide and rule' would operate if one BW general manager deals with two NABO representatives. TR felt that we do not always cope fully with national issues, so we need to decide carefully which way we should go. AS supported PL's idea, and thought it would be possible to involve more members, who may then become interested in standing for Council. CS thought that might lead to a two or three-tier system, which would change the nature of our organisation, and as there is very little change in the area to be covered by each current regional secretary, the involvement of members should be left to them. GR supported this. TR said that any change in our area representation/responsibility should be clearly publicised. SS felt that no decision should be made until full details of the new BW structure is known.

The vote: In favour 0, Against 8, Abstentions 2
Proposal NOT CARRIED.

- 14) that Council meetings be abolished/abandoned.

Proposed CS, seconded DH

CS felt that with this new system of proposals, voting could be done via e-mail, thus saving considerably on time and expenses.

The vote: In favour 0, Against 7, Abstentions 3
Proposal NOT CARRIED.

- 15) that the September Council meeting be cancelled.

Proposed CS, seconded SS

This meeting is an extra one to the seven in previous years, CS wondered if it is necessary. PL responded that there are three reasons for it -

- a) BW might well come up with something requiring an immediate response
- b) We need to plan the AGM

c) We need to review the Constitution.

CS proposed an amendment - that the agenda be limited to just those items. PL thought this would preclude anything that might crop up.

Amendment not adopted.

The vote: In favour 0, Against 4, Abstentions 6.

Proposal NOT CARRIED.

- 16) that NABO writes to the Environment Agency re the river Nene, that money is being spent on inspectors wages and paperwork rather than on maintenance.

This matter raised by a member, proposed PL, seconded SP

SS shared information he had gleaned at last year's National Rally, namely that due to severe underfunding in previous years, the EA has suffered a major skill loss. This means that there are plenty of people to carry clipboards, but none to do the work. AS informed Council that the EA's bid for funds this year has been turned down due to government expenses such as the Iraq war, SP felt that concern should be expressed to David Lawrence, and SS that the EA needs encouragement not criticism. PL felt that the Nene is deteriorating due to lack of maintenance, and proposed an amendment that this should be conveyed to the EA. SP agreed to write in this vein. SP

The vote: In favour 10 (!!!!!!!) Proposal carried.

- 17) that NABO write to the EA objecting to:

a) its arbitrary exclusion, without national consultation, of certain types of boat from the Stour and the Wye.

Proposed AS, seconded TR

The vote: All in favour Proposal carried.

b) its unhelpful attitude concerning the restoring the navigation works on the Wye.

Proposed AS, seconded FL

The vote: All in favour. Proposal carried.

AS is to write to the EA. AS

- 18) that NABO opposes the Transport & Works EA Order 2003

Proposed SS, seconded AS

SS identified two areas of concern. 1) that there is no definition of the consultation process, apart from six like-minded boaters being able to express their concerns to the Department of Trade, and 2) that failing to comply with the registration requirements is a *criminal* offence.

TR agreed with SS, saying that in future this could apply to other waterways without consultation. SS felt that the phrase "as the agency sees fit" occurs too many times in the document. PL felt that the EA is taking too many powers upon itself, and AS, in support of SS, said that a careful response is needed as registration, which should be a simple matter, is being used to raise revenue.

The vote: All in favour. Proposal carried.

TR felt that a detailed response may not be required, as a simple objection would lead to a public enquiry, SP that we should mention that we "would require" certain changes. SP to draft the reply, then circulate it, SB asked anyone with comments to pass them on to SP. ALL SP

- 19) that NABO formulate a plan of campaign for an Independent Regulator.
 Proposed CS, seconded SP
 CS was concerned that the campaign might flag due to lack of ideas, whereas we should be attempting to keep awareness of the campaign to the forefront of the boating world.
 The vote: All in favour. Proposal carried.
 PL felt that we should elicit support from other boating groups re petition etc., then a press statement to the tune of "NABO elicits support from leading groups", "Regulator bandwagon gathers pace". CS wondered whether Bob Clarke or Penny Barber could give us ideas. CS read out the reply from Bill O'Brien - PL thought a meeting should be arranged with him. SB to formulate a plan. SB
- 20) that Eugene Baston (BW Customer Services Manager) should have access to our members website and to our Council minutes.
 Proposed SB, seconded SP
 The vote: In favour 0, Against 10 - proposal NOT CARRIED.
 SS wondered whether the password needs to be changed - not thought to be necessary. CS asked SB if she could find out whether other organisations are also being asked for such liberties. SB

3. REPORTS

- 1) that the Chair report be accepted - proposed SB seconded AS
 The vote: In favour 5, Abstentions 4
- 2) that the Financial report be accepted - proposed DH seconded PL
 DH identified a loss of £250 for sweatshirts and t-shirts, whereas at the selling price, there should be a profit. SB felt that there is often confusion over which 'pot' show takings should be accounted for, so that the money is being wrongly allocated.
 The vote: In favour 9.
- 3) that the Membership report be accepted - proposed SP seconded SS
 The vote: In favour 9.
- 4) that the BSS report be accepted - proposed TR, seconded CS
 TR distributed reports to those who hadn't got it.
 As part of the re-assessment the Technical Committee had asked that test scores should be given to the various categories, then the Committee would consider them. The scheme is supposed to be re-launched at the Boat Show in January 2004. In summary, 17% of items are becoming advisory instead of mandatory, 30% of mandatory items are being re-worded, and 14% are being removed. LPG fridges will be kosher after the re-launch date.
 AS asked if Council will be formulating an opinion on the new BSS at the next meeting. SP felt that items which are contentious or involve expense should be brought to Council's attention. SS asked for an update for our members for the next magazine. TR stated that the Technical Committee would not be constrained by BW deadlines: they intend to get it right this time. SB felt that BW would not extend the timescale, TR felt that BW desperately want users'

support this time, after the previous cock-ups.
The vote: In favour 8, Abstention 1
TR was thanked for his report.

DH felt the voting on these reports to be a waste of time, as we couldn't vote against a report. He, supported by SP, felt that he couldn't attend another meeting in this style.

- 5) that the Secretaries reports be accepted - no proposer or seconder.
a) AS London report. Concern was expressed at the number of business barges being planned in Birmingham and London. AS proposed, seconded by PL, that NABO needs a more positive policy about this matter. CS felt that what was agreed at the last meeting (i.e. that each case should be considered on its own merit) was sufficient.
The vote on the proposal: In favour 3, Against 4, Abstentions 3.
The proposal was NOT CARRIED.

Proposed TR, seconded CK, that it be NABO policy against any further expansion of business barges on the waterway system.
PL was against this, and felt that each case should be considered on its own merits. CS suggested that CK should write to Birmingham planning department to ask for details of the site and size of the planning applications. SB wondered if the problem was too big for us, and that we should work with the IWA on this.

SB, chairman, felt that the newstyle Council procedure was not being given a fair trial, and further that Council members were deliberately trying to sabotage it. DH left the meeting at this point. SB stated that a new chairman would need to be found. PL, GR, TR stated they did not want a new chairman.

A general procedural discussion took place until TR had to leave (lift with DH).

CK, midlands secretary, informed Council that she had been approached by Carlton TV, via SB, to take part in a documentary programme about different lifestyles from a human rights point of view. TR thought that she needed to be very careful, PL thought that it could only be good publicity, but a bad thing if she refused. CK informed Council that SB would be present during the interview, and that she would be doing it as a private individual, not as a NABO member. It was generally thought to be a good idea.

CK had to leave at this point, so the meeting folded around 4p.m. with nine reports listed on the Agenda not considered.

Signed: 

Date: 19. 7. 03