

# MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon & Horses, Oldbury on SATURDAY 24th JANUARY 2004

**Present:** Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair  
Geoff Rogerson (GRo) Stephen Peters (SP)  
Aileen Butler (AB) Celia Kennedy (CK)  
Carole Sampson (CS)

**Apologies for Absence:** received from Gordon Reece.

## 1. MINUTES

- a) No corrections having been received, the minutes were approved as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.
- b) Action Reports from the previous minutes.
  - SS 1) GRo is unable to attend meetings in Gloucester as they are on Wednesday evenings. CS informed Council that, as a result of the appeal in the last NABO News, a member, Nick Atty, has volunteered to go to meetings in Gloucester.
  - 2) Paul Herbert attended the meeting in Southampton on 4/12/03. SS is awaiting feedback.
  - 3) See CS 1)
  - 4) SS informed Council that he has set up an extended Council mailing list, namely: council.plus@nabo.org.uk Use of this address includes all Cour members plus Trevor Rogers, Tony Haynes, Joan Jamieson, David Harle, Adrian Stott. Melanie Darlington will also be included if she wishes to be.
  - 5) Liaising with Adrian Stott. SS has received a format as to how the dossier would be compiled. When he met Adrian, he suggested that the NABO website could be used for anyone to to 'post' comments about a waterway, others could say when something has been fixed, and BW can also see it. Although deemed a good idea, Adrian suggested a newsgroup.
    - SP - this should not be restricted to NABO members. CS and GRo agreed.
    - CS - a press release should be used to increase awareness and gain positive publicity for NABO.
    - SP - waterway standards for each waterway would be needed.
    - CS - not all boaters are internet capable when afloat. They should be encouraged to send notes, identifying the precise location of the problem, to the NABO freepost address.
  - 6) Done.
  - 7) Done.
  - 8) Done.
  - 9) Ongoing - see under finance.
  - 10) AB's request for the size of signage to be discussed at the National User group meeting was not raised. SS felt that the topic was unsuited to that meeting, but might be more appropriate at the next Corridor Issues meeting. In any case, this subject could become part of the Waterway Dossier.
  - 11) At SS's request, GRo has contacted Bath Council, which won't give out any information about housing people on boats: he was told it is a matter for Social

Services. Social Services won't give out any information either. BW is not interested. The only way to find out is from a boater. GRo will try to do this. This led on to a discussion about no mooring being allowed on stretches of towpath for environmental reasons - voles, plants etc. GRo feels that this is a dangerous concept as it could set a precedent which could lead to the 'closure' of umpteen stretches of bank.

12) SS raised the issue of the 'oversight' (no running of engines unless underway, which had suddenly appeared in the licence conditions) at the Parliamentary Waterways Group meeting. A new document is being produced.

- GRo - we need to scrutinise any new document as we have not been consulted. It was felt that licensing, conditions and charging should automatically be put on every agenda as they concern all our members, even if there is nothing to discuss at the meeting.

**CS**

- CS**
- 1) She has written to Trevor Rogers, which SS followed up with a phone call. He is willing to come back onto Council, but would like a short break initially.
  - 2) Joan Jamieson has agreed to be East Midlands regional Secretary, but is concerned not to take on too much.
  - 3) Done.
  - 4) The AGM has been arranged for November 14th at Lapworth village hall. AB's friend, Judith Moore, has agreed to cater for us. CS will contact her. **CS**
  - 5) Melanie D. has informed CS that no refunds are given to overpayers (of membership fees). If the bank requests a refund, then NABO's administration charge is always equal to the amount being requested. Nothing further is ever heard!
  - 6) The Boats on Show voucher has been sent to Paul Wagstaffe and a receipt has been received. SS met him recently, and was told that seven share vouchers have been sent to him (including that from James Mason!), and he expected to return payment over two to three years.
  - 7) Crates have been purchased for the store, together with a trolley for moving stuff around at shows. CS asked for help to sort out the store after today's meeting: SP offered to help.

8) Done.

9) SS informed Council that the second level router in the complaints procedure is now Eugene Baston.

**BW** CS asked GRo to try to obtain a letter from the farmer who had been told by that he was undercharging for his moorings. This is for us to keep on file as it is evidence that BW is trying to influence market forces. He will try to do so. **GRo**

**AB** 1) Done.

2) and 3) (booking rallies) - ongoing.

• CS and SS are prepared to attend the campaign rally at Runcorn at the end of June. It will cost an extra £5 to trade from a boat. All were agreed and the fee was sanctioned. **CS S:**

## 2. REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

SS explained the need for someone to circulate ideas etc., and co-ordinate with the regional secretaries who are not on Council.

CS said that she had tried on several occasions last year to get a discussion group going, for the interchange of ideas and observations, but nobody bothered to respond (except Adrian).

GRo offered to phone up all regional secretaries prior to each Council meeting for a chat, and to find out what is happening in their area.

CS suggested that this should be done after the agenda is available, so that they can comment on the issues to be raised.

Proposed CS, seconded SS, his offer was accepted.

## 3. FINANCE

a) Budgets. CS informed Council of a lengthy conversation she had had with GR the previous evening. He is continuing to suffer from ill-health, and is having trouble keeping on top of things. In order to relieve him of the worry, she suggested that either she or SP hold the cheque book, and David Harle to be asked to do the administering.

SP stated that he had not yet been made a signatory on the account. CS to see to this.

It was agreed that GR and David should be consulted about this, and David also to produce budget figures. SS

b) Financial support for RYA/IWA investigations into diesel tax.

SS explained that these organisations are attempting to reduce the impact of the harmonisation of the tax on diesel fuel required by the EU from 2006.

The meeting felt that this is something that will affect all our members and should be supported.

GRo proposed that SP should be our diesel tax man! SP agreed, and will contact Neil Northmore, who is present chairman of the navigation section of the RYA. SS mentioned what happens in Europe, where diesel is expensive but moorings are cheap.

CS thought that if the same were to happen here, it wouldn't matter, as long as boaters end up paying no more than those in Europe.

GRo felt that we need to find out what sort of expenditure the RYA/IWA expect, and what would be a suitable contribution. SP will find out. SP

After discussion, it was agreed that £1000 is a suitable opening figure.

## 4. MIDLANDS METRO

CK had attended a meeting with Metro's legal advisor. One bridge is being lowered, and it appears there is to be a stop by Merry Hill which will create noise for visitor moorers. It has been suggested that the line be screened by a fence or trees, but this would impede the view.

*This led on to item 5.*

8. A. O. B.

a) SS explained that the idea of inviting Eugene Baston to attend one of our meetings had come from him not from Eugene himself. EB is wheedling his way in at the moment, using newsgroups and the like to discover how representative of members views organisations are. SS feels that it would be good for EB to see how we work and whether we are representative.

SP felt that he should come for just a part of the meeting.

GRo thought he should be invited for lunch, give us a short speech, then answer our questions. He had changed his mind having understood the background to the idea.

SP informed the meeting that we have already similarly invited David Fletcher.

CS felt that the arrangement should be confirmed at the last minute in case we need the whole time to discuss NABO business. He should wait until we have time.

It was agreed that he should be so invited. CS to write the letter, SS to sign it.

SP stated that he still had not received a reply from EB from an e-mail sent in May/June 2003, about charges for using structures. e.g. dock access in London. CS would be delighted to pursue this. CS

b) Support for BW re restoration projects. This request has come from George Greener.

GRo stated that of course we should support restoration projects, but what form should the support take? SS to pursue. SS

c) Recruiting boat hirers as associate members. SS explained that many hirers do so regularly as they do not have the time available to make boat ownership economically worthwhile. But they are extremely interested in the waterways. Should we attempt to interest them in NABO?

CS thought that an approach to hire bases to include specifically written information about NABO in their bumpf would be the way forward. AB to do this. AI

It was thought that members should be consulted via NABO News, as some might object to having hirers as members. SS

CK expressed the concern from some members she had spoken to, that these people are not boat owners. It was explained that associate members do not have to own boats, and they have no voting rights.

d) Environment Agency Transport & Works Order. SS had received a letter from the Dutch Barge Association expressing opposition to this order. Should we support them? SP does not agree with the DBA, which feels that the amount to be charged for registration should be included in the order. He feels that it will make little difference. The consensus of opinion was not to support the DBA.

e) CS has received a request for £5 as the subscription fee for the Worcestershire Waterways Users Forum. Council approved payment of this.

f) CS enquired as to what was happening regarding the volunteer, David Mann, to help with membership secretary work. SS explained that negotiations were continuing, but he was unsure how much money would be saved due to the extra communications needed between him and Melanie D.

g) AB has been asked to accept membership fees from passing boaters who do not have bank accounts. She wondered whether she should do this, and how to get the money to Melanie. She was told that her personal cheque would be acceptable, if she doesn't mind. CS said it should be sent using the freepost address.

h) GRo needs six membership application forms. CS will collect these from the store and send them on. CS

i) GRo raised the issue of winter moorings taking up most of the space at visitor moorings, so that visitors have nowhere to moor. NABO has a policy that no more than 25% should be allocated for winter moorings.

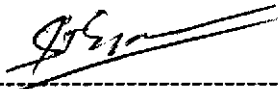
SS felt that this figure was unrealistic where there is a long length of v. moorings.

GRo wanted to know Council's views as he will be attending a meeting with BW about the moorings issue in the near future.

After discussion, it was felt that GRo should use his common sense.

The meeting closed at 2.45pm, the next meeting will take place on Saturday 6th March.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

6/3/04