

MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon & Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2004

Present: Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair (SS)
Aileen Butler (AB)
Stephen Peters (SP) Celia Kennedy (CK)
Carole Sampson (CS) Peter White (PW)

Apologies for Absence: Gordon Reece & Geoffrey Rogerson.

1. MINUTES

- a) Proposed SP, seconded AB, and with all agreed, the minutes were approved as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.
- b) Action Reports from the previous minutes.
 - GR 1) Not known
2) Thought to be done
 - SP 1) Done.
2) Done, no further reply has been received, but there has been no car park levy today.
 - AB 1) Done
2) Not applicable
3) Done and acquired - she showed the new communicator to Council
4) Done with 3.
5) Done
 - CS 1) Done, but no responses, although the information has been found on the BW website
2 - 4) All done
5) Council nomination forms had been sent to Peter Foster, who has returned his completed, and Trevor Rogers.
 - SS Both done.

2. AGM + COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

CS outlined the arrangements for the AGM, and asked for Council approval for an increase in budget from £120 to £150 for the buffet. Assuming that members would be as generous with their contributions this year as they were last, overall cost of the event should be small. All agreed.

CS distributed Council nomination forms to those present.

3. END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS

CS informed Council that David Harle's wife had finally died, leaving him feeling that he could not continue with NABO's book-keeping at this time. The chairman had made an executive decision that the book-keeping be undertaken by Melanie Darlington, and the final accounts be completed by John Darlington. The cost of the services of both of them would still fall within the budget set by Council for the employment of administration services. These decisions were ratified by Council.

CS distributed the *draft* final accounts. The new auditor has been contacted, and hopefully fully audited accounts will be available for the AGM.

John D. had identified possible questions that the auditor might ask. Council discussed the accounts and the points raised. GR should contact Trevor Rogers about an outstanding overpayment. GR

A further reminder about members raising their standing order payment to £15 needs to be placed in NABO News SS

4. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

This was not very informative as it did not show a comparison of total membership numbers from last year to this, or how many members have resigned. CS to ask for a more detailed report to be available for the AGM. CS

5. DEFRA QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW OF BW - NABO RESPONSE

CS distributed copies of this, and informed Council that copies have been sent to Lords Corbett and Livesey, and our president Bill O'Brien. Otherwise, it had not been widely distributed as it was desirable that BW hears of its contents from DEFRA rather than through any back door.

6. REPORTS

a) National Rally

SS reported that he and CS had attended this event and manned the stand. He had attended a Chairman's reception/meeting on the first day. Five new membership applications had been received, but he felt it a good idea to have a stand as many more information packs had been given out and members attending liked to meet the Council members there.

SS proposed that GR's boat entry fee for the 2005 rally be met by NABO. Seconded SP, all agreed. GR to be contacted when he returns from holiday to see if he will also take and man a stand. CS

CS thought that the idea of having information prepared in a smart envelope worked well: SS to design something for the envelope. SS

b) British Waterways AGM

SS and CS had attended this two days ago. SS reported on the structure of the event, CS had taken notes and reported on the issues raised, namely:

- concern from private marina owners about possible unfair competition with BWML
- a commitment that BW marinas were open to be sold if the bid price is right
- complaints procedure
- licence evasion - Robin Evans stated that a survey of every boat on the system had been completed over the last fortnight, and would be done again during the next three months. (CK was aware of this, other Council members were sceptical)
- targets are being set to deal with offside vegetation
- a minimum standard of cutting the entire towpath edge once a year

Concern was expressed from the floor about:

- the loss made by waterscape.com

- BW still seeking to take over the navigational responsibilities currently resting with EA
- George Greener stated that this is a dead issue
- lack of communication of the new complaints procedure strategies to the average boater

SS informed Council that Eugene Baston had told him informally that a representative of NABO is to be invited onto the steering committee for the new National Consultative Council. SP thought that this should be accepted, all agreed.

7. NABO POLICY DOCUMENT

SS had put together the recent fleshing out of the policy statements into a document, distributed by e-mail, and asked for approval of this by Council.

AB had discovered some anomalies, namely:

- lack of consistency between the use of **background** and **supporting detail**
- use of BW and British Waterways
- typing errors
- 'closure season' should be replaced by 'future works programme'

SP thought a glossary of abbreviations at the back would be helpful

SS to amend as necessary

SS

Proposed CS, seconded AB, subject to the above amendments, all agreed that the document be accepted. This to be placed on the AGM agenda for formal adoption. CS

8. EA TRANSPORT & WORKS ORDER

Nothing further has been heard, possibly due to several changes of personnel within EA. The document may well have been scuppered by the IWA.

9. BSS - NABO RESPONSE

SS and SP had read the document, and thought it a great improvement. SP to write accepting it in general terms.

SP

10. LICENCING, CONDITIONS & CHARGING

Default item on the agenda.

Nothing to debate at this time.

11. A. O. B.

a) CS informed Council that Sue Burchett has not renewed her NABO membership. Various reasons have been cited, such as an expanding interest in campervanning, RBOA, expense etc. Generally, it is thought that there is more to this than that. SP proposed that the general secretary write to her expressing sadness, gratitude, and a hope that she might want to rejoin. CS to do this. CS

- b) CS informed Council that so far, twelve boats are interested in cruising between Sharpness and Bristol - PW expressed his interest, so thirteen.
- c) CK asked about the state of rubbish disposal facilities. CS thought that all was tidy when the bins had been emptied, but that not enough bins, or more frequent emptying is required.
- d) SP commented upon RYA's meagre coverage of inland waterway matters in its magazine. He will be commenting directly on this.
- e) CK informed Council that recently, surveys of cyclists, anglers, and walkers have taken place, as well as one of boating users specifically excluding private boaters. No-one knew of this.

This concluded the formal business part of the meeting.

From 1.15pm, Council was joined by Eugene Baston, Customer Relations Manager BW Watford, for a question and answer session. Subjects covered were:

- leaving lock gates open - current debate initiated by Adrian Stott
- vandalism on the cut
- licence evasion
- Montgomery Canal limited use
- placement of visitor moorings
- distribution of the stoppage programme document
- questionnaires for boaters
- accidents - boaters not reporting them, so figures inaccurate
- notice taken by BW of problems found by its own staff when such problems reported by user groups seem to be ignored
- size and shape of licences

Eugene stressed that he personally feels it important that user groups should get together and present a united front, this being the most effective way to facilitate change.

The meeting closed at 3.35pm. The next Council meeting will take place during the AGM on Saturday 13th November at Lapworth Village Hall.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

27/11/04