

**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon &
Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 5th MARCH 2005**

Present: Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair (SS)
 Aileen Butler (AB) Stephen Peters (SP)
 Tony Haynes (TH) Gordon Reece (GR)
 Peter Foster (PF) Carole Sampson (CS)

Apologies for Absence: Celia Kennedy.

1. MINUTES

With one small amendment, proposed SP, seconded TH, and with all who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 22/01/05 meeting were approved as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.

Action Reports from the previous minutes.

CS i) New headed notepaper was produced, as full A4, shortened A4, and compliments slips: also some envelopes.

ii) Done.

iii) A badge kit had been purchased, and new badges were distributed. CS explained that she had already sent some to members who attend meetings, although there may be others that would like one.

SS i) Envelopes had been printed by Nigel, and SP had collected them from Melanie via Ruth.

ii) Has contacted Eugene, awaiting a reply.

iii) Done.

iv) TH had received his business cards.

v) No-one had volunteered to join a University Challenge quiz team.

TH Had circulated his mowing response, and incorporated the suggestions he received.

SP i) Had endeavoured to do so, but got stuck in the lift at the store - would return with back-up during the lunch break.

ii) Had discovered that NABO has never been affiliated to 'The Thames Ahead', and had sent the necessary application form to CS.

GR i) Not having been at the last meeting, GR had not understood what was needed here: will investigate.

ii) The new banking arrangements are in hand

GRo Not known.

2. EA TRANSPORT & WORKS ORDER

SP had received two responses from the EA, the first noting NABO's conditional withdrawal of objections, and the second informing him that two other organisations had

responded likewise, but there are nineteen organisations which have not, as yet, responded. Therefore, the deadline has been extended to the very apt 1st April 2005.

SS explained what has happened since our last meeting. A second Memorandum of Understanding had been sent out, which, after close scrutiny, revealed fifteen un-notified changes. He had made strong objections to Craig Woolhouse (EA), which had led to direct contact by phone. Basically, the EA is not prepared to spend any more time on the M of U: i.e. like it or lump it. SS has now sent a letter of complaint to Baroness Young.

TH feels that the EA is paying lip service to the consultation.

SS agreed, saying that the EA thought the Order could be slipped through without anyone noticing.

SS asked if anyone on Council would like to represent NABO on the EA Harmony Forum.

SP would like SS to continue

Proposed GR, seconded SP, and with all in favour, SS will do so.

3. MEETING REPORTS

i) PWG. AB had attended with SS and found it most interesting. The next meeting is about East Anglia development: PF is interested to go. SS to send him details. CS explained that PF should make arrangements for SS to book his train ticket on line (cheaper). SS PF

ii) NINF. SS had attended the recent meeting. Items of interest were:

a) Shropshire Union Canal Society moorings on the Llangollen Canal, and the limit of 48 hours placed on them.

CS reminded Council of the Statements of Intent, whereby BW promises, wherever it is practicable and where there is a need, that moorings of mixed duration will be provided. She and SS will investigate when they cruise the area in May.

SS thought that something should be said in NABO News.

CS was concerned that our viewpoint would alert BW.

SP thought the article could be vague, not mentioning the Shroppie.

SS felt that it wouldn't matter if BW is alerted, as it would save flannel at user group meetings.

GR agreed to write an article. GR

b) VAT on new vessels.

There has been a change in the way tonnage is calculated, as to whether a vessel qualifies for no VAT. SS informed Council that Adrian Stott is on top of this, and we should leave it to him.

SP asked if NINF is being wound up.

CS said she had received a request for this year's subscription.

SS said 'no' but that there had been discussion about venue and timings of meetings - Sunday morning at Stoke Bruerne is not easy to get to by public transport. The next meeting will take place in June at the St. Pancras Cruising Club on the Tuesday of the next PWG meeting.

4. BW CORRIDOR ISSUES MEETING

BW has said that generally, in order to reduce numbers, only one representative from each organisation will be invited. But an exception has been made for TH as he is dealing with the CutCrime issue. SS asked Council if there are any issues needing raising.

CS signage (over), and towpath surfacing.

SP Sustrans and cycling

SS said that other organisations will be raising some of these issues: he will give his support.

5. Default item - LICENSING, MOORINGS, CONDITIONS and CHARGING

- i) PF feels that the current system of charging 60% of the normal licence for very limited use of a river navigation is unfair. These navigations are not connected, so boaters cannot use other rivers. On the River Trent, the lock keepers have been removed during the winter period, and seasonal staff employed between Easter and October. As a result self-operation of locks has deterred many people from cruising at all, as they feel it is hazardous, which means that users are getting even less value for the licence fee. Apparently, assisted passages are available, but the system does not work, and anyone is prevented from a spur-of-the-moment trip when the sun shines.

SP thought that if we challenge the percentage discount, it will open up a can of worms for other users.

CS said that Joan J. had already sent a letter to Derek Cochrane prior to the removal of the lock keepers. To the best of her knowledge, no reply has ever been received.

After discussion, it was agreed that a letter be sent to BW outlining the arguments of less value for the licence fee, and Health and Safety issues. SS

- ii) SS informed Council that GRo has been asking for specific numbers of new boat licence applications in 2004, and how many of them are ostensibly Continuous Cruising due to lack of available moorings. BW is claiming that the computer system cannot give this information. The matter is being pursued.
- iii) It seems that patrol officers are not enforcing licence evasion on the Staffs & Worcs even-handedly. They are avoiding difficult customers, but using a heavy handed approach to softer targets. SS will discuss this with Celia K. SS

6. BRITISH WATERWAYS ADVISORY FORUM

The first meeting, under the chairmanship of Professor Jeffery Jowell, will take place at the University of London at the beginning of May. SS had made some comments about the proposed Constitution. The IWA is still objecting to the whole set-up.

7. EVENTS AND MARKETING

AB is to contact Ken Bennell (transport) about the Crick and Saul rallies, John Russell re Crick and Alastair Morton re Saul. An appeal for help should be put into the next magazine. AB SS

CS has asked Melanie D. to order some Dunton Doubles and put them in the store when she goes. She wondered what else NABO should sell. She felt that the sweatshirts and polo shirts do not sell well, but it is good to have something to sell at rallies. She wondered about flue caps with rings on the top.

Everyone was asked to give the matter some thought before the next meeting. ALL

This led to a discussion about the picnic set (seats which fold into a table) which is cracked and looks naff. It was agreed that a folding table and two chairs should be purchased as replacements. Proposed GR, seconded CS, and with all in agreement that a budget should be set for this of £120. Everyone was asked to look into this and give suggestions to AB by the end of March. ALL

8. FINANCE

GR had been unable to obtain signatory forms for the new account in time for this meeting. He will be doing so when he returns from holiday.

SP asked which bank was favoured.

GR said Barclays.

SP thought that Barclays may do all the work in transferring the account.

SS thought that we should think about PayPal, an internet scheme which allows people to pay for goods and services on-line, so that members can pay subscriptions that way.

CS suggested that GR should ask about Direct Debit instead of standing orders.

9. A. O. B.

- a) The issue of falling membership was discussed. GR felt that the problem is largely due to not being able to contact members, returned mail etc.. AB said that members are giving their subscriptions to her as they have no bank account or land address.

CS thought that we do not sell ourselves, we need a higher profile.

TH agreed.

It was thought that we need to have something to offer members, something really worth joining for.

Proposed SP, seconded CS, and with all in favour, anyone joining at a rally receives twelve-months membership for £10.

- ii) TH will contact River and Canal Rescue, so see if a reciprocal deal can be arranged: a reduction in fees for NABO membership, with free advertising. CS suggested that they give NABO information packs to all boaters at their annual engine inspection. TH

- iii) The idea of life membership was discussed, at, say, £100.

SS felt that this was a matter for the AGM.

- iv) More regular press releases, in which NABO claims all the glory and credit for whatever. TH will liaise with SS and do these. TH

- b) AB wondered if, regarding the increase in duty on red diesel, Council could prepare a letter which members can use to petition their MP's.

CS wondered if the timing is right.

SS thought that something could be said in NABO News suggesting that members question the canvassing MP's as to what they will do about it. S:

SP reminded Council that members can now fax their MP.

- c) TH presented the CanalWatch leaflet produced for the Basingstoke Canal.

- d) TH asked that Councillors send him details of all the waterways - open or disused - that

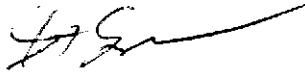
they cross on their way home. He has an idea for an NN article.

- e) PF wanted Council to know of his doings since he was last on Council. He has attended meetings of the Trent Fluvial Strategy, Trent Freight Strategy, and OnTrent. He feels that we should make contact with Associated British Ports, who control the Trent below Gainsborough. CS offered to try to find a contact name and phone number. CS

The meeting ended at 2.45pm.

Date of next meeting: 23rd April 2005

Signed: _____



Date: _____

23/4/05