

MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon & Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 17th SEPTEMBER 2005

Present: Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair (SS)
Geoffrey Rogerson (GRo) Stephen Peters (SP)
Aileen Butler (AB) Tony Haynes (TH)
Carole Sampson (CS)
Andy Colyer, a member, also attended

Apologies for Absence: Peter Foster and Gordon Reece.

1. MINUTES

a) With all who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 16/07/05 meeting were approved as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.

b) Actions from the previous minutes.

CS i) Our complaint regarding the policy of only providing 48-hour visitor moorings has now reached Ombudsman level. CS explained that the second level reply had been sent to the wrong person. The Ombudsman has accepted the case, will be making enquiries of BW, and responding in due course.
ii) Notices will be made when she returns home.
iii) Windlasses and flue caps have been ordered and should have been delivered prior to the National Rally, but hadn't been. CS explained that a new style have been ordered, which will need a brass handle to be purchased elsewhere.
iv) and v) Done.
vi) Done, but apparently, nothing had previously been sent to RCR.
vii) Done.

SS i) By the time this coming issue of NABO News has fallen through letter boxes, it will be too late for Incident Report Forms to be of any real use. A further supply will be obtained next year, hopefully without the water-based glue, and distributed before most members start cruising.
ii) The membership application form has been amended. SP suggested a further change, that 'recommended by' should be replaced by 'introduced by'. SS
iii) iv) and v) Done

GR Not done - not present.

GRo The meeting with Shakespeare's solicitors had taken place.

2. REPORTS

a) The National Rally.

AB reported that Gordon Reece had been responsible for the stand. Everything had gone well with plenty of help. Ken Bennell (member) had transported the stand. CS asked if he had claimed his travelling expenses, AB had overheard GR pressing him to do so., and would check up on this. AB

It was thought an extra remuneration at Christmas time would be appropriate.

CS

b) BW AGM.

SS reported that there had been a useful networking session during lunch beforehand., when he had met Tony Hales - new BW Chairman - and Hilary Bainbridge, the new Ombudsman. There had been a presentation from the Minister, who had been shot in Stourport Basin, and the usual self-praising spiel at the meeting itself. SS had questioned whether, under the auspices of Openness and Accountability, the question and answer session was being recorded, and whether it would be published on BW's website.

c) BWAf.

SS had received four days notice inviting him to the agenda meeting which should have been held in July. Various excuses had been given for this, and SS is concerned that that BWAf's chairman and vice chairman are both too busy to organise the meetings properly. There had been a full BW turn-out: Tony Hales (chairman), Terry Tricker (board member), Robin Evans (chief executive), Simon Salem (external relations director) and Eugene Baston (external relations manager) on minute duty. The first full meeting of BWAf will take place on 11th October, with the main agenda consisting of: Restoration Priorities, which will feature the Rochdale Canal, Congestion, and the Consultation process.

d) EA Harmony Forum.

The whole meeting had been rather vague due to the non-passing of the Transport & Works Act / Order. DEFRA are still deliberating it, and the process has been deferred yet again to 31st December. EA asked user groups to write to DEFRA to try to chivy it up.

There had been a discussion regarding the shortfall in funding for carrying out major maintenance projects. SS had asked whether the EA had asked users if they are prepared to pay an 8.5% increase.

3. Default item - LICENSING, MOORINGS, CONDITIONS & CHARGING

CS distributed copies of GRo's draft response to BW's licence consultation.

TH thought that the paragraph:

"Even if we were prepared to accept the new criteria of 'usage', it could in no way justify such an extreme increase. It may be that an increase of even 5%, 10%, or even 20% could be justified, but certainly no more" should be removed.

CS felt that we should not compromise at this stage, as it is in our members' interests to pay the lowest licence fees possible.

This led to a discussion about shared-ownership boats, where NABO has at least one member. It was decided to re-word a sentence headed "Validity", to include, with vessels without a mooring, shared vessels that are not commercially owned.

GRo spoke about the meeting with Shakespeare's solicitors. The consultation document was thought to be too vague at this point. The final report and its final proposals, could be analysed more carefully. Currently, the best defence was from a Human Rights aspect, which would need to be taken up by an individual boater. Andy Colyer thought he knew of an appropriate person.

Andy had met an MP at his local surgery yesterday. He had shown him the consultation document, has enlisted his support, and he will be writing opposing the plan. This MP has been supportive on other occasions.

GRo wondered whether the terms 'pleasure' and 'business' (as applied to licences in the 1995 Act of Parliament) can be changed.

GRo proposed that the draft response, with the incorporated amendments, be submitted to British Waterways. Seconded by SP. All were in favour. SS

4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

CS distributed nomination forms.

- In line with the members suggestion last year, the start time will be brought forward to 10.30 to allow for general discussion before lunch. The guests will be invited from 12.30
- CS informed Council of her communications with Bill O'Brien, our president. She will be writing to him and Robin Evans enclosing a map and final details, and also to our hosts at Stafford Boat Club to invite its committee and members to join us for the afternoon discussion session with Robin Evans. CS
- GRo will meet and greet Robin Evans GRo
- SP will meet and greet Bill O'Brien SP

The new clause relating to life membership was discussed and will appear on the published agenda in NABO News.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

GR was not present at this meeting, and had not sent a report in advance. SS agreed to contact Jon Darlington to see if we could have a statement in the near future, which he would circulate to Council prior to the AGM. S

6. MEMBER RECRUITMENT OFFER - brought forward from the last meeting.

Still thought to be a good idea, it was agreed that membership forms and leaflets proclaiming the RCR offer should be available at the AGM, so that, if attendees approved the idea, it could be implemented immediately. For each new member recruited, the current member would receive a £5 reduction in his/her fees, or a refund if paying by Standing Order. Up to a maximum of £15.

7. NABO POLICY ON RESIDENTIAL SECURITY OF TENURE

Simon Robbins, a member who himself lives on a residential mooring on the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union, had attended a meeting at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, representing NABO.

SS wondered if we could officially adopt a view on this matter. It seems there are two schools of thought:

a) If subject to legislation and restriction, perhaps landlords would be less inclined to offer residential moorings

b) It is in the interests of boaters to have more security of tenure.

After discussion, it was agreed to support the stand for greater security of tenure and to see how proposals develop.

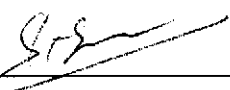
8. A. O. B.

- a) SP raised various matters which had been submitted by Peter Foster.
- i) An incident in which a member had become involved in a brawl with a BW employee. He had attended a meeting at the appropriate BW office with the member.
- ii) Speeding boats causing damage to other vessels, and a hit-and-run incident. AB commented that boating IS a contact sport. SP to write about these matters for SS to include in NABO News. SP SS
- iii) The new per mile travelling expense does not cover PF's costs.
- b) SP reported on the progress of his questioning of the payment of VAT on river registration fees. He had recently attended a hearing of the VAT Tribunal. The tribunal has had to correspond with BW, which has delayed the issuing of a statement. There is to be a further two-month extension. He agreed to write a short article about this for NABO News. SP SS
- c) TH had attended a Cutcrime meeting at Watford. It was a mid-season review, with no definite conclusions as yet. 204 incidents had been reported in three months (BW waters only). 21% concerned vandalism, 11% physical attack. These represented a 0.5% chance of an incident per boat. SS added that the data had come from report form returns and information gleaned from the Waterway Reports Board.
- d) TH had received 27 responses to the signage 'quiz'. The average score is 19.35 out of 30. SS to write something about it for inclusion in NABO News.
- e) Andy Colyer informed Council about a case where BW is prosecuting people for trespass on a closed-down boatyard site. (Oxford/Jericho area.) BW is thought to own the land. A campaign has been launched to show that a boatyard could be a viable business.
- f) AB reported that members had said they could not remove old (NABO) stickers from their boats. She feels that this does not matter as the more stickers seen on the system, the more publicity we have!
- g) Rallies. AB suggested the National at Beale Park, Crick, and the London Cavalcade, and that perhaps we should look for another rally in the north. SP suggested looking at an events list and choosing one. SS and CS will be passing through Rickmansworth in the near future, and will collect a National stand entry form from there. CS commented that we need to send in the entry early in order to get a good spot and to claim the maximum discounts. CS
- h) SS informed Council of two forthcoming meetings: a Boating Issues meeting at Hatton on 27th October, and a Corridor Issues meeting, also at Hatton, on 6th October. He asked if anyone else would like to go. The vedge pledge is likely to be discussed at the latter. AB commented that she had seen edges nicely cut, with the cuttings in the water, but much too shallow for a boat to get to the

- edge.
- i) SP reported that Louis Jankel, NABO's representative on the Thames RFERAC committee, had written to the EA following its announced intention to levy a hefty price increase for Thames registrations. He corrected its misapprehension that BW customers were happy with a similar increase in licence fees.

The meeting ended at 2.45pm.

Date of next meeting: AGM on 19th November 2005, council meeting ON THE SAME DATE.

Signed:  _____

Date: 26th Nov 05