

MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon & Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 28th JANUARY 2006

Present:

Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair (SS)	
Aileen Butler (AB)	Gordon Reece (GR)
Stephen Peters (SP)	Geoff Rogerson (GRo)
Tony Haynes (TH)	Simon Robbins (SR)
Andy Colyer (AC)	Merleen Watson (MW)
Carole Sampson (CS)	

Apologies for Absence: Peter Foster.

Prior to starting the agenda:

1) SS informed Council that Simon Salem, BW's Marketing and Communications Manager, had requested a meeting between himself and NABO to try to restore better relationships between the two bodies. GRo and TH expressed an interest in attending with SS: date and venue to be arranged as soon as possible.

2) SS commented upon the use of the Council website for the posting of meeting-related documents, and asked Councillors if they had found the system useful.

- MW said she had, but under her current phone arrangement, could not download the bigger files due to time limitations.

- CS said she had found the system excellent and quick, and especially valued being able to access the documents at a time of her own choosing, and not having her in-box filled up with them sent as e-mails.

- SP had found it easy.

SS asked if it would be helpful if the file sizes were added to the titles.

This was thought to be a good idea.

1. MINUTES

a) With all who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 26/11/05 meeting were approved as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.

b) Action reports.

SS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Re-amend membership application form 2) Write red diesel article for NN 3) Write about credit/debit card for NN 4) Contact BW + other user groups 	All done
CS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Organise cases of wine for auditor + Ken Bennell 2) Organise 2006 AGM at Stourbridge 3) Invite Hilary Bainbridge to 2006 AGM 4) Add licence consultation to next agenda 5) Questionnaire in NN re boaters being 'delighted' 	<p>Done</p> <p>See later agenda</p> <p>See later agenda</p> <p>Done</p> <p>Not done - pending</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>CS</u></p>
AB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Book Crick rally - liaise with John Russell 2) Bring lap-top to next meeting 	<p>Not done <u>AB</u></p> <p>Not done</p>

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------------------|
| GR | 1) Bring lap-top to next meeting | Done |
| ALL | 1) Ideas wanted for a new president
2) Look at Concessionary NN list | See later agenda
Some did this |
| c) | Matters arising from the last minutes | |
| | i) 48-hour moorings complaint. CS informed Council that the Ombudsman had sent her draft report, which is confidential at this time. BW had stated that it would amend the mooring durations on the Shropshire Union Canal, and that seems to be the end of the matter. Regarding how the complaint had been handled, two counts of maladministration were noted. The final submissions had been made, and the final report is awaited. CS asked GR to monitor the situation, and request a list of mooring with proposed new durations from BW. | |

GR

CS explained what recommendations she had suggested, which included pressure being put on BW to provide 'minutes' for its meetings as opposed of 'meeting notes'. SS asked all regional secretaries to put this on the agendas at the next round of meetings.

REGIONAL SECRETARIES

SR commented that he sends in written questions which have to be responded to before the meetings: he finds this helps to get answers.

ii) Red diesel. SS explained that there is nothing more to be done at present, following the government statement at the beginning of December. It will be requesting a further period of derogation from the EU.

- GR asked why the change of heart?

- SS explained about the pressure MP's had received from BMF, RYA, and users.

iii) 2006 AGM. CS reported to Council that the venue (Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge) had been booked, Hilary Bainbridge (Ombudsman) had agreed to attend, and enquiries had been made re catering. CS proposed that buffet food be ordered from Waitrose (only supermarket doing such food in the town), and asked for a budget, increased from last year, of £350, to cover the cost of the venue and food.

Proposed CS, seconded GR, and with all in favour, this was agreed.

This to be offset by asking members for contributions as usual. CS asked Councillors for help with this, as we will need to set out the furniture, make coffee, collect/arrange food, heat up various items, and clear away afterwards.

2. LICENCE CONSULTATION

SS had been in touch with Sally Ash, who had said she wasn't prepared to rake over the business of the Ombudsman's ruling again.

CS had noted that the 'white paper' document stated that only new arguments would be considered, and wondered whether she (SA) was being devious in detracting attention from the shared-ownership issue by making the 'green paper' document appear to be concentrating on continuous cruisers when in fact it was an attempt to circumvent the Ombudsman's ruling. Now, in not looking at the Ombudsman's ruling again, she would seem to be getting away with so doing.

GRo thought the response should be looking to the future.

CS felt that the response should concentrate on three areas:

- the Ombudsman ruling, with the extracts from his report that had been received from a member.

- the proposed change of nomenclature
- mis-use of Cabinet Office Guidelines.

She informed Council of the formal complaint made over the latter.

SS felt the response to the whole consultation should contain both old and new arguments.

After discussion, it was agreed that the inclusion of a section looking to a future review constitutes new proposals, which should be subject to their own, separate, consultation.

SP felt that the response should include "we await a green paper on the wider review".

Council then looked at GRo's prepared response.

MW thought that BW is relying on information which is not in the public domain.

TH felt that the Ombudsman's ruling is relevant, as Sally Ash would not be trying so hard to avoid it if the ruling was in BW's favour.

SS thought that her attitude and the proposals are such that he can challenge BW's commitment to the Ombudsman scheme when he meets Simon Salem.

GRo is to finalise the response and circulate it ASAP.

GRo

3. Default item: LICENSING, MOORINGS, CONDITIONS and CHARGING

a) Mooring fees increases

SS is challenging central Shires over the setting of its end-of-garden mooring fees. It seems that instead of starting from the lowest fee that the area charges for a site with no provided facilities, that area is starting from an average fee for all moorings, which is not what was originally agreed. He asked regional secretaries to find out what is happening in other areas,

REGIONAL SECRETARIES

He also felt that, since the reorganisation, much larger areas were being taken into consideration, rather than just the waterway in question.

CS wondered if members should be warned about putting their names down on too many waiting lists, as this seems to be the main criterion for setting mooring fees.

SR felt that waiting lists should not be used as a relevance.

GRo said that since the moorings matrix had been scrapped, and now BW consults with Oxera, there are no grounds, other than unfairness, on which we can complain.

CS commented that the table shown for the phasing in of large increases could cause confusion, as one increase could be being phased in over five years when another, possibly in twelve-months time, was just being introduced.

b) Licence structure survey.

SS asked if Councillors had looked at the survey, and if they were happy with what is being asked. All were. He mentioned that Sally Ash had described it as 'very comprehensive'.

4. INLAND WATERWAYS SAFETY EXECUTIVE

TH talked about the number of bodies that have regulatory influence over boats, namely, BSS, insurance companies, navigation authorities, Health & Safety Executive, and the MCA (Marine & Coastguard Agency). Already the MCA is looking at hire boats, and he feels that private boats will be next, and there is talk of some sort of 'driving licence' for boat steerers. He feels that now is the time for waterway groups to set up their own self-regulatory body, to present a united voice, which could eventually come under the MCA.

SP felt that the RYA would muscle in and take it over.

CS thought that we shouldn't worry about the RYA, as there is already a lot of discontent on the inland waterways about its involvement,
TH proposed that he approach other organisations with this suggestion, also including AINA and APCO.

SR thought that insurers should be included as well.

All were agreed. TH to go ahead.

TH

5. FINANCE

a) Insurance for non-council workers

Having read the proposal beforehand, everyone agreed that this should be continued. i.e. personal injury insurance whilst travelling on NABO business. CS to contact Zurich Municipal for an updated invoice.

CS

b) Internal communications i.t.allowance

SS explained his idea. Rather than NABO buy expensive equipment which turned out to be unsuitable in some instances, each Councillor would receive an allowance according to their role which could be used as he/she sees fit - to attend a course, buy equipment, etc. SP would like to see a list of what each Councillor does/needs to fulfill his/her role. AC felt that people bring their time and expertise, and shouldn't have to buy equipment as well.

GRo explained his use of his 5-year-old NABO laptop.

SR stated that in order to participate fully, each Councillor needs internet access.

CS - does that mean that every Council member must be internet aware?

Answer - yes.

Everyone was asked to make a list of what they have and what they need and send this to SR. He will ask his contacts for information and possible solutions.

SR

c) Treasurer.

SP reported that NABO has one life member and another changing to life membership in the summer. He thought we need to adopt a policy re life members and accounts.

SS - ask Jon Darlington, who should know if there is an accountancy standard.

6. RCR OFFER

TH wondered if we want to continue with the RCR offer, which had been for one-year. Everyone thought it had been successful. CS thought we need some leaflets which those who cruise extensively during the summer can hand out to RCR members about the savings that can be made by joining NABO. TH to contact RCR.

TH

SS

7. VICE-PRESIDENTS

SS explained that we have minimal contact with Bill O'Brien, our president. Bob Laxton, current chairman of the Parliamentary Waterways Group is the obvious successor.

CS asked who had heard of him?!

SS wondered if he should be asked to be vice-president, to be elevated whenever Boll O'B resigns. And we can have as many vice-presidents as we wish.

CS asked if there are any other candidates.

SS - possibly David Suchet, Richard Branson, Timothy West, Prunella Scales. Also Sheena Knollys. soon-to-retire IWAAC president.

CS felt she should write to Bill O'B to see if he wishes to continue, and possibly sound

him out about a successor.

CS

8. NARROWBOATS ON THE THAMES

Eileen McKeever, manager of Thames Region waterways, has received complaints about narrowboats taking up too much mooring space and spending too long on water points. An awareness campaign is underway.

AB stated that narrowboats are not now allowed on the tidal Thames without a second boat.

SP said it was to do with not having marine band radio.

SR said this only applies to boats over 22m long.

9. RESIDENTIAL MOORINGS

The current consultation on residential boating issues requires responses to be sent to the ODPM by 21st February. SR does not feel that he can represent NABO on this matter as he is too closely involved. He gave copies of the appropriate document to Councillors, and asked for it to be sent to all NABO members, as it is important that non-residential boat owners respond as well.

GRo felt that we need to formulate and agree a policy.

SR feels that landlord/tenant protection may lead to all boats being protected against huge hikes in mooring fees.

www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp

10. A. O. B.

a) SS - Louis Jankel (Thames) is suggesting we formulate a boating costs index similar to the retail price index, in order to have some concrete figures to brandish. MW agreed to prepare a questionnaire, asking for help with ideas. ALL MW

b) The year planners have arrived with Melanie D. and will be sent out with the next NABO News. A bigger envelope has been supplied with them, so we will also include a membership form and a BW Incident Report Form. TH to contact BW. TH

c) SP mentioned vacancies on rferac committees.

d) SP informed Council of the National Environment & Rural Communities Bill is proceeding through parliament, in which the English Nature and the Countryside Agency will be reconstituted as Natural England. IWAAC will be reconstituted as IWAC. It will be funded by DEFRA and report to DEFRA on all matters pertaining to inland waterways. The IWA is concerned as environmental requirements will be put ahead of recreation and amenity. SS asked SP to formulate a response. SP

e) TH reported that at the BSS open meeting at the Boat Show, there had been a presentation by the Fire Service from Warwickshire, which had been excellent. Free smoke alarms etc. were available to those vulnerable on boats. NABO is being asked for its support for a national extension of the scheme. This would require a letter stating our support. All agreed. The officers involved would be prepared to give a talk to NABO members, lasting about twenty minutes. CS proposed during the AGM while we are electing the new officers. No decision taken.

f) CS asked if we should be giving advice to members re the filling in of BW questionnaires. After discussion, it was agreed that TH will mention this in his Counterpoint article.

g) SR spoke about Crossrail. There are two main issues: Poplar Dock, which will be

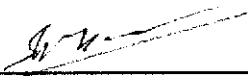
closed during the redevelopment, and spoil from a tunnel construction near Paddington Basin.

- h) SR - the mayor has commissioned a study of London's waterways, thought to be connected to the Olympic Games 2012.
- i) AB - someone slipped in Paddington Basin, leading to a safety issue. As this is a local issue, she was advised to contact Adrian S., London secretary.
- j) AB wondered if there are any rules regarding breasting-up. There are notices in some areas saying yea and or nay. It was not thought that there are rules, but should be allowed subject to non-obstruction of the channel.

The meeting ended at 4pm.

Date of next meeting: 11th March 2006

Signed: _____



Date: _____

11/3/06