

MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon & Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 16th SEPTEMBER 2006

Present: Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair (SS)
Aileen Butler (AB) Stephen Peters (SP)
Tony Haynes (TH) Simon Robbins (SR)
Andy Colyer (AC) Peter Foster (PF)
Carole Sampson (CS)
Mrs J Haynes also attended as a guest

Apologies for Absence: Geoffrey Rogerson (unwell), Gordon Reece (family problems).
GR had also stated that he is unable to stand for Council for the coming year, but would continue as Northwest Secretary if Council wishes him to do so.

1. MINUTES

- a) With all who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 3/06/06 meeting were approved as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.
- b) Action reports.
- TH i) Not done. The deadline for responses is now past.
ii) This has been done. No fault could be found with NABO's Constitution, so matters will be left as they are.
iii) The Buying A Boat booklets have been sent out to the waterway magazines.
- SR Both done.
- SS Both done.
- AB Done. Sue B could not remember who had produced the original banners, but was able to suggest alternative suppliers.
- CS Mooring development added to the agenda.
- c) Matters arising from the minutes.
None.

2. AGM

CS went over the arrangements for the AGM. Jacquie Haynes was thanked for her offer to do the catering: offer accepted. CS explained that she and SS had visited the Bonded Warehouse during the summer to assess the facilities. The whole venue will be ours this time, but there is no facility for heating up food. The buffet will therefore be cold. It is planned to offer cans of beer and assorted fruit juices. AB suggested the beer be labelled with a guide price. Paper plates and plastic 'glasses' will be needed. Jacquie will deal with the coffee/tea beforehand, CS will bring the biscuits. **CS**

Access will be required from 0900.

TH will contact Nigel Grant of Warwickshire Fire Service: presentation between noon and 1220. **TH**

Hilary Bainbridge to be invited from 1300 for lunch: afternoon session to begin at 1400.

SR to meet and greet Ms Bainbridge, PF to chair the 'huddle'. **SR PF**

Council members were asked to be there from 0930 to help set out chairs etc.. **ALL**

CS explained that she needs a venue for the 2007 AGM so that a booking can be made sooner rather than later. She suggested the pub in Thrupp. AB will be passing through there and will make enquiries. SS suggested somewhere in Banbury. TH said he would look into suitable venues. AB TH

3. FINANCE

i) SP distributed the draft summary account. Various items were discussed. A small excess of income over expenditure this year. Melanie D, to be asked for a membership report for the AGM. SP

ii) The insurance is due towards the end of this month. There has been little rise since last year, total £1218. All agreed that cover continue.

iii) Current balances:

	Alliance & Leicester	£2846	
	Barclays Current A/c	£5414	
	Barclays deposit A/c		£32291

Total banked funds £40551

4. BW MOORINGS WORKING PARTY PROPOSALS

The working group is being run by Sally Ash and Madge Bailey. SR reported that the latest paper has dropped some ideas and introduced new ones. The idea that BW would take a cut every time a boat is sold with its BW mooring has been dropped, although a boat can continue to be sold on its mooring.

- It is suggested that moorings will be offered on a three-year term, rather than yearly. This is to offer greater security, and also to avoid the annual increase battle. After this period, there will be a contractual necessity to renew the mooring contract unless any exemptions apply: it is not known what the exemptions will be.
- The document proposes to increase the notification of leaving a mooring to six months.
- A moorer would be allowed to sub-let the mooring, subject to notification and no profit is made.

SP thought this would cause difficulties in that more people would want an on-line mooring as this facility is not offered by marinas.

- A boat owner would continue to be allowed to have a tenant using the boat.
- The contentious new clause is that waiting lists will be abolished, and when a vacancy exists, it will be put out to tender. The highest bidder will get the mooring. An open or ballot system would be considered.

TH is concerned that boating will be for the affluent, and many people will no longer be able to afford boating.

SR informed Council that BW thinks that the current mooring fee system does not work, and BW does not know what the market rate is.

CS explained about a mooring in Leeds which has vacancies which no-one wants. A low bid could be tendered and a mooring obtained cheaply.

SS thought that fees cannot be reduced dramatically as BW will be under pressure from private marinas and BWML.

CS thought that there is a hidden agenda to get boats off-line and into marinas. She also thought the whole idea to be a tactic. Raise the suggestion now, so that everybody expresses outrage, then capitulate, but keep on raising the idea until boaters get used to it and cease to object.

AC felt that this is a move away from the idea of Waterways For All.
SP thought it unfair and socially divisive. Any charge should be reasonably affordable.
TH said it would lead to more Continuous Cruisers and illegal moorers.
CS felt that a blanket negative response would not be productive. SR should suggest a better method for charging. Possibly head for a facilities-related scheme which would include location etc., to guide BW in the direction of the old moorings matrix, without mentioning that term.
SS said that Service Managers had been told to be transparent about their calculations, but it is a very opaque subject.
AC feels that questions should be asked. e.g. where are waiting lists not working?
CS thought that even longer-term contracts should be considered, with a scale of discount offered for those prepared to pay up front.

5. VISITOR MOORING DURATIONS PROPOSALS

CS had distributed suggestions prior to the meeting, and handed out hard copies at the meeting.

She explained the history and her thinking about the problem of mainly having 48-hour moorings on the Shropshire Union Canal. Council then discussed the individual suggestions and made amendments accordingly. These to apply to the canal system only.

CS will produce a final draft which will then be sent to BW to provide the basis for discussion at the forthcoming Boaters Issues Meeting. **CS**

6 BW GRANT CUT

SS explained that he had been invited, with expenses paid, to attend a meeting in London with Robin Evans re DEFRA's cut in budget. Basically, BW wants complaints sent to DEFRA / MP's, without using standard letters so that standard replies can be avoided. The idea is to clog up parliament and thus raise awareness of the issue. Robin is happy for BW to be blamed if appropriate. SS feels that it would be pointless to write as an association, it would be just one letter, members need to write individually, choosing the different aspects of the problem which affects them. SS had written to Mr Miliband along the lines of current state of the waterways and loss of investment value of boats. CS had written to her MP about loss of jobs in waterways-based industry, and potential homelessness.

TH feels that the government thinks it can take money away from heritage to pay for other activities.

SS said that as well as campaigning, we need to tell BW where money can be saved.

SP stated that BW will have to adopt a new short-term plan to account for the shortfall: we should know what it is.

SS felt that BW is actively encouraging scare mongering to ensure an outcry from boaters.

CS wondered if NABO should produce a presentation to show the current state of the canals, and what will happen if the underfunding goes ahead. This should be backed up with the result of a questionnaire showing how people had afforded the cost of a boat and how they afford its running costs. This to be taken to DEFRA civil servants next February/March.

TH thought this a good idea, but it should include the waters of all navigation authorities, as the EA is similarly under pressure re funding.

SR feels that BW would prefer not to be under DEFRA. He suggests asking members for

photographs via NABO News, and will help.

SR

SS

7. NABO IMAGE

Sue B had commented upon NABO's poor showing at the recent National Rally at Beale Park.

AB said that Louis Jankel was hardly ever around, so that Ken & Iris Bennell were left with having to erect and take down the stand and are not happy.

TH reported that most of the work had fallen on himself and Jacquie. They felt that the stand looked tatty.

SS didn't want any recriminations, but we do need a dedicated rally organiser.

SP said the matter should be raised at the AGM.

AB thought we should ask members which rallies they attend and ask for their help.

CS said that we had tried this before and no suggestions were forthcoming.

AC felt that NABO's image is tired: it needs a full revamp, and offered to look at this.

His offer was accepted.

AC

SR said that he wasn't receiving the extra copies of NABO News any more: if we can't get that right we're just a bunch of amateurs.

SS said he needs some of the information packs from the store.

CS proposed that the old circular blue stickers be thrown out, in favour of some transparent ones like the rectangular ones. This was seconded by AB.

In favour 5, abstentions 3.

The motion was passed.

It was felt that we need an up-to-date list of NABO achievements for display. Everyone is asked to think of suggestions for this.

ALL

SP said he had done this before and will look out the document.

CS proposed a NABO-makes-a-difference week, to run between 11th and 17th June 2007.

The idea is for each participant to garden their overnight mooring, to remove the ecological argument from BW, and also to show where a boat may get alongside to moor.

SR pointed out the health & safety aspects, + corporate responsibility and liabilities to NABO.

SP thought it could be widened to an improve your environment week, to include collecting litter from the water or towpath. River users could collect litter from the waterside bushes.

TH thought it a good idea, but NABO could be liable.

SR offered to draft out an item for NABO News about this.

SR

8. PERMANENT MOORINGS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

SS reminded Council that the IWA is trying to encourage the use of little basins as permanent moorings, and asked if the meeting was in favour of supporting the idea?

9. DCLG SECURITY OF TENURE FOR RESIDENTIAL BOATERS

SR reported that the consultation had decided upon no new legislation, but instead to develop model agreements. Work on this is to start later this year. There are issues with planning and supply of moorings. The Barge Association is in favour of planning

guidance to create new moorings, others feel that moorings as a whole should be considered.

TH remarked that SR is doing excellent work on the moorings issue: appreciation was expressed by everyone.

10. GLOUCESTER & SHARPNESS CANAL / RIVER SEVERN ARRANGEMENTS

SP reported that Ian Jarvis (General Manager) had consulted users. When pressed for details, SP was sent a single sheet which contained little information. He pressed further, and only then was full information distributed to interested parties. Winter manning is to be reduced to a bookings-only system, reputed to save over £350K per year. CS thought that users were less concerned about the manning levels, but more about the booking system.

PF noted that River Trent user numbers had declined since a similar system was introduced there, and that eventually, BW will say there is no demand and remove winter manning altogether.

SP remarked that a system designed for boaters is needed, not one for BW.

SS informed them that he had placed the item for discussion at the Boaters Issues meeting.

11. CHAIRMAN'S CAR HIRE

CS asked if the chairman could be given the discretion to hire a car to travel to meetings where public transport is unavailable. There are some parts of the system which have poor rail connections, and, with the increase in rail tickets, it might even be cheaper to hire a car.

After discussion, the meeting felt this would be acceptable as long as the chairman could justify the cost when compared to taxi + train etc.

12. A. O. B.

i) PF informed Council that the current chairman of The Boating Association is resigning due to health reasons.

CS asked if PF could open up a channel of communication regarding amalgamation of the two bodies: PF thought that a single boating organisation would give greater strength to our cause, and would do so. PF

ii) SS told Council that it looks as if SIBUG will be dissolved and individual members are being asked if they wish their details to be passed on to NABO. Any funds will also be donated to NABO. He proposed that any who join NABO should have their SIBUG renewal date honoured. All were agreed.

iii) PF informed Council that Caroline Killeavy - General Manager East Midlands - will be addressing the Newark Town Council Planning Committee and answering questions re the demise of the dry dock facility etc.

iv) TH had noticed that A.O.B. could also stand for Association Of Boatowners.

v) AB distributed brochures from the National Rally, and also re the development of Daventry Basin. SP had heard that it was not going ahead.

vi) SS mentioned the facility gap analysis meeting that he had attended. We need to respond as to what constitutes a facility. He will distribute his and CS ideas for Councillors to add to / amend.

