

MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon & Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 10th MARCH 2007

Present: Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair (SS)
Aileen Butler (AB) Stephen Peters (SP)
Tony Haynes (TH) Simon Robbins (SR)
Howard Anguish (HA) Carole Sampson (CS)

Apologies for Absence: Peter Foster (recent operation), Andy Colyer (busy with boat),
Geoffrey Rogerson (recently out of hospital).

1. MINUTES

- a) With all who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 3/02/07 meeting were amended slightly, then approved as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.
- b) Action reports.
- TH All done
HA Done
SS i) Pending
ii) Done
iii) Peter Lea had said that a forensic examination of accounts is only applicable if there is a criminal element.
iv) Not done
v) Done
CS All done
AC Not present, not known
AB Done.
- c) Matters arising from the minutes.
- i) Contact with Regional Secretaries prior to each meeting.
TH reported that he has contacted them prior to this meeting, but has received no feedback as yet.
- ii) Purchase of banners in abeyance due to the absence of AC.
CS felt that if matters were left to the next meeting, it would be too late to get them in time for the Crick Show.
After discussion, it was decided that:
- Proposed SP, seconded TH, with all in favour, a budget of £2000 for one or two banners + 3000 small round stickers
 - The latest sticker design was approved.
 - The banner/s should be 9' in length, the width determined by the scaling down of the artwork.
 - SS to contact Richard Carpenter to see if he can provide these. **SS**
- iii) NABO President
David Sachet has replied to SS, saying he is too busy etc. SS has been in contact with Richard Bowker (BW board member), who knows Richard Branson. He asked him to make enquiries to see if he would be interested, and is awaiting a reply.
TH felt that we shouldn't give the impression that we are desperate.

AB mentioned Jon Nokes as a possibility as he has been involved with canals.
SR commented that all we seem to be looking for is a name: SS agreed with this.
TH suggested Timothy West.

2. BOATMANSHIP COURSES

TH explained that he had felt confused after the last meeting as to whether we should proceed with this idea.

CS felt that this is a good idea, broadly in line with the NABO's objectives as stated in the Constitution. She thought NABO should act as an enabling organisation, providing approval, certificates, and a coursework file.

HA agreed with the idea in principle, but had reservations if the courses were rehashings of other courses. He added that it is easy to get approved instructor qualifications from the RYA.

TH asked for Council's endorsement to pursue enquiries.

SS actioned TH to investigate courses further, and report back at a future meeting.

TH

3. NABO NEWS

CS congratulated TH on his first attempt with the magazine, considering that he had only had three weeks to accustom himself to a new computer with a new operating system.

TH explained why he had wanted to edit the magazine, and took issue with SS and CS over comments made previously. He asked for Council's endorsement of himself as editor.

SS stated that Council should not pore over detail, but that he feels it could be more involved in providing articles. He felt that in the past, he had been starved of material, and had had to generate it himself. He hoped that he and Council could help TH.

SS proposed, seconded SP, that TH have editorial control over NABO News. A vote of confidence was given.

HA commented that it is usual within organisations for some committee members to do more than others.

CS noted that TH is now doing more than anyone else.

4. EFRA

SS has submitted a written report on behalf of NABO. He informed Council that anyone can apply to submit oral evidence on April 16th at Gloucester Docks.

SR added that the deadline for written submissions has been extended.

CS asked if we are supposed to be complaining about DEFRA or BW?

SS replied that the five categories are:

- user relationship with BW
- the effects of reduction in budget
- commercial activities of BW, including the property portfolio
- potential for growth in leisure and freight
- relationships between BW, and central and regional governments

SR said that evidence is required, not just opinion. He will be attending to talk about

BW's property affairs.

SP felt that it is essential that NABO attends, suggesting that the chairman fly to Gloucester if necessary. He felt that a supplementary submission should be sent, covering the following points:

- investment made by boat owners
- specific cuts
- BSS

SS

5. **B.S.S.**

TH had distributed a press release issued by Graham Watts. Both EA and BW have withdrawn their financial contributions. The body was expected to be fully self-funding by 2012, but this is to be brought forward immediately. TH read out the statement from the Advisory committee, opposing the move, mentioning self-certification. Fees to boaters are to increase dramatically (partly due to the Broads joining the scheme), the Advisory and Technical committees might be abandoned, and the scheme is set to become more draconian.

SP feels that if the Broads will be using BSS, then it should put some money into the scheme.

SR thinks that BSS has become irrelevant - insurers do not require it.

CS wondered if the Office of Fair Trading could be consulted.

TH thought that we need to send out a press release, stating that it is no longer viable to need a certificate to apply for a licence. **TH**

CS asked when the price increase be implemented?

Answer: soon.

SP suggested that the proposed Boatmanship Courses should include a section on self-certification for safety purposes. **TH**

Council agreed to pursue the course of self-certification by a competent person.

SS asked whether it is fair that boaters should bear the cost of safety issues.

TH stated that there is no evidence to show that boats are safer now than they were before BSS.

6. **BOATING ISSUES MEETING - 3rd APRIL 07**

a) Mooring auction trial

Moorings waiting lists will be suspended while an auction system is tested over 300 transactions, in spite of NABO's opposition to the idea.

SR explained that BW feels it does not charge market rates for moorings. He feels that the idea hasn't been thought out properly. He is annoyed that this has been announced without having first informed the Moorings Working Party, and mentioned another instance of BW taking advice from a working party and then ignoring it.

SS had noticed that BW is claiming to have consulted, giving the impression that consultees have agreed to something, whilst in fact, they have voiced opposition.

b) Suggestions for further agenda items.

i) Standedge Tunnel - discussed later

ii) Working Party consultations - are representatives valued?

iii) Craft licencing - a longer licence period would help to reduce the excessive number of renewals due on 1st January.

iv) BSS

SR produced a newspaper article stating that BW will be selling off 80 sites for redevelopment.

SR felt that he would like to attend the meeting as well as SS.

CS felt that permission should not be sought in advance, but that they should turn up together.

7. REPORTS FORUM

Discus Pro has been purchased after the expenditure had been approved by Council since the last meeting, at a cost of \$299.95, half for doing the work to set it up, and half for the licence. Twelve months support is included. SS commented upon the more professional appearance of the bulletin board, plus there is better spam protection. Proposed SP, seconded CS, that the expense be ratified. All agreed.

SS informed Council that there it comes with a facility to convert text to an e-mail. This was discussed. but TH felt that a dedicated pay-as-you-go mobile phone would be a better option. The NABO palmtop, currently with SR, will be passed on to TH. SR

SS reported that he has cloned the old system for use by the SOW campaign, at no cost.

TH informed Council that members send in trip reports, and that perhaps NABO should have a facility to accommodate this.

It was thought to be a good idea, SS to set it up. SS

8. NATIONAL RALLY

AB had ascertained that an inside site is available, either in the premier or the standard marquee. The former would cost £66 per square metre including a shell scheme.

CS asked if we should go at all?

TH had heard that the Earl's Court Boat Show is to be revived, and that a date has been set. It was generally felt to be a good idea to attend this, AB to find out more information. AB

Proposed SP, seconded TH, that we don't attend the National at St Ives: all agreed.

AB had received an offer for Middle Level lock-keepers to give out NABO promotional material to rally traffic. Approximately 250 leaflets would be needed.

SP felt we should take advantage of the offer, especially if we won't be having a stand. SS to revamp the Why NABO? leaflet, and order / produce same. AB has the delivery address. SS

There is a transport problem for Crick, as Ken & Iris are not available. It was suggested that a request for help be put into NABO News, + a similar request in the bulletin. TH

SS

9. FINANCE

i) The NABO Compaq laptop used by SP for many years is now obsolete and defunct. There are also two other laptops of similar age in a non-working condition.

All agreed that they should be scrapped. i.e. written off.

ii) A request had been received from SOW for a donation for banners. CS consulted the AGM minutes, where members had voted in favour of a maximum of £500 to go to this campaign. Proposed SP, seconded AB, that this sum be donated to SOW. All agreed. SP to prepare a cheque. SP

iii) SP reminded Council that the year-end is at the end of this month, and that expense claims submitted after the end of April would not be paid, as per the Constitution. Furthermore, assets (stamps etc.) held by Councillors should be listed and sent to Melanie D. ALL

10. EA HARMONISATION CHARGING REGIME

TH explained that a length only charging regime seems to be the preferred option, but that length + breadth has not been discounted.

CS said that we need to decide which option will become NABO policy, as policy dictates a system common to all navigation authorities. She further stated GRo's discontent at the number of wide-beam boats on the Kennet & Avon canal.

The vote: length 1, Length + Beam 5, abstention 1
with a capping option.

11. Default item: LICENSING, MOORINGS, CONDITIONS & CHARGING

SS reported that BW craft licensing is to move to Leeds.

A member had had a problem renewing her licence over the phone when she had found the office closed. After discussion, SS was empowered to suggest to BW a longer licence period to reduce the number of 1st January renewals. SS

12 STANDEDGE / ANDERTON LIFT

CS reminded Council that it had previously been agreed at a National User group meeting that boaters would pay an extra 2% on top of their annual licences to cover the cost of operation of the above + the Ribble Link. Shortly after this, the service was reduced from five days to three days per week. She reported that Yorkshire are proposing to further reduce passages to two days per week, and that she has been invited to a local 'workshop' to discuss this. She felt that a national agreement was to be changed locally. SR commented that if the service is reduced, then we should demand a refund of the extra paid. It was agreed that SS should raise this issue at the forthcoming Boating Issues Meeting. SS

13. IWA REORGANISATION

SS reported that the IWA is reorganising itself, trying to recruit more members for its upper echelons. It is concerned that it is perceived as a narrowboat organisation.

14. A. O. B.

PF - has received no response about the Newark flood gate

SR - a member residing in Packet Boat Marina is engaging with BWML re the 16% increase in mooring fees. SS commented that the increase is 23% at Sawley Marina.

TH - had been asked by Louis Jankel for NABO's views re BW becoming the single navigation authority; he needed to know by Monday. SR felt that this is much too important a matter to be decided in a hurry. SS to contact Louis to discover the need for urgency. SS

TH - suggested NABO conduct a survey of boat brokers to assess boat values and sales after the news of the increase in diesel duty. On that subject, TH volunteered CS to write to John Healey at the Treasury.

AB - will be missing from the next meeting.

SS - proposed changing the NABO role e-mail addresses to reduce spam. After discussion, it was agreed to go for the role +.07@nabo.org.uk, to be changed to 08 next year. SS

The meeting ended at 3.40pm.

Date of next meeting: Saturday 21st April 2007, 10.30am, at the Waggon & Horses Oldbury

Signed: 

Date: 21/4/07