

**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon &  
Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 21st APRIL 2007**

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

Apologies for Absence: Peter Foster (damaged foot), Aileen Butler (on holiday),  
Geoffrey Rogerson (medical appointment).

**1. MINUTES**

a) With all who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 10/03/07 meeting were approved as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.

b) Action reports.

SS i) Stickers have been ordered. For 3,000, the cost is £685 + vat, for 5,000 £952.90 + vat. Carriage £15. It was decided to order 5000, having them delivered directly to Ruth (NABO News packer).

ii) & iii): done

iv) Pending

v) done

vi) No reply from BW regarding extended licence periods.

vii), viii), & ix) all done.

TH All done - see later

SR Done at this meeting

AB Done. One of the organisers has offered to attend a Council meeting to effectively do a sales pitch. This was not thought to be necessary. Concern was expressed that attending this event would be very expensive, both financially and time-consuming, but CS thought we should keep our options open.

SP The donation has been sent to SOW, and a receipt received.

CS Not done. SS said that he could easily send an e-mail.

SS

c) Matters arising from the minutes.

CS spoke about the 'workshop' meeting re Standedge Tunnel. It appears that the goal posts have moved regarding the acceptable levels of diesel emissions, which could have serious implications for all longer tunnels, Harecastle and Dudley being specifically mentioned. Tunnels are classed as confined spaces. BW will be carrying out its regular tunnel inspections this year, the first being Standedge, which will also include a review of operating procedures. The discussion highlighted the fact that no measurement of emissions has been carried out since prior to the tunnel being reopened. CS suggested escorted passages as at present on two days a week, with the option of self-propulsion on a third day. She was not convinced by BW's commitment to maximising use of Standedge, as there seemed to be greater concern about not rocking the boat for the other tunnels.

TH asked for an article about this for NN.

CS

SR commented that Swiss road tunnels would have to close.  
CS informed Council that she has been approached to be included in a South Pennine Ring pressure group, and wondered what Council thinks about yet another group.  
SR thought she should get on with it!

## 2. BW REGULATOR AND CONSULTATION

SS wondered whether NABO should revive its campaign for an independent regulator / scrutineer for British Waterways. e.g. Offcut.  
BW has its Openness & Accountability system, comprising:

- the complaints procedure
- the Ombudsman
- local consultation
- the national consultative council, which has been replaced by BWAF

SS feels that BWAF does not fulfil its purpose. NABO has given BWAF a chance to work, but SS thinks the time has come to resume the regulator campaign. SR had suggested that the Audit Commission be the best body to oversee BW in his submission to the EFRA Committee, because it already has processes in existence, and does this kind of work with other bodies.

CS asked how much clout the Audit Commission has.

SR replied that in a worst case scenario, it can put people on the BW Board, and actually supervise BW's workings.

SR proposed that we should press for independent scrutiny of BW. This was thought to be a good idea, the actual wording of a proposal to be left to SR.

**SR**

SP felt that, once formulated, it should form the basis of a press release.

SR recommended that Councillors look through the EFRA transcripts to see what questions the committee is asking: searching questions.

SP thanked SR for his deposition and hard work on preparation for his submission to EFRA. All agreed with this.

The question then arose as to what to do next?

It was decided that nothing could be achieved until after the EFRA Committee reports.

SS felt that the best option would be for BW to be moved to DCLG, supervised by the Audit Commission.

## 3. Default item: LICENSING, MOORINGS, CONDITIONS & CHARGING

- a) BW is to set up another, different, working group to give user input for the sealed tender method of bidding for a mooring during the mooring auctions trial. SS has been invited to attend, but told that no debate as to the merits of the scheme will be allowed.

SR informed Council that the original working group had told BW that it needs to develop the idea further before a trial starts.

SS felt that the idea has been adopted because BW cannot manage a waiting list system. He informed Council that the trial will be an internet auction, commencing in May, for 300 transactions, the typical number of vacancies over a six-month period. There are to be two trials: an on-line auction, and

a sealed tender. He says that BW is aware of the general opposition to the scheme, and that different options as to how the trial will be conducted are needed. BW is against the sealed tender system as it will be expensive.

SR observed that this opinion shows how little BW understands the method!

CS asked what happens afterwards?

SR replied that BW hasn't thought about that, but it could mean a hike in mooring prices.

CS thought that would lead to more continuous moorers.

SR stated that the whole principle is flawed. He would not be prepared to attend a meeting to discuss the operation of a flawed principle.

TH felt that strong PR is needed.

CS thought that this should be issued prior to the BW meeting.

#### Actions:

- SS to refuse to go, stating why SS
  - SS to contact other invitees saying the same SS
  - SR to prepare a press release, by rejigging his draft letter to Tony Hales, this also to be included in NABO News SR
  - Advice to members to be put in NABO News: TH
    - a) Buyer Beware
    - b) try to find out from BW exactly what you are bidding for: duration, right to renew etc.
    - c) current mooring prices can be found on Waterscape
- SS wondered if, in the future, BW would give up operating moorings  
SR felt that BW could well do so.

#### b) 2008 Licence increases

These have been set at 10% + the cost index (OXERA) The same increase for 2009 and 2010. BW is proposing a consultation exercise about this.

#### c) Score criteria for historic boats

Criteria to establish what is an historic boat are being discussed with HNBOC. If minimum criteria are met, then the vessel will qualify for a 10% discount. BW proposes to set up an appeals panel.

It was thought that members' opinions should be sought via NABO News.

TH

## 4. SAFETY

### a) BSS

TH reported on a meeting held in Reading. Louis Jankel is concerned that NABO might lose its credibility if it pursues a case for self-accreditation, but TH felt that he hadn't understood that this would only be supplemental to initial certification by a competent person. Trevor Rogers feels that, as boaters are going to be the funders of the scheme, we should have greater representation on the committees. The idea of spacing the inspections more widely apart was discussed, but it was felt that this would increase costs as BSS would still require the same income. TH feels that greater flexibility is needed, including financially. TH added that there is no evidence that boats are safer now after introduction of BSS.

SS felt that something explaining self-accreditation should appear in NABO News

TH

AC thought that alternative terminology would be better.

TH will be attending a meeting of the Technical Committee on 21st May.

b) Inland Waterway Safety Executive.

Having had no response to his initial approaches to other organisations about this, the idea has been mentioned again.

c) Antisocial behaviour

What to do with troublesome swimmers in locks etc.

- summon BW
- summon the community police team
- report the incident to the police, and get a crime number
- put the information on the Waterways Reports Board

5. CRICK RALLY

SS had heard from Aileen, and reported that we are close to having full manning for 26th - 28th May.

TH offered to provide transport for the stand items if no-one else volunteered, but he would need help with the lifting. TI

AC undertook to provide picture via CD with which to decorate the boards. AC

6. NABO NEWS

SP commented that there was an improvement in the style and layout in the latest issue.

TH asked what he should include and what to exclude.

SS thought that he would have enough material from this meeting.

CS to send details of BW's reorganised team structure to TH. CS

7. DEFRA / EFRA / SOW

SS had attended a SOW strategy meeting. The Constituency Petition idea is being pushed, to keep the waterways funding issue in front of Parliament. These to be effected between Easter and the summer recess.

David Blagrove had reported to that meeting that in Stoke Bruerne, there are over 100 jobs within the village, but in a nearby same-sized village, there are only 6. The only difference being the presence of a canal.

TH informed Council that he is undertaking a two-year cruise in aid of SOW. RCR is sponsoring him: would NABO be interested in doing the same? CS commented that NABO has already recently made a large contribution to SOW funds, but asked if TH will be promoting NABO.

Proposed CS, seconded SP, and with all present in favour,

that TH receive £5 each for having recommended someone as a new member. TH would need two small banners. SS to organise these with Richard Carpenter, at £10 each. This cost falls within the budget set for banners and stickers at the last meeting. SS

## 8. BOATMANSHIP COURSES

TH has spoken to several people who are enthusiastic and want to proceed. SR asked what has been done to find out what take-up there would be for the courses.

TH explained that the courses are already running, and, as there is current dissatisfaction with the RYA courses, there should be takers for our courses. We would have leaflets to hand out at rallies.

## 9. FINANCE

i) SP will produce the annual budget for 2007 - 2008 at the next meeting. He reminded Councillors to let Melanie know of any NABO assets, including stamps.

Current funds stand at:	Barclays Current Account: £2833
	Barclays Deposit Account £35739
	Alliance & Leicester £2203
	TOTAL £40775

ii) TH wondered whether NABO should take out a maintenance plan for his computer.

CS commented that she had never had anything go wrong with her Mac, nor had SS, nor had AC. Not thought necessary.

## 10. A. O. B.

i) AC will be attending two festivals at which he will promote NABO. He asked for promotional literature - he can find these at the store.

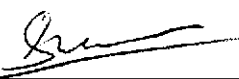
ii) AC has been in contact with someone who works for the Waterways Trust, who is seeking funding for a recycling project on the Kennet & Avon. He will find out more details and report back.

iii) HA has been contacted by an ex SIBUG member who had received NABO News but nothing to inform him that he is now a member of NABO. HA has contacted Melanie, who had prioritised the NABO News labels, but will be sending out welcome letters in the near future.

SS thought that the welcome should be repeated in NABO News. TH

iv) SS will be attending a Parliamentary Waterways Group meeting on 24th April and will be addressing the meeting about the Waterway Reports Board.

The meeting closed at 3.10pm.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 2/6/07

The next meeting will take place on Saturday 2nd June, 10.30am, at the Waggon & Horses, Oldbury