

**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon &
Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2007**

Present: Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair (SS)
 Stephen Peters (SP) Andy Colyer (AC)
 Simon Robbins (SR) Geoffrey Rogerson (GRo)
 Aileen Butler (AB) Carole Sampson (CS)

Apologies for Absence: Howard Anguish (shared owner cruising week).
 Nothing heard from Peter Foster.

1. MINUTES

a) CS expressed thanks to AB for taking the minutes last time, in her absence.
 With all who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 2/06/07
 meeting were approved as a true record. The chairman signed the minutes.

b) Action reports.

SS Both done

SR All done

AB Has asked for a refund from Crick Show entry fees. This has not been
received: she will check.

c) Matters arising from the minutes.

None, apart from what follows during this meeting's agenda.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN RESIGNATION

SS explained that Tony Haynes has resigned due to immobility and a
problem with his medication. He is hoping to be able to come to the AGM.

SP proposed a thank-you letter. CS & SS to do this.

CS

3. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOVEMBER 17th

a) CS distributed Council nomination forms. AB informed those present that
she will not be standing for the next year. She did not respond to arm-
twisting. CS covered the arrangements, + confirming that John Edmonds,
navigation champion in the EA, + chairman of IWAAC, will be attending from
lunchtime onwards.

b) A member had suggested that Eugene Baston, recently resigned from BW,
should be invited to stand for, or be co-opted onto, Council.
GRo thought it a good idea, now that there would be no conflict of interest.
CS agreed, but felt that he could be equally useful off Council.
SR would prefer a cooling off period, as Eugene does not have the respect of
boaters, and his inclusion could lead to resignations. Perhaps in one year's
time?

SS feels that he wouldn't accept, and that a back seat role would be
preferred. In any case, he doesn't own a boat.

c) There followed a discussion about lack of volunteers to join Council, and how
members could be encouraged to help.

SP said that this is a recurring problem. We need a proper co-ordinator.
CS thought that a direct approach to a member produced better results than if requesting volunteers.

AC thought that more information should be required on the membership application form, such as where the boat is moored and where the cruising is done. He asked for the appropriate membership information to be distributed to Regional Secretaries. SS

SP suggested that this matter be placed on a future agenda. CS

SR suggested that members be asked if they can help NABO, then be contacted to establish how we can use them.

SP felt that the matter should be raised at the AGM.

An article needed for NABO News. SR

4. FINANCE

a) Current status

Alliance & Leicester	£4,338 - £2500 being transferred to Barclays
Barclays Savings Account	£36,317
Barclays Current Account	£4,168
TOTAL	£44,823

b) SP distributed draft accounts for the year 2006-2007. It was noted that expenses are down from the previous year, giving an excess of income over expenditure of £3,286

c) Tony's computer.

Now that TH is no longer editing NABO News, he has offered to buy the computer for £400, approximately 50% of its original cost. This shortfall would enable him to buy office software so that he can better utilise the machine.

No decision made at this time: to be reviewed after the AGM. CS

d) Palmtop

TH has this at present and doesn't want it.

CS understood that it had been designated for use regarding Waterway Reports, although its phone number has not appeared in NABO News.

Again, no decision was taken: to be reviewed after the AGM CS

5. MEMBERSHIP EXCLUSION

It has been suggested that a member be excluded from membership due to statements made which conflict with official NABO standpoints, and also defaming NABO on internet chat rooms.

SP read out paragraph 7g of the Constitution, explaining the exclusion process.

SR explained that this person has been warned previously, and to make clear what are his opinions and which are NABO's, and there has been no improvement. He feels that NABO looks stupid if these doings are just ignored.

As it would be difficult to implement 7g immediately, the matter to be discussed after the AGM. CS

6. PUBLICITY

- a) HA had commented prior to this meeting, that NABO does not blow its own trumpet sufficiently. TH had been in charge of press releases, but these had lapsed since going boating. CS offered to do these: the offer not formally accepted.
SR felt that, to do the job properly, each release needed to be followed by a phone call: Have you received it? Will you be running with it? Need any more information?
SP said it involved public relations as well
SR wondered if Eugene could help with this.
- b) SS informed Council that Charles Moore has rejigged the website. There is now a new section called Current Issues. Councillors should visit the site and have a look.
It was stated that this would need to be kept up-to-date.
SS urged everyone to feed information to him. ALL

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

- a) Moorings Tender Trial
SS informed Council that BW has stopped taking waiting list bookings.
SR commented that BW is determined to go ahead, in spite of the EFRA report and user comments.
SS felt that we cannot stop it.
CS wondered if we could pursue the matter with the new Minister + is BW fit for purpose?
GRo and SR felt that we should continue to push for the trial to be dropped.
SP thought we should write a concise letter to the Minister, to persuade him to have the trial dropped, then issue a press release saying what has been done. This was agreed. SS CS
SS to phone DEFRA on Monday morning to request an urgent meeting. SS
- b) Moorings reduction policy
SR informed Council that BW has backed down regarding the removal of moorings at the Beeston site, following concerns expressed by the local MP and support from the local community. He thought it a bad choice for a first attempt.
CS commented that there would have been no improvement regarding navigation as there are long-term moorings on the other side, and a lock nearby.
BW has now agreed in principle to reduce such moorings by natural wastage.
SS wondered if NABO needs a policy on this.
SR feels we are not against the idea in principle, but that common sense should feature in it
- c) GRo has received letters asking for help from boaters involved with Section 8 enforcement. There seems to be a purge on the Kennet & Avon Canal. Some are not members.
i) A boater has overstayed on a mooring, has no licence, and has incurred overstay charges of over £1000. He has been told to leave the canal or his boat will be removed. GRo feels this is justified.
ii) Another boater has received a draconian, threatening, intimidating letter from BW, which is inaccurate: the boat has moved more than stated.
It was suggested that he write a letter to Nigel Johnson (BW legal eagle)

explaining where the letter is erroneous. This he will do in conjunction with SR. He also asked that he be authorised to submit his letter to Shakespeare's Solicitors to ensure its accuracy first. This was agreed and expenditure authorised. GRa SR

- d) Visitor Moorings durations
This matter is ongoing with Simon Salem. CS had received a reply which bore no resemblance to the original proposals.

8. MEETING REPORTS

- a) Simon Salem (3/07/07)
SR had thought this a waste of time.
CS had observed his body language, and noted him switching on and off. Entrenched responses. He wants to meet with NABO twice a year.
- b) Waterway Minister (12/09/07)
SS explained what had happened, including giving the Minister copies of photographs which show the dilapidated state of the South Oxford and North Stratford canals.
- c) SS asked for items for the forthcoming Boaters Issues Meeting.
i) Policy on the reduction of Visitors Moorings to accommodate BW plant.
ii) Policy re towpath moorings: why should boats be forbidden to moor just because the householder doesn't want an obscured view.
iii) How are decisions taken at national u/g meetings relayed to local units.

9. EVENTS

AB informed Council that Ken Bennell had offered transport of goods and equipment to rallies, and had offered to man the stand for the duration. (Not available for Crick next year!)
A discussion followed.
CS wondered if we should investigate a joint stand with other organisations.
SR wondered, without AB, if we would attend any rallies next year.
Ask at the AGM which rallies should be attended, + help CS
AC said that he knows of someone who attends rallies to represent groups/organisations. He will make enquiries. AC

10. Default item: NABO NEWS

SS feels that the magazine needs to have views other than those of the Chairman. He introduced the idea of an article entitled Points to Ponder, which would be unattributable, opinionated, give food for thought, etc., and asked Councillors to contribute to this, on any topic in which they have a bee in their bonnet.
AC suggested articles on 'sustainable boating'. This met with general approval. AC

11. BWAFF

SS informed Council that he has asked that BWAFF discuss the commercialism of BW, the meeting to take place on 31/10 or 7/11.
SR thought that BWAFF is worse than useless. The agenda is prepared ad

hoc, and it is supposed to be the public consultation which reports to the Board, whose members don't attend.

SP observed that no-one is interested in it.

CS commented that it had only been set up to exercise control over George Greener, which is why SR believes it doesn't work.

SS is thinking of standing as Chairman, but hasn't yet made the decision.

He further informed Council that he had been approached by Michael Stimpson re the resurrection of NINF, as there is no umbrella organisation for boat owners and other users.

12. RED DIESEL

The IWA is proposing that red diesel be continued to be used. The duty should rise, but a 25% refund can be claimed back for that used for heating.

Customs & Excise have three options:

i) as above

ii) set a rate lower than the road diesel rate

iii) boaters to pay the full rate as per the road price.

SP feels that we should support the continued use of red diesel, sold waterside at the new price based on (ii) above. - we shouldn't have to pay the portion for road maintenance. He thought a 25% reduction *in the increase* is too much.

SS, AC, & CS thought we should ask for that amount, as you won't get it if you don't ask!

13. REPORTS FORUM

SS reported that the Forum is now linked to Waterscape, and that BW is prepared to distribute a leaflet with every licence renewal. SS informed Council that there have been 477 reports so far this year.

CS felt that there is a misconception amongst boaters that they have to be on-line to be able to file a report: needs addressing in NABO News. SS

14. LOCK LADDERS

SS has been approached by someone from BW enquiring whether NABO has a policy on lock ladders.

Several Councillors wondered why they want to know?

CS said yes please, a minimum of 1 on narrow locks, 2 on wide locks, preferable offset towards each end. They need to be recessed and have 'loops' at the top. They should be included in an annual inspection re safety.

15. LINCOLNSHIRE LINK

There has been an article in Towpath Talk asking for letters of support for this in order to persuade commerce to fund the project. CS is prepared to write a letter.

SP thought mention of river users should be made. i.e. high enough and wide enough. CS

16. A.O.B.

i) SR: business barges. There is a planning application for thirteen more in Paddington Basin, bringing the total to nineteen.

AB observed that some of the existing ones have not been taken, so why should more be needed?

SR explained that building is going on apace there, much unlet. He asked for Council support to oppose this application. All were agreed.

ii) SR has written to Tony Hales, who has previously given a promise to consult about moorings, which hasn't happened. SR wants to write again. CS felt it would be better to wait awhile, to see if we have a meeting with the Minister and/or civil servants, in which case questions will be asked which might have more impact. This was agreed.

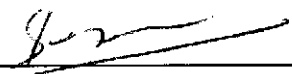
iii) AC reported on the recycling initiatives supported by local Councils in his area. SS asked if he would write an article about it for NABO News. At

iv) AC has heard a rumour that Bath Narrowboats and its boatyard is to be closed down. Another lost boatyard.

The meeting closed at 3.40pm.

The next meeting will take place on Saturday 17th November, during the AGM at Shipton-on-Cherwell.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

24th Nov 07

~~ACTIONS~~