

**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon &  
Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 26th JANUARY 2008**

**Present:** Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair (SS)  
Stephen Peters (SP) Simon Robbins (SR)  
Howard Anguish (HA) Carole Sampson (CS)

Apologies for absence: Geoffrey Rogerson (birthday party), Andy Colyer (no lift),  
Richard Carpenter

**1. MINUTES**

a) With all present in agreement, the minutes of the 24/11/07 meeting were approved. The chairman signed the minutes. One matter from the previous meeting had been omitted, namely the proposed increase in mileage travelling allowance from 20p to 25p per mile, in view of the huge increases in fuel costs. Proposed SP, seconded SS, and with all in favour, this was agreed.

b) Matters arising - none.

c) Actions

CS i) has approached a member about this, but the person concerned had a family crisis at the time. She will contact him re Anglian Secretary in the near future. Mike Smith, the retiring secretary, has offered to be involved with introductions etc.

ii) - vi) - Done

vii) Not done. CS will summarise the moorings durations fiasco in the near future.

AC had found someone to purchase the computer currently with Tony Haynes, but the sale had been overtaken by events. TH has no box, is being awkward, no courier will fetch it and no-one can go. After discussion, it was agreed that his offer of £400 to buy the machine be accepted. HA to contact him. HA

SS i) - v) Done

vi) Not done as the chairman of TBA has not been seen at meetings. He will phone him.

ALL Speaker for the 2008 AGM. No-one had any new ideas, so it was to invite Vince Moran (BW) to speak, possibly as part of a trio leading a round robin discussion. No other names suggested!. CS to invite Vince. CS

**2. WHERE DOES NABO GO FROM HERE?**

In recognising the contributions made to NABO by SS and CS, HA asked what their plans are for the immediate future, as they have both stated their intention to leave Council at the end of the current year. SS explained that he had come close to throwing in the towel recently, due to a seeming lack of support from a Council member, and apparent apathy of

members towards his on-line survey. However, he confirmed that he expects to remain as Chairman until the next AGM. After this, he will be available in an advisory capacity, and is prepared to continue editing NABO News if Council wishes him to do so. As his plans are not finalised, he may be able to attend some Council meetings. CS stated that she has no plans to continue her involvement on Council, but would be prepared to make bookings for Council meeting venues and AGM 2009 if asked to do so.

There followed a discussion as to what and how a Council of five could achieve 2008-2009.

Generally, it was felt that there would be a need to prioritise. It was agreed that HA and SR would devise a survey to be included in NABO News to ask members what they want from NABO, what they would miss and what they could do without.

CS informed Council that there are two members who need nurturing to come onto Council, namely, Richard Carpenter and David Fletcher. HA is in contact with the former, she will contact the latter.

SR thought a list of what needs doing should be put in NABO News: if no-one offers, then they will not get done.

SS informed Council of Charles Moore's wish not to continue with webmastership, and its future was discussed. SS thought it could be minimised, doing away with the members section as this is the area which needs most work to keep it up-to-date. SS will continue with this in the short term.

CS reminded Council of the Pool of Information document, which contains full details of how NABO operates. Copies rest with Peter Lea, Jon Darlington, and there is one in the filing cabinet in the store. Parts of it need updating: she will do this before retiring.

Tony Haynes' offer to be co-opted was discussed. As Council does not yet know what direction it will be taking, it was thought not to be a good idea, although he is welcome to stand for election at the next AGM.

It was decided that the plea for help should be the lead article in the next NN: HA to write it. HA

### **3. MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT + joining on-line**

SP reminded Council that it had been agreed at the last AGM that NABO spends money on advertising and recruitment.

SS spoke about his experience trying to join the DBA on-line. He managed to send his details but had failed to pay. It was agreed that an interactive application form be put on the website but Standing Orders and payment would be by post.

It was agreed that further discussion about advertising be deferred until Council knows what it can achieve with reduced numbers. This item to placed on the agenda for next time. CS

#### 4. BWAFF BW STATUS REVIEW MEETING

SS has been invited to this meeting, being held between BWAFF and the consultants on 05/02/08, to discuss BW's future status. He asked what his input should be.

SR felt that the meeting was to discuss the structure required to enable BW to borrow money. It would need a corporate status with subsidiaries. He questioned whether anyone would actually lend BW money - what would be the collateral: a two-three hundred year old failing waterway system etc. He felt that there would be asset picking.

SS was mandated to listen and report back.

#### 5. FINANCE

SP informed Council that the current balance is £44,283

#### 6. BW WORKING GROUP EFFECTIVENESS

Having received no satisfactory result, SR wonders whether it is worth, at this late stage, taking the matter of non consultation prior to the moorings auctions 'trial' to the Ombudsman. He felt as certain as he could be that BW would be found guilty of maladministration, but wondered if the horse has already bolted. Hilary Bainbridge has a backlog of work, and it would probably take a year before she responds.

CS felt that the message inaction would give. That we are not serious about our complaint, that we can be fobbed off, and that we are prepared to put up with BW's nonsense.

It was agreed that the complaint should be sent on to the Ombudsman.

SR

SR felt that all the work done on the various working parties was not worth all the effort. As far as the Customer Service Standards are concerned, BW has cherry-picked what can be done easily and quickly. He doesn't believe that BW is serious about Customer Standards. Furthermore, he is concerned about the lack of progress on various issues such as the licence increases, the facilities survey, and the moorings durations. He had distributed a draft letter beforehand.

CS asked where the letter would get us, and what we would hope to achieve. SR felt we would get nowhere, but we won't get anything if we don't ask.

SS informed Council of an approach to him by a post graduate student looking into facility gap analysis. (He was suggested by Sally Ash.) He has agreed to be involved, but does not know what this will entail at present.

SR finds the use of a student to be offensive. It will be slow process and time demanding.

HA felt that however late, something is being done and we should not be churlish. At least we can't be accused of not taking part.

CS wondered if SS should contact Sally Ash to ask:

- what is the process supposed to achieve?
- will any notice be taken of the final analysis?

- why is this necessary when BW has already surveyed the opinions of boaters via a towpath survey?
  - the working party has already given input
- SP thought that we shouldn't be afraid of withdrawing from something if we feel we are being given the run around
- SS questioned who should be sending the letter - SR or Council or himself.
- CS asked who it should be sent to?

It was agreed that the letter should be written from Council, to Robin Evens with copies to Vince Moran, Tony Hales and John Edmonds (chair of IWAC), *after* the results of the licence fees consultation have been published. SR to hone it in the meantime. SR

This led to a discussion about the role of John Bridgeman, who had been introduced as the BW Board member responsible for users concerns at the latest BW AGM. Users do not have direct access to any board member, and he should know of our concerns. CS agreed to write to Tony Hales (BWB Chairman) asking for a means of communication with John B. CS

**7. Default item: MOORINGS/ LICENSING/ CONDITIONS**

GRo had asked whether legal opinion should be sought prior to sending the moorings auctions consultation complaint to the Ombudsman.

SR said that this is not a legal problem.

**8. Default item: NABO NEWS ARTICLES**

HA has some amusing photographs.

SR will write a Thames facilities and moorings meeting report

CS will write a Point to Ponder

HA   SR   CS

**9. A. O. B.**

**i) Hotel expenses.**

HA feels that it could be a safety issue having representatives travelling long distances on a meeting day. He wondered if Council meetings should be held at different venues to share the travelling.

CS was concerned that this could lead to a misunderstanding with Andrew at the current venue.

SS feels that if it can be shown that staying somewhere overnight reduces travelling time and expenses, then it should be sanctioned

SR said that the matter should be put to the membership via NABO News - maybe ask if there is a member in the Birmingham area with a B & B?! HA

agreed to write this.

**ii) Good news!**

CS has at long last managed to negotiate a special deal with Enterprise Rent-a-Car for NABO members. Details will be published in the next NN

HA commented that Tesco will deliver to boats if a postcode is given.

**iii) Challenging Cruise - The Wash**

CS felt that the trip would have to be cancelled as she doesn't know what her and SS's availability will be this summer. There are various concerns

about the trip, namely the having to provide the indemnity cover for the pilot, and the discouraging remarks made by BW's Boston lock-keeper. HA expressed concern about these trips, saying that any disclaimer is not worth the paper it is written on.

**iv) Green-Blue meeting at the Excel Boat Show**

SS had attended this meeting and found it more interesting than he expected.

**v) Rallies**

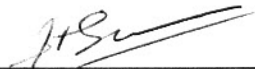
Proposed CS, seconded SP that NABO attends no rallies this year.

All agreed.

The meeting closed at 1540

Next meeting: Saturday 8th March, 10.30am at the Waggon & Horses, Oldbury.

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



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

8/3/08