

**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon &
Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 8th MARCH 2008**

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

Apologies for absence: Richard Carpenter

1. MINUTES

a) With all present in agreement, the minutes of the 26/01/08 meeting were approved. The chairman signed the minutes.

b) Matters arising - none.

c) Actions

- HA i) Tony Haynes has agreed to purchase his computer from NABO for £400, although he states that he cannot afford it at present. SP will send him an invoice, and we must ensure that the matter does not get forgotten. **SI**
- ii) Done - the article caused a stir on Narrowboat World's website!
- iii) Done.
- iv) There has been no comments from members re hotel expenses. Proposed SP, seconded HA, that the cost of overnight accommodation incurred on official NABO business shall be reimbursed upon submission of an official receipt, subject to the claim being for budget accommodation only.
All were in favour.
GRo commented that an analysis of such expenditure should be given at each AGM. **SP**
- CS All done
Vine Moran has agreed to come to our 2008 AGM.

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

a) Ombudsman Complaint.

SR had distributed his draft submission electronically prior to the meeting. He went on to explain that the complaint concerns the lack of advance consultation about the moorings tendering scheme, not about the scheme itself.

HA expressed concern that, as it is unlikely that we will receive a quick response, the Ombudsman's judgement would not be relevant. SR felt that if the Ombudsman finds in our favour, then a precedent will be set, and we should continue. NABO complained to the EFRA Committee about poor consultation, so we would look inconsistent if we give up.

CS commented that it had already been voted on at the last two Council meetings, and we have agreed to continue.

GRo commented that if we cancel the complaint, we would be perceived as ineffective by BW, but feels that if we win, OK, but if we lose, it could be catastrophic for NABO.

SS thought the complaint would sit in the middle.

SR felt certain that BW would be found guilty of maladministration, and possibly of injustice. It had not been possible to find someone at the top of a waiting list who had missed out on the moorings of their dreams. SR felt that those people, if still looking for a mooring, are concerned that BW would be vindictive if they complain. CS thought that this should be added to the submission.

After further discussion, it was agreed that SR would submit his outline statement and let the Ombudsman decide if the case is worth pursuing before sending her the extra documentation. **SR**

GRo wondered what NABO's future opinion would be about the Moorings Tendering trial when the full consultation takes place.

SS and CS will be attending a meeting with Simon Salem where they would hopefully learn of BW's thoughts on the matter.

b) Licence fee increase

SR has not yet sent his letter to Robin Evans.

Generally, it was felt that the increase could have been a lot worse.

Hire boat licenses are to increase by inflation only, which should make the actual amount extra paid per boat comparable.

3. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? - continued from the last meeting

a) Membership survey

HA informed Council of the responses he has received to his survey in the last NABO News.

- We should continue to concentrate on: the red diesel issue, moorings tenders, vegetation, anti-vandalism, dredging, and a plea not to forget non on-line members

- On the back burner members suggested: the red diesel issue, sealed tenders, the website - reduce its complexity, keep the bulletins, Waterway Reports a good idea, but not used - and BSS

- Redundant: the website (there should be no specific section for members), and merchandising

b) Chairman and General Secretary replacements

SR stated that he is 98% against any suggestion that he stand as Chairman. GRo's face lit up at the thought of the other 2%!

HA and CS spoke about the Chairman's role: SR commented that there would always be pressure to do more.

c) Merchandising

It was decided to suspend merchandising. Members to be informed of this via NABO News, although to take full effect once current stocks of pennants and windlasses have been exhausted.

d) Richard Carpenter wished it to be known that he intends to come to future meetings. Those present hoped that he will be able to come up with new ideas for promoting NABO and gaining more members.

e) THaynes has abandoned his idea for a new group called 'Waterways for All' in favour of SOW with its new constitution and membership. HA expressed his concern that, although SOW has stated that it does not intend any conflict with other groups, what would happen in

the future if, with a more militant committee, its modus operandi and objectives changed.

SS does not feel that NABO should have close association with SOW. It should be financially independent so NABO should stay at arms length.

4. APPROACH TO JOHN BRIDGEMAN

CS had written to Tony Hales, who, much to her surprise, had agreed to her suggestion that NABO have direct access to John (the BWBoard member with responsibility for consultation). After discussion, it was decided to leave items for discussion with him until the next meeting. CS

5. EFRA COMMITTEE evidence request

The EFRA committee is concerned with the withdrawal of funding for the Cotswolds restoration project by BW.

CS felt that she does not blame BW for doing this. The collapse of the Mon & Brec canal has forced BW into a reallocation of funds, and it hasn't had any choice but to pull out.

SR agreed, but felt that BW should have told its partners, and given them a chance to secure alternative funding, before announcing the decision publicly. It was decided that this matter is not part of NABO's brief, so there is no need to make a submission.

6. Default item: FINANCE

SP reported that there is:	£ 2240 in the Alliance & Leicester account
	£ 3325 in the Barclays current account
	£39,495 in the Barclays savings account
TOTAL	<u>£45,000</u>

He reminded Councillors that the end of March is the end of our financial year, and that all claims have to be submitted by the end of April.

7. RED DIESEL

It appears that the governments IT system is in a shambles: NABO's consultation details have been lost. SS has re-established contact with HMCE, and he expects a meeting to be arranged in late March '08

8. NORFOLK BROADS

The meeting was joined by Jerry Ping, who came to discuss Broad's matters with Council.

He is a member of a group of twelve boaters, who feel that, as users, they are not represented. There exists the Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association, which is an arm of the RYA and which used to be a yachting association. His group feels that there is a need for an enveloping organisation with teeth.

GRo asked what ratio there is between yachts and powered vessels.

Answer: 10-15% yachts, the rest powered.

SP explained that NABO exists to serve its members.

CS suggested that Jerry organise a meeting to canvass for support for

joining NABO, to which Council will send a representative. This was agreed.

After Jerry Ping had left, CS proposed that she and SS could perhaps take this issue on board, as, when they have left Council at the next AGM, they will have some free time. This offer was accepted, subject to seeing how things develop.

9. Default item: NABO NEWS ARTICLES

AC will write another article about sustainable boating, but not for this issue, HA will write about boating superstitions + the survey results to date, CS will try to think up something for the Point to Ponder. SR will produce something about the Thames Alliance and moorings.

10. A. O. B.

a) AC reminded Council about THaynes offer to moderate the Waterway Reports Forum, plus his request that NABO take on a two-year phone contract for him to do so.

Proposed GRo, seconded CS, that we do not take up this suggestion, all were in favour.

CS thought that TH could use his own phone and claim the expenses.

This led to a long discussion about the Forum. Although a good idea, not many people use it. This is a pity as a lot of time and hard work went into it. CS proposed that a counter be put on it to see what usage there is, and something put in NABO News saying, use it or lose it. SS said it couldn't be done. HA to mention it in his article. HA

b) SR informed Council of a member on the Beeston moorings who is pursuing a complaint to the Ombudsman re the closure of linear moorings and the lack of proper consultation involved.

c) SP reminded Council that NABO's financial year ends at the end of this month, and that expense claims for the year must be submitted by the end of April.

d) SR reported that Simon Salem had stated that the Moorings Working Party had been useful, and will wait until after the consultation before seeing if it needs to meet again.

The meeting closed at 1620

Next meeting: Saturday 19th April, 10.30am at the Waggon & Horses, Oldbury.

Signed: _____

Date: 19/4/08