

**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS, held at The Waggon &
Horses, Oldbury, on SATURDAY 7th JUNE 2008**

Present: Stuart Sampson, chairman, in the chair (SS)
Stephen Peters (SP) Simon Robbins (SR)
Andy Colyer (AC) Richard Carpenter (RC)
Carole Sampson (CS)
The meeting was joined by three interested members: Patricia
Putterill (PP), David Fletcher (DF), and Brian Rowland (BR)

Apologies for absence: Geoffrey Rogerson (new engine), Howard Anguish (boating)

The chairman welcomed Patricia, David and Brian. He explained that they are welcome to come to meetings, be co-opted, or wait to stand as elected Council members at the next AGM.

DF added that, as well as helping attend local U/g meetings, he is also interested in technical matters (ex engineer). His previous offers to help had not been taken up. SS is to contact Trevor Rogers to see how he can become involved. **SS**

1. MINUTES

a) With all those who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 19/04/08 meeting were approved. The chairman signed the minutes.

b) Matters arising: SR had attended the meeting regarding the red diesel issue.

He explained that a discounted rate of between 25% and 40% is yet to be decided by HMRC. RBOA and DBA are concerned that some of their members would be disadvantaged by this as they cruise infrequently, and are looking for a way by which an extra rebate could be available for those who live on board.

SP asked how the rebate is to be applied.

SR explained that the rebated cost will be applied at the point of sale, but that there might be a certification system. HMRC want a simple, easy to apply system. It doesn't mind what happens, but it has to satisfy the EU.

c) Actions

HA Unknown.

SS No progress re obtaining representation on the CSS panel.

CS Had contacted Melanie D.

SR i) This needs input from everyone. He asked that everyone read the document and send him their ideas.

ii) The Ombudsman has already ruled on our complaint, namely that it falls outside her remit. CS asked if we should go along the bad publicity route, in that statements made by BW are not worth the paper they are written on. SR replied that this was something we should discuss with John Bridgeman. SP expressed thanks to SR for all the work he has done on this issue. All concurred.

2. FINANCE

a) SP reported a healthy bank balance.
Alliance & Leicester £ 1366
Barclays Current a/c £ 4834

Barclays deposit a/c £39834

TOTAL: £46,034

b) SP has received a communication re storage costs, which have been increased from May '08. NABO's annual payment is due in October.

c) Travelling expenses. Due to the unprecedented increases in fuel costs, SP proposed an increase in the mileage rate from 25p to 50p.

This was seconded by CS.

After consideration of the rate set by the Inland Revenue for tax purposes, SR proposed an amendment of 40p, which was seconded by AC.

This was accepted by the majority at the meeting, whereupon SP withdrew his original proposal. SS to inform members of this in NN. SS

3. BW's Draft Paper - CONSULTATION + meeting with John Bridgeman

SR explained that the document does not go into sufficient detail.

The key is: what should BW consult about, when, and with whom?

He feels that items need documenting. The latest round of EFRA consultation is due to be reported upon soon, and possibly published by the end of the month.

CS felt that we should adopt a proactive approach, by defining what we think should be consulted upon etc.

SR felt that SS should question the Minister at the forthcoming meeting, but not do anything further until after the EFRA committee reports. He asks everyone to reread the document and send outline topics to himself and SS. ALL

SR further proposed that SS contact John Bridgeman apologising for the lack of contact, but promising to meet him soon. SS

4. NABO PROMOTION and MARKETING

RC explained his previous experience in this field for the benefit of the newcomers. In order to decide upon a way forward, he went back to basics, looking at our product, and asking:

- are we healthy?
- do we need to increase our membership, bearing in mind the healthy bank balance and the extra admin costs which would be incurred?
- public relations
- NABO News, and how members see Council and NABO
- How many people use our services? Why so few? Could we do more?

SR wondered what services we actually provide.

We should consider:

- finding boat builders to recommend us
- a road show, meeting boaters face-to-face
- prepare an information pack, and enlist the help of active members with the distributing of these
- shows and exhibitions
- display materials - he distributed two pictures of examples

BR felt that our main objective is to fight bureaucracy on behalf of boaters. We also need to specify what we've done for individuals, and possibly hold meetings (pubs?) during the off-season.

SR felt that people ask 'what's in it for me?', and that the best recruitment

method is in person and by word-of-mouth
BR continued by informing Council that an advertisement placed by
The Seamaster Club in Motorboats Monthly had increased membership.
Also, a good website can attract members.
CS observed that we need an Ombudsman-style report, listing incidents
where members had contacted a Regional Secretary or someone on Council,
stating the problem and the advice given.
This was thought to be a good idea, for presentation at the AGM, and
distributed to all members afterwards. CS is to collate this, and everyone
was asked to pass such information to her. **CS** **ALL**

5. NABO NEWS

PP explained that she had responded to the plea for a new editor. She is
already doing something similar, and would like to contribute to NABO. She
was concerned at what she feels is a lack of broad waterway knowledge.
SS explained what an important tool the magazine is, as it is avidly read by
the highest echelons of BW, EA and parliament.
SR feels that SS's current role is as editor, senior journalist, typesetter,
and as liaising officer with the printer.
PP felt that this was within her current capabilities.
CS thought that previous, non-political articles could be repeated after a
year or so, e.g. AC's articles on sustainable boating.
BR feels that back copies could be published on the website. He went on to
express concern at the changing face of NABO, with a new chairman, News
editor, webmaster, + marketing. He went on to question his own technical
competence and skills regarding some of the aspects of the website.
It was explained that although SS will be giving up the chair, he will not be
disappearing. He is prepared to stand for Council next year, or to be co-
opted, or to fully stand down, whatever the rest of Council would prefer.
Thus SS will be available into the future and will liaise with BR.

6. Default item: MOORINGS, LICENSING, CONDITIONS and CHARGING

a) SS informed Council that the consensus of opinion at the recent BWAFF
meeting is that usage/mileage should not be reflected in fees, but there is a
need for everything to appear to be fairer. The idea of increasing ALL boat
licences, then giving a discount to those which have a proven home mooring,
was considered. A roving mooring permit had been suggested, whereby a
Continuous Cruiser who needed to stay in a limited area could do so upon the
payment of a fee. This could be of marketable value to BW. Charging by
size could be justified: it was suggested that a bigger boat = a bigger purse.
CS reminded Council that it is NABO policy for charging to be based on
length + breadth.
SR questioned the legality of this. After discussion, it was agreed that
NABO is not in favour of the roving licence. **SS**
SR observed that there is an excess of boats over moorings, so there will
always be problems.
There had been no mention of residential licences.

b) Overstaying on moorings.

A document has been issued by BW: SR is not sure what we're supposed to

do about it. He expressed concerns re the removal of boats under section 8 without giving the statutory 28 days notice. After discussion, he is to draft a response re overstay charges and the implementation of section 8 and 8.5 SR

c) Moorings tender 'trials'

The pre-consultation consultation document has been expanded to include other options re charging for moorings. SR did not know how to proceed with it.

DF felt that the onus is on BW to explain itself better, not for us to come with solutions.

The matter to be discussed at the next meeting. CS

7. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

SR feels that the standards published in the recent document are meaningless. There is no information about the starting point, and no accounting of the standard reached. He feels we need to comment to BW as soon as possible.

SS felt the standards are more concerned with health and safety than with improving the waterways.

SS is to press for representation on the CSS panel. SS

8. THAMES LOCK HOUSES

Louis Jankel and Graham Patterson are dealing with this issue.

The EA is planning to move out of 22 lock cottages.

The following points were made:

- concerns over customer service
- safety at locks
- ? duration of implementation - a bad time to be selling property
- problems re vandalism + lock operation during the winter etc. on the Trent
- liaison between EA and boaters during times of flood etc.
- during floods, vehicles will not be able to reach locks

SR is to brief Graham P. SR

The meeting ended at 4p.m.

Next meeting: Saturday 12th July, 10.30a.m. at the Waggon & Horses, Oldbury

Signed: 

Date: 12th July 2008