

**MINUTES of a COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
of BOAT OWNERS, held at the Waggon and Horses, Oldbury on Saturday
7th March 2009**

Present David Fletcher (DF), in the Chair
 Stephen Peters (SP) Simon Robbins (SR)
 Richard Carpenter (RC) Stuart Sampson (SS)
 Brian Rowland (BR) John Slee (JS)
 Geoffrey Rogerson (GR)
 Also attended Trevor Rogers (BSS Consultant) and Geoff and
 Pat Wood – visiting members
 Apologies for absence were received from Howard Anguish
 (illness) and Andre Colyer (family)

John Slee was proposed as a co-opted member of Council with Special responsibility for Continuous Cruising Matters by GR and seconded by BR – unanimous vote.

1. MINUTES

With all those who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 24th January meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman (DF)

Matters Arising:

- a. Brian had not yet been able to arrange a meeting with Melanie but planned to do so before next council. From his initial look at the information he had on the Microsoft Access programme we use – it was quite an early version and may need updating. He could advise better once he has visited Melanie. (BR)
Brian had investigated whether NABO needed to be registered reference the Data protection Act and found we do not need to.
- b. RC reported that he had had little success with reaching Broads members so far with a view to finding a NABO representative but would now use updated membership lists to target those from the region. (RC following up)
- c. DF reported that some members blogs were still outstanding but that BR had had most which he was now editing for inclusion on Web page. The final ones would be chased individually by DF. (DF)
- d. RC reported that he had had some updates for concessions for the gratis receipt of NABO News but now

- all. He had enough to update it and would forward this to Council for a Final check before the next issue. (RC)
- e. SS issued updated Handbooks to council and all present and (RC) will distribute further copies to Regional Reps and Council Members not present. Other amendments would be looked at before next council – see Item 10.
 - f. HA reported to the Chairman that he had had no further feedback from the last AGM.
 - g. SS had had no further feedback from the Commercial Boat Owners Association who had indicated that they might like NABO cooperation on Trent matters (SS will continue to keep a dialogue open)
 - h. DF reported that he had not as yet written to BW and DEFRA firm engagement on Auctions matters. However it has been logged as an Agenda item for the BWAF Meeting scheduled in May.
 - i. Sally Ashes cruise has not yet taken place which is being attended by AC.
 - j. DF reported that HA was continuing his dialogue with Jonathan Bryant on improving the structure and content of BW Regional User Group Meetings.
 - k. RC reported that as yet no one has been able to get together to tidy up and sort out the Store, e will continue to try and get a date for a couple of Council Members to get it done.(RC)

2. FINANCE

a) The Treasurer outlined our balances as follows

A+L Account	£1,198 (£1130)
Barclays Current	£4,084 (£3,832)
Barclays Tracker	£40,691 (£40,691)
Total	£45,973

He reported that in the present climate we were earning 0.1% gross!

Acceptance of the report proposed by SR seconded by SS.

B) The Treasurer also reminded all Council Members that they should ensure he has any outstanding Expense Claims by end of March which is the Financial Year End.(All)

3. LICENSING, MOORINGS, CONDITIONS & CHARGING

MOORING CONTRACTS WORKING GROUP

- a) SR outlined his concerns about where progress could be made at the present time and in particular where he could personally

contribute. He was concerned that perhaps his own position and relationships may be causing a lack of progress on the issues.

- b) DF proposed possible change of approach to the whole subject and will discuss this with SR prior to next Council. All agreed that Simon was best placed and most experienced in understanding what was needed.
- c) Council agreed that more detailed personal interaction with the other Boating Groups was essential and this will be undertaken by DF/HA/SR who will keep in touch on this.
- d) General discussion held on the actual contents of each contract and what it actually covers in terms of rights to holders and /or restrictions. In general it was felt that people do not actually know or take note in most cases.

AUCTION Update

DF reported nothing to add since last Council Meeting.

MOORINGS PRICE INCREASES

- a) SR issued a copy of the BW press release issued on 24th February covering price increases from April 2009.
- b) Council were concerned that these rises fell within the recent BW consultation. SR will review these. (SR)
- c) It was agreed that articles would appear in NABO News and on the Web site asking for members view and experiences. SR would write a small piece on this and the Chairman will also cover this in his Column.

4. LEGAL.

- a) DF reported that the agreed letter had been sent to BW but as yet had not been acknowledged. BW had a further 7 days to respond as they were given a time limit for response.
- b) SP asked that we ensure that Rivers issues were added to questions being raised for Legal Councils advice.
- c) Council agreed that the list of questions that had been circulated were approved for when the advice of Legal Council would be sought.
- d) Council unanimously agreed to wait for the letter of response from BW before taking further action - however no one expected a positive response from BW.
- e) Council further agreed that the Chairman would be authorised to then submit the series of questions for review from which an estimate of costs would be given (in the order of £5000-£6000). He would communicate this by E mail for final approval to take the matter for Legal Councils advice. (DF)

5. **TECHNICAL & BSS ISSUES**

a) Trevor Rogers NABO's Technical and Boat Safety Standard representative outlined a flavour of his work on our behalf. He sits on the BSS Advisory Committee, the Technical Committee (this will now be undertaken by DF) and the also the British Standards Institute for Small Craft. Trevor is also an Observer at BW Management Committees. Council thanked him for his continued efforts on all members behalf.

b) Trevor gave an example of the work the BSS Committee does. A proposal for regulation of Solid Fuel Stoves was causing some interesting problems in terms of Safety which if accepted would pose major problems for boat builders. These would not initially be retrospective but if they were huge issues could be raised. Trevor will write an informed piece for NABO News. (TR)

c) The possibly absurd consequences would be put into an article/cartoon for NABO News by (DF)

d) TR gave Council a copy of a request from the BSS Secretariat which sought to gauge the views of user groups that proposed a possible Environmental Role for BSS to improve the level of awareness by boaters of environmental issues. After discussion Council unanimously strongly disagreed that this should be within the remit of the BSS.

6. **National Inland Navigation Forum MEMBERSHIP**

A general discussion took place led by SR – not generally impressed with the potential for this group at this stage however it was proposed that we should continue at this stage and that one member of Council would attend. The annual fee of £5 was approved (prop GR, seconded by SS). (SP)

7. **COST OF BOATING**

a) JS outlined the proposed member survey which he has prepared for use to hopefully allow a better analysis of the costs of boating to give council more informed information when working and advising at the various UG Forums attended. All present agreed it would be very useful and some amendments and suggestion were made which will be incorporated.

b) The computer programme that allows the building of such surveys for web use (which has unlimited usage and can so provide further survey options) has a monthly or annual subscription. Council agreed the expenditure of \$200 for this (£141) (Proposed SS, seconded RC) JS will purchase on line and claim.

c) Council agreed this survey would appear at a link to be published in NABO News and members without internet access

could request a hard copy from the Secretary by phone or letter. (JS will write a covering piece for NABO News to include the link).

8. WEB SITE PROGRESS

- a) BR outlined the simple redesign of the web pages following some work undertaken by himself and SS. The main objective was to make it a little more user friendly and kept simple in terms of display and usage. Brian demonstrated how we now have a full online issue of NABO News on the page. He indicated that he was aware that documents with heavy memory usage were a problem for Members when cruising and these needs to be taken into account. He asked for some relevant photographs that he could hold on file and perhaps use to brighten up the page but acknowledge comments from council about the size in terms of memory. (All send pics)
- b) The next stage is the importance of updating content – both on the open pages which should inform possible new members and interested parties of the work of NABO, and on the member pages which should always be up to date in terms of news and views.
- c) It was agreed a short version of the minutes would be issued to give a flavour of Council Meetings and Current issues (RC)
- d) The Front page would have updated HOT NEWS Items and current issues as a Chairman Column (DF)

9. HANDBOOK & NABO POLICY DOCUMENT

- a) SS issued council with the 2009 version indicating that there were still some items that needed revision but there were not many actual policy changes. The updates were outlined by DF.
- b) The couple of items that needed review were variations to the Moorings Text and the Cycling Text and these will be done by SR. (SR)
- c) SS proposed that they should be a section in the future which covered BW's Customer Service Standards Policy. He would follow this up with a proposal for addition. (SS)
- d) GR is looking at including Item 10 "Scope of Licence and Moorings Terms and Conditions" in the questions for Legal Council. (GR)
- e) Thanks were expressed for the effort put in by SS on the detail of the document.

10. NABO PROMOTION & MARKETING

a) RC followed up the previous council meeting where a budget was agreed to provide willing members with a display which could carry recruiting information and membership applications. This was shown and approved. About 40 such displays, designed to be easily carried and displayed by members on the roof of their boats when moored, will be available together with 10,000 leaflets. All agreed on the display shown. (Photo and piece concerning these for NABO News RC)

11. SAVE OUR WATERWAYS UPDATE

a) RC outlined his attendance at a meeting attended by Will Chapman and Michael Shefras of SOW with Simon Salem, Jonathan Bryant and Jonathan Ludford. RC indicated his continued membership of SOW and his membership of the Committee at this time. He attended however in response to an invite to NABO to attend.

b) Minutes and notes of the meeting had already been circulated to Council via DF.

c) The proposed policy of SOW which is subject to approval at an AGM to take place in the next four weeks is still to press for the support of the Inland Waterways System in terms of its secure future. Instead of its initial founding to react quickly to the proposed DEFRA Cuts and create campaigning events it now seems to be moving towards an awareness campaign to try and reach all users who do not actively contribute to funding. In particular to campaign to Local Authorities where they do not. SOW are asking for support both in terms of finance for support materials, and in terms of endorsement by all user groups including NABO. They plan to run promotions at leading Canal and River Events during the season working with the BW's Historic Boats as focal points. SOW have had a promise of £5,000 from BW towards the costs provided that other contributions from User Groups are received. Will Chapman is approaching these at the moment.

d) SR voiced his concerns at BW input which basically gets someone else to do the hard work in campaigning for their future.

c) DF posed the question " what is the function of NABO" in terms of its actions. There was general agreement that whilst the future of Waterways is paramount to boat owners it was not the function of NABO to campaign in this way.

- d) SP pointed out that providing funds (which NABO did during the initial SOW Campaigns) would need to be properly accounted for as to where it would be going.
- e) DF said he had some concern that some funds may only be required to cover past SOW costs and reiterated the worry that accounting would be an issue. RC did refer to a budget breakdown that was sent with the proposal for expenditure.
- f) Council unanimously agreed not to support this new initiative in terms of providing a donation but would endorse the campaign in general if it got off the ground. (RC will write giving this decision.)
- g) SS asked if he should go ahead with the offer he had made of a page to SOW in NABO News. Council agreed this should be withdrawn.

12. FACILITY GAP ANALYSIS

- a) SS raised the question of the provision of facilities by BW being eroded slowly due to developments, non repair etc. This was based on letters and complains being received from members. RC outlined a couple of examples at Marple on the Macclesfield Canal.
- b) After debate it was agreed to try and get information across the system as to where this was becoming a problem. SS will do an analysis using Waterways Maps to see where they were and also as members via NABO News to let us know where they have lapsed or are a problem. This would give us ammunition when dealing with BW in terms of statutory deliver of facilities. (SS)

13. STANDEGE TUNNEL SUPPORTERS GROUP

- a) DF Read out a report from HA. "This is a group of interested parties – IWA, Shire Cruisers, NABO and various local canal societies, which has been meeting at the request of BW Leeds to look into the possibility of allowing self drive transits of the tunnel. After some limited trials last year it has been decided that "chaperoned" transits will be allowed from this year, 3 boats in each direction on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and some passenger transits using the tunnel "pod" on Saturdays. Subject to this year being successful, and BW allowing additional finance, the tunnel will be fitted with gas detection systems, communication links etc over the winter with the aim of a possible increase in transits from next year. The group has been a successful working group in conjunction with BW and assisted in drawing up the passage guideline which will be available on the tunnel web site shortly "

14.

AOB

- a) DF asked for Council agreement that he could open up where he felt it right with other boat owning organisations with regard to our Legal Policy actions.
- b) RC reported on possible AGM Venues – Tamworth Boat Club or Wolverhampton Boat Club – he was hoping to check them out and finalise a venue before next Council. (RC)
- c) Speakers were discussed for the AGM and it was agreed to approach Richard Fairhurst , Editor of Waterways World in the first instance. 2nd Choice would be Jay Kavanah and ex Lock keeper to be introduced by BR if needed. (SS dealing)
- d) RC noted that we have 10 new members this month 5 of which were as a result of some promotional work done by HA. We did however have 19 non renewal during the same period. He planned to make some random calls during the coming weeks to try and get a better feel for the drop off.
- e) RC had accepted an invitation on our behalf to meet BW's Board at a ceremony to open the Liverpool Link on 24th March at the Tate Liverpool.
- f) RC reported we had an invitation to attend and promote ourselves at no charge at Nottingham Boat Clubs Gathering on 8/9/10th May. RC will speak with Joan Jamieson about the possibilities.
- g) RC reported he was having problems with reaching anyone at Enterprise Car rental about our arrangement and free promotion for them. JS reported the last three occasions he used them the deal he got personally was better than that we offer. (SS will check with Carole if she has a contact.) (RC will continue to chase them.) (SS will remove their ad from NABO News for one issue while its being sorted.)
- h) RC reported that following a members complaint about proposed development by BW at Marple which would result in a loss of boating facilities he had made some investigations. It appears that H2O Urban which is a joint venture between a company called bloc ltd and BW have run a public consultation in the area but did not consult with boaters. The issue is a local one which RC will follow up. However contact has been made with the CEO of bloc ltd who has promised full involvement of NABO for all future developments and has promised the relevant parties at BW will include us on correspondence. RC following up)

ACTION Points are all indicated through the minutes by underline.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm.

Date and time of the next full Council Meeting: Saturday 18th April 2009 at the Waggon and Horses at Oldbury time 10.45am.

DM
18/4/09.