

**MINUTES of a COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
of BOAT OWNERS, held at the Waggon and Horses, Oldbury on Saturday  
6<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

Present        David Fletcher (DF), in the Chair  
                  Councillor Stephen Peters (SP) Simon Robbins (SR)  
                  Richard Carpenter (RC)     Stuart Sampson (SS)  
                  John Slee (JS)                 Howard Anguish (HA)  
                  Geoffrey Rogerson (GR)     Andrew Colyer (AC)  
                  Brian Rowland (BA)

**1.     MINUTES**

                  With all those who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> April meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman (DF)

**2.     MATTERS ARISING**

- a.     Simon Robbins had looked at the existing membership details on our old version of Microsoft access. He felt he could work with it and required Melanie to provide a list of the data she would like to work with or be able to enter if she lets him know. RC will follow up with E mail to Melanie (RC & SR)
- b.     RC reported he can still not find Broads based members.
- c.     RC reported that he continued to update the concessions for the gratis receipt of NABO News. DF asked for a latest copy to also review again. A new list was needed following the latest proposed reorganisation. (RC)
- d.     Sally Ashes cruise has not yet taken place which is being attended by AC. AC felt it was still worthwhile and will push for when it will happen.
- f.     RC reported that as no one has been able to get together to tidy up and sort out the Store, he will continue to try and get a date for a couple of Council Members to get it done. (RC)
- g.     RC reported that he had booked Wolverhampton Boat Club and they would charge £10 for its use to cover a cleaner. He will visit during the next few weeks to discuss catering options (RC)

### 3. FINANCE

- a. The Treasurer was unable to report due to his late arrival at the meeting following his election as a County Councillor – details would be forwarded in due course.
- b. DF asked the Treasurer in the light of the present parliament expenses scandals if he could confirm that expense claims by NABO Councillors would bear scrutiny should any members wish to see them. SF felt certain, since Councillors only claim agreed allowances for travel and commitments agreed by Council, in addition to the lunch during Council meetings.

### 4. 20/20 BW ANNOUNCEMENT

Copies of the recent announcement by BW were distributed and discussed in general. DF reported that it had been discussed at two recent meetings he had attended, including one at Parliament where it was generally accepted with support.

JS suggested that BW had not yet achieved the 2012 vision that was set out some years ago and this was supported with comments by SR.

In general, Council felt that the current Senior Management of BW would not be good enough to deliver, given the general lack of results over the past 15 years.

GR pointed out that there was no reference to boaters within it, only other users. It was conceivable that by the time it might be implemented there could be 45,000 boats on BW waters based on present trends. This would place a whole new strain on facilities and usage.

Council agreed unanimously that NABO should seek early input to the initiative and was in general very supportive of it.

The key issues were

- (i) the standard of present management in relation to the running of the canal system in particular
- (ii) the long term vision and its impact
- (iii) Stakeholder involvement – there must be an experienced boating user on board at BW
- (iv) Users should be split in terms of stakeholders into those that pay directly and those that only pay indirectly.

DF will write a piece as NABO response and circulate to Council for comment before release (DF)

## 5. LICENSING, MOORINGS, CONDITIONS & CHARGING

### MOORING CONTRACTS WORKING GROUP

- a) SR reported that there had been no activity and so had not been useful of late, however the members of the Group continued to be supportive that it may be useful in the future. Other Groups like WUSIG, for example, dealt with the subject as part of other items on those agendas. SR asked Council for view on whether it was worth pursuing. All felt that as the issue of mooring availability was almost always at the top of any agenda it should be pursued.
- b) SR reminded Council that at meetings he has attended he is the only actual moorings customer – no-one else has any experience to offer!
- c) DF will follow up on a draft letter already prepared (David please confirm? Notes not clear?)

### MOORINGS PRICE INCREASES

- a) No further feedback to anyone since increases announced. DF had had a letter from a pensioner that outlined for pensioners all their own increases were swallowed up by the rises and more.
- b) DF also reported that there had been correspondence from members about the wrong charging of VAT following the reduction last year. DF had discussed the individual items with Sally Ash who blamed admin errors that were being worked on but BW felt these were very few.
- c) SS would put something in NABO News asking if any other members had had any problems with the revised VAT (SS)
- d) SR and JS had picked up on an issues concerning Lime House Lock in London and proposals for charging for out of hours usage. Council debated the precedent and DF will write about this in NABO News. SR suggested there should be a national policy on tidal locks. (DF)

## 6.

### LEGAL.

- a) GR reported that we had now had seen Councils legal opinion on the questions raised and that our solicitors were happy with the results, which were positive as far as the view NABO had on the issues. GR gave a very general view to Council but a meeting would be set up between DF and GR with Mark Beasley the Solicitor to discuss in more detail and to understand the opinions before a more detailed report to Council. (DF and GR)

7.

## WUSIG

HA outlined the outcome and issues from the first meeting of WUSIG to help prepare the consultation.

- a) SR was concerned that the full 4 months public consultation would be shortened. HA confirmed it had been revised.
- b) One of the issues was on the residential aspects of the consultation – much of what was being discussed would only complicate these.
- c) SS made the point that, put simply, there were not enough moorings 1,2,7 or 14 day and outlined a simple calculation that suggested that with the present increase of boats there would be a need for a minimum of 300 plus extra year on year. BW were wanting to increase boats but was not factoring in the moorings needed.
- d) SR pointed out that this has been a recurring theme and was pointed out to BW 15 years ago.
- e) GR suggested that we should advise BW to put a cap on new boat licenses until they have sorted out enough moorings.  
HA and GR are continuing to monitor progress of the consultation.

A further wide ranging discussion took place about the Chairman's forthcoming BWAFF meeting and a NNUF meeting and Councils input.

8.

## BW ADVISORY FORUM

- a) DF reported from his meeting at BWAFF which was attended by a number of Executive Directors from BW, including Robin Evans and Simon Salem.  
They outlined the 20/20 Vision on staff reductions – these are still subject to union debate. The logic was an easier management structure, better asset maintenance and use interface.
- b) DF would do a review for NABO News (DF)
- c) SS pointed out that this was a complete U turn from when Robin Evans joined and created the present business units.
- e) DF stated that he was impressed by the asset management report by Jim Sterling.
- f) SR said that BW should be given some real credit for this work.
- g) DF reported that there had been a question about any fatalities due to a failure of any asset – BW could not answer.

**9. CHAIRMANS MEETINGS WITH RBOA/TBA**

DF reported that no formal meetings had taken place but at other UG meetings he maintained an informal dialogue.

**10. CONTINUOUS CRUISERS**

JS felt that most of the issues were being covered in other aspects of the work of NABO; however he felt that Continuous Cruisers feel targeted and felt they shouldn't have to always defend themselves. The overstay/blocking of moorings was not the fault of continuous cruisers but continuous moorers and only reinforced the 'lack of moorings' argument. Council reiterated its continued support of genuine continuous cruisers.

**11. COST OF BOATING SURVEY**

JS outlined the survey results which would be published in NABO News and pointed out some interested facts to Council.

Generally felt that a survey next year will provide the proper gauge to compare.

JS noted the range in costs paid for insurance etc and DS thought this type of information should be useful for members to guide on averages to look for.

**12. WEB SITE MATTERS**

BR said it was a work in progress but it must have input every few days to make it worthwhile and keep the front page fresh. DS asked everyone to ensure they consider anything of value that should be forwarded to Brian for inclusion.

**13. NABO PROMOTION & MARKETING**

RC reported that response had been limited from the requests in NABO News, but reports from the events that had the display suggested that leaflets were well distributed.

Two marinas in the North West had put in a display.

The next reports from Melanie would perhaps be significant if we see an increase in members from specific areas.

AC asked about the value of perhaps talking with other organisations about funding joint stands at the key shows.

**14. NABO NEWS**

Council were again unanimous in warm approval of the last issue and SS continues to be modest in his acceptance of such praise!

Contents and articles were agreed by Council Members at the request of the Editor.

SS reminded Council that he will be off on his travels in Europe at some stage soon and thought needs to be given to a new Editor for NABO News sooner or later.

**15. AOB**

- a) John Slee reminded SS that he had volunteered as a moderator for Waterways Reports but it had not been sorted (SS)
- b) RC reported that we had a net gain in members this month: 18 in and 16 not renewed. He would continue to try and contact non renewer's to see how the reasons stacked up, following his calls in March which resulted in 75% renewing. (RC)
- c) RC would provide examples of the letters received by members regarding membership at the next council meeting to see how they might be freshened and improved. (RC)
- d) BR reported that he had revisited the issue of data protection and was confident that we did not need to as a not for profit organisation.
- e) RC presented a wall planner proposal that would

provide


copies for all members at Xmas FOC. This was approved provided that the envelope supply was included to allow it to be circulated with NABO News.(RC)

**ACTION Points are indicated throughout the minutes by underline.**

The meeting closed at 4.05 pm.

Date and time of the next full Council Meeting:

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at the Waggon and Horses at Oldbury time 10.45am.

 5/9/09