

**MINUTES of a COUNCIL MEETING of the
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS,**

Held at the Waggon and Horses, Oldbury on Saturday 6th March 2010

Present David Fletcher (Chair)

 Stephen Peters Simon Robbins

 John Slee Howard Anguish

 Sue Burchett Richard Carpenter

Visiting Member Panda Smith

1. APOLOGIES

Council member Andrew Colyer (still in South America); Geoffrey Rogerson (poorly)

2. MINUTES

a) **Approval.** With all those who had been present in agreement, the minutes of the 23rd January meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman

b) **Matters arising** if not elsewhere on this agenda

+ Richard reported that the store was emptied five weeks ago and all items were at his home and the savings this year would be £800. Transport cost was £50.

+ Tidal Lock pending David to consider how to approach **Action David**

+ No specific AGM review has been done but no negatives have come back from anybody. Council agreed that subject to availability we should go back to Wolverhampton Boat Club as it worked well. Speaker to be discussed at next Council. **Action Richard**

+ Legal challenge ongoing – now awaiting response from BW. Council decided that pressure must be kept up and a deadline for response set. If not met then to elevate to the next complaint level stage. **Action David**

+ David reported that the Moorings Consultation Document previously circulated and agreed had been submitted to BW.

+ David reported that the Licensing Cost Consultation previously circulated and agreed had been submitted.

+ Stephen reported that the HMRC Tax liability checks were ongoing with John Darlington. **Action Stephen**

+ SR commented on television programmes continued use of the Canal as a run down and less than positive area – car dumping's, muggings, rubbish etc. Council asked the Chair to write to BBC/ITV and BW to look at more positive ways of presenting canal. **Action David**

+ RC reported that the National Olympic initiative “Discovering Places” Event had been put back from May to 23/25th July. He was still liaising with NW BW and other organisation about a possible Boat Gathering as part of it.

+ Freedom of Information. Council discussed the use of FOI requests to BW in particular and the worry that we needed to be perhaps more selective to avoid them being frivolous or duplicated with other UG and individuals. SR advised that there was a new web site www.whatdotheyknow.com/ which allowed a search (and copy of response) of all requests made to all government and public authorities. Council agreed that this would be a topic for the web site and a note in NABO News. **Action Simon**

3. Debate on NABO and Priorities

DF started the debate and asked if Council would review its position on boating and waterways issues as this seems to be something done every few years. A great deal of time was spent discussing NABO's priorities relevant to its present committed activists and possible workload and in relation to its constitution. The general theme revolved around the term Boat owning and issues related to Boat owning. Should NABO be spending time on BW's Third Sector discussions or just concentrating on mooring issues for example. Should NABO be attending Meetings on overall Waterways strategy with DEFRA or on BSS matters and so on? The consensus was that everything that involved the Waterways ultimately came under our remit and affects boat owners.

The problem, as always, is having enough people on Council or some members prepared to commit to spending time assisting with the quite large and varied issues and debates that will continue during the next few years.

Several Council Members asked the question “What do our members actually want or expect and did we really know?”

The following priorities were broadly accepted

- We should continue with our LEGAL Challenge to BW. **(DF/GR)**
- BW Customer Service Committee which is not open to UG members but has been served by Stuart Sampson as a private user to date. As Stuart will soon be off to the continent we should endeavour to ensure

that BW replaces him with a NABO Member if possible. **(DF to press how to get a member invited)**

- Boat Safety Scheme issues are important to be reported to Members.
- Create a questionnaire to ask our members to indicate what they prioritise. **(JS?)**
- Invite members to attend the next council meeting specifically to debate what they require from us – incentive that they get lunch! **(NABO News and Website)**
- Continue of course with all matters relating to Licensing and Mooring.
- Continue to support the initiative already taking place in the North of more localised User Forums with BW and ensure it is taken Nationwide. **(RC, HA and Regional Reps)**
- Continue efforts to increase membership but with a priority of meeting our members and boat owners in general to further ascertain their priorities and NABO's role.
- Target the Trail Boating Community **(RC)**
- Ensure we follow through on all work done

4. WATERWAYS FOR EVERYONE

DF provided council with a list of questions posed by DEFRA in the Waterways for Everyone Consultation. In view of the number and range it was felt that discussion in Council would take too long to formulate answers on the day.

It was agreed that this would provide an opportunity to test the range of options available on the new web site. The questions would be posted on the Council Area to allow each to make comments where a view was held and post them to the site – all to be completed by Tuesday 23rd March to allow DF to extract and provide the NABO response by the end of month closing date. **(Web addition JS)**

SR proposed that the previous letter to the Waterways Minister (and its response) be included in our final submission and be posted to the web site at the same time – unanimously agreed. **(JS)**

Response document **(DF)**

5. NEWS EDITOR

DF confirmed that Stuart would edit for the last time and he had agreed to go out on a positive note for the future of NABO rather than E mails he had circulated to Council...

There was some debate about whether we needed an editor or just someone with the skills of a desk top publisher to prepare the main contents which was mostly provided by Council.

RC pointed out that the procedure to the print and distribution stage had been given to him by Carole Sampson and he felt comfortable with in one at that stage.

Two names had been proposed who were not on Council and who had offered to prepare NN for publication. It was agreed that a small Sub Committee comprising HA and JS would follow up, interview candidates' and report back well before the next council meeting with a view to giving one of them the opportunity to do the May NN under a degree of supervision and final content by appointed Councillors.

(HA/JS)

Panda Smith offered to help any councillor to precise articles that may be too long or too wordy – she had some experience of this skill.

7 .WEB MATTERS.

JS reported that the site was now live, and seemed to be getting some regular hits. One new member had used the application form already.

John had prepared a Press Release announcing the site for the general Waterways Press and RC would publish this. **(JS/RC)**

Council discussed various options on the site and from this is it was agreed that JS would develop and FAQ to allow all meetings attended, and forthcoming could be added by Councillors. Regional Reps would be encouraged to ask a Council member to add theirs as well. **(JS)**

Council also agreed that John would run a cost of boating survey to follow up on last years. **(JS)**

JS then demonstrated to Council how to add/amend an article to the web site.

It was agreed that all articles submitted would generate a message to the Chair, Vice Chair, Gen Sec and the Webmaster any one of whom could check and approve for publication. This would serve as an extra check on content, facts etc. If there were problems this would be referred back to the author or instigate a debate.

8. FINANCE

Stephen reported that the bank balances to date are Alliance and Leicester £4815

Barclays' current a/c £5,453 and deposit a/c £26214 giving a total of £36,482. SP pointed out that he believed there were approximately £2000 of un-presented cheques at this time.

9. MARKETING

RC reiterated the reason for deciding to do Crick Show (29th, 30th, 31st May) this year following the E mail approvals. There had been no negatives from Council.

DF pointed out that he was keen to meet members and boat owners in general to follow on from the theme of finding out what they thought NABO's priorities were.

RC showed council his designs, taken from the new Web presentation, for the new POP up display stand which would be used at all future events, as well as the provision of two slimmer Pull Up displays, again transportable by car easily and to be used for any event. He asked Council for opinions on content as he had used promotion prose taken from our present leaflet – all would respond within one week. RC will E mail the designs. **(RC/Council)**

RC estimated the costs of displays (once he had twisted suppliers arms and called in some favours would be a total of £700 for all the display and design work (the displays would normally be £1,300 plus design/delivery etc) This expenditure fell within approvals sought and agreed last year.

RC estimated the final costs for the display stand and ancillaries at Crick would be £377.07 (We ordered electricity to light the display and run a laptop linked to our website). DS will be present throughout the Show and has his boat berthed there (at his own cost) RC will be there to set up and cover two days – he will cover his own Hotel Costs. A final budget will be sought for approval at Council in April. **(RC)**

10. NABO NEWS ARTICLES/ DEADLINES

Articles to be sent to Stuart on his canal mate address

Web site Instructions	<u>Action John</u>
Manchester Ship Canal	<u>Action Howard</u>
Bridge and Lock location identification for Emergency Services	<u>Action Howard</u>
Chairman's Column	<u>Action David</u>
Item on Safety	<u>Action David</u>
Freedom of information procedures	<u>Action Simon/Panda</u>

Worcester User Forum	<u>Action Stephen</u>
Crick	<u>Action Richard</u>
Psue don nim	<u>Action Who is this?</u>
Letter from Alan Holden	<u>Action Richard</u>
Questions for the Political Parties	<u>Action Richard</u>
(Subject to approval from Council)	

11.AOB

- Panda updated Council on the latest position in the Kennet and Avon disputes. She was encouraged by the involvement and apparent support of Wiltshire Council and some local Parish councils who were also meeting with BW.

Panda asked for any comments and advice Council could offer following her submission to us by E mail recently – this before it goes to the Waterways Ombudsman.

DF and HA expressed general informal feedback that they had had from boaters over the situation on the K & A about just how close the issues were to be anti NABO's official position on Continuous Mooring and Cruising. SR assured Council that he had followed this issue very closely and was happy that our involvement was properly supportive.

- Remind Regional Secretaries to send reports to RC following forthcoming rounds of User Group Meetings **Action Regional Secs**
- RC suggested we might provide some facts for Members to ask "doorstep canvassers and prospective MPS" should they encounter any in the coming weeks. Agreed he would circulate some ideas to Council for approval and subsequent publishing in NN. DF pointed out that the IWA had already done something similar so it had some merit. **Action Richard**
- SR reported that there would be an amendment to BW's Houseboat Licence contents following a successful formal complaint and we would be able to make comment.

The meeting ended at 4.25pm

Date and time of the next Full Council meeting at the Waggon & Horses at Oldbury at 10.45 am on Saturday 17th April 2010

Approved

Dr

17/4/10