

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

Held at the Waggon and Horses, Oldbury on Saturday 28th April 2012

Present: David Fletcher (Chair), Geoffrey Rogerson, Stephen Peters, John Slee, Richard Carpenter, Andy Colyer

1. APOLOGIES

Peter Fellows, Simon Robbins

2. Minutes 3rd March 2012

a) Minutes were approved

b) Matters arising/Actions

- i. The article on Water resources was published
- ii. CRT Election to be dealt with during meeting
- iii. Draft Letter to be sent Local Partnerships by Regional reps to be drafted by DF, introducing NABO and seeking answers regarding openness DF

3. Licensing, Moorings and Charging

- a. **K & A** AC will follow up on current correspondence although the mood is not encouraging. The concern is the BW Staff responsible not having the confidence of the groups involved. AC reported that the local Trade Association had been seeking answers on various issues and WM Mark Stevens was asked to update them and even he seems to be stalling – he is generally very good and it seems he is not getting the answers internally. GR reported that there was an upcoming meeting under the Wiltshire Voices banner and will be well attended if past form shows anything. BW have not attended in the past although there has been someone from the Local Partnership. GR and AC are seeking a meeting with the Local partnership Chair and BW manager to introduce themselves and NABO GR/AC
- b. **Mooring Fees** DF expressed concern that there had been no response in the press or indeed from any source following the article in NABO News. A discussion took place about the distribution of NN but feeling was that all key people had received it. Result must be that the piece was on the nail!

- c. **NABO Policy on CC** DF again reported no knowledge of any comment from Press or elsewhere about our statement on policy on Continuous Cruising and Mooring Overstay. Again we can assume its accepted. It was agreed that RC will recirculate it to Press on a separate release to see if we can get follow up. **RC**
- d. **Boat Moving Powers** SR has correspondence ongoing on this issue in London which has been circulated and the ramifications will be discussed at next Council meeting and on line between Council in the meantime **SR**

4. Consultations and reports form meetings

BWAF. RC was unable to attend due to illness and minutes had not yet been circulated. DF will follow up with the Chairs who did attend. .

NINF Sue attended on our behalf and reported general discussions with nothing to relevant. Main concern was the lack of any support from IWA.

APPWG DF attend meeting on 16th March which was largely a CRT Announcement. It was more useful for the opportunity to speak privately over lunch with John Dodwell, and one of the “elected” Boating representatives Vaughan Welch.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS. DF will draft a letter for regional reps to send to Local partnerships – debate was had on content and objectives. **DF**

5. CRT MATTERS

a. **BW/CRT Health and Safety.** JS appraised the meeting on his correspondence with BW (Vince Moran) over the issues concerning the sad loss of life of a youngster using a bottom bridge on locks on the S&W. The meeting agreed that response by BW seems to be very over the top and yet still inconsistent. JS reported that FOI requests have produced the Risk assessments and AC will review these and advise Council to allow a possible response. It was agreed that we should offer BW our help and support on H&S issues where we can from a Boating perspective. Meeting felt that over reaction from BW could be due to the influx of new target users of the system – an assumption that boaters new the risks perhaps? It was proposed that we should seek a face to face meeting with Vince Moran in due course as correspondence was getting a bit confrontational and defensive. – this will not be done until later in the season. DF will seek an information discussion with the Waterway manager for the area. **AC/DF**

DF indicated that he thought that the NT had changed policy on how it approached H&S. - he would look into it further.

b. **New Waterways Advisory Group.** RC revealed we had been asked to nominate a representative for this planned group by Jeff Wyatt at BW and DF said he has informally be approached to Chair it. All agreed that we should

take part as it was most relevant to NABO even though its remit was yet to be fully revealed. DF agreed to be nominated and will see to application. DF

6. FINANCE

SP reported the following balances

Barclays Current	£4,560
Barclays deposit	£15,736
Santander	£2,499
TOTAL	£22,975(March £22,870)

SP explained that the Santander account was largely in place as it handled the Direct debits and the Administration involved in changing and contact all the members didn't justify changing – they were older longer standing members. He made regular transfers from this account.

GR suggested that perhaps we should review our membership fees to perhaps £20 in order to increase revenues to allow the appointment of staff to handle the issues we have. After debate it was decided to informally review other similar groups membership fees but do nothing until the transfer to on line applications and renewals. It was pointed out that no changes to fees could be done without approval at an AGM but that this coming one might have it on the Agenda. There had been no increases for more than ten years. To be discussed more in the future.

7. Web Matters

- i. JS reported that work continued and progress was being made on the Paypal on line payment method for new membership and he hoped it would be up and running within a few weeks.
- ii. JS introduced a list of terms and conditions we will need for the web site and he was reasonable happy this allowed us to comply with any consumer or trading laws on line. He had used and adapted other terms he had found – the meeting confirmed acceptance that these will be published on line..
- iii. JS reported that Twitter was increasing quite well with over 300 followers at the moment and this was growing. He stress that it was important that posts were made daily if possible and this increases traffic and interest. He found that visits to our Facebook page was not as successful but couldn't give any real explanation.
- iv. RC reported that he had made contact with a company of his acquaintance through his local Chamber of Trade who have offered to spend a day with our Webmaster to look at our site and give advice on Optimisation – the ways in which we can achieve more present on Search engines on line. They would happily meet with JS at his convenience to explain more on the subject and help rewrite parts of

the site to ensure more views. The fee would be £150 for the day and the meeting felt this would be very worthwhile. Plans will be made for a follow up in late June when JS felt he could be free to give the time to this. **RC/JS**

- v. RC reported that we have been asked to provide an entry in a page on their new site – yet to be launched – a directory of all business's and user. He has done this.
- vi. A more general debate took place about linking our site to others to try and ensure we are seen on boat owning and sites where boat owners would logically search. After the optimisation meeting this should improve.

8. Promotion/Marketing

RC reported that he had had to resend new copies of NN News to potential advertisers who wanted to see it before committing to buying from us. He had had poor response so far and had now started targeting Advertising Agencies who represented the bigger brands. AC reported that the rates for much smaller ad in the DBA magazine which also had a smaller circulation were nearly what we were asking. RC will make new efforts. SP indicated that NN was increasing in cost and that revenue from advertising would offset this significantly.

RC had received the latest figures from Melanie on Membership and this showed a net loss of members of nearly 80 during the past 12 months. We were recruiting new ones but not at the level we were losing them. A debate on why this may be concluded that we are just not reaching the vast majority of boaters who are marina based. – the worry being that they are not really interested or affected by the issues we pursue. The past 130 losses will be telephone by a group of volunteers and members of council to see if its possible to glean the reasons for renewal – and even discover if our administration is out of date and follow up needs review. RC will be providing lists to each with contact details. **RC**

Our remaining 9000 leaflets incorporating membership Forms will be distributed at crick in the “goodie” bag issues to all attendees at a cost around £400 – budget already agreed. Council thought it best way of reaching owners and potential owners and of ensuring stocks were used before being out of date following CART.

DF will also look at a possible new wording for the philosophy of NABO and why membership for new membership application Form. **DF**

CART Cavalcade.- proposed late June. NABO had been invited to take part and provide a boat. No one can get a boat there – RC will approach Wolverhampton Boat Club to see if the would represent us. **RC**

9. NABO NEWS

RC reported that he would link with Peter Fellows who was ok to edit as usual despite his family bereavement. RC understood that Peter had quite a bit of material.

Other pieces agreed were

Review of the Election to CRT and the process SP

An article on no seat for NABO and ramifications/concerns DF

DF Fletcher usual Chair plus extra on CRT update

Peter to be asked to do something on Drought/Impact etc to be gleaned from correspondence and waterways web sites in general

RC to write to BW Press Office to introduce them to Peter as a source for print and articles (done).

Geoffrey was doing a new cartoon!

It was further unanimously agreed following a proposal from GR and seconded by SP to reduce the numbers of NN News each year to 6 from the present seven. This would help control costs, and reduce pressure on Council and Editor.

AOB.

DF. Louis Jankel is in the Jubilee Parade. RC reported that the Flag had been ordered.

Volunteers. yet again discussion was had about the serious position NABO was facing without the recruitment of new helpers and eventual Council Members. Councillors were again aged by the Chair to consider this and potential.

Concessions list of NNNews. All Council have a list provided and are asked to review this –and recommend any amendments. We are wasting resources and not reaching key people and so RC will also send again separately. **ALL**

BSS. David reported on the continued deterioration of Trevor Stevens health which will result in our BSS representation needing review in due course. DF is of course heavily involved in BSS in any case and reported continued review taking place in BSS regulations which would be reported in due course.

Meeting closed 3.10pm.

Approved.

DF

9/6/12