

Minutes of a COUNCIL MEETING of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BOAT OWNERS

Held at the Waggon and Horses, Oldbury on Saturday 8th September 2012

Present: David FLETCHER (Chair), Stephen PETERS, Richard CARPENTER, Simon ROBBINS, Geoffrey ROGERSON

1. APOLOGIES

Peter FELLOWS, Andy COLYER.

DF announced that John SLEE had formerly resigned from Council with immediate effect for personal reasons. This meant his roles as Webmaster and Continuous Cruising Representative were also vacant with immediate effect. RC explained that he had met with John who expressed his profound apologies for leaving Council so suddenly in the knowledge that it would put pressure on other councillors, however he had no other option.

2. MINUTES 9th June 2012

- a) Minutes were approved unanimously
- b) Matters Arising/Actions
 - i) GR reported that the proposed meeting had not been set up with Local Partnership Chair and BW Manager as no minutes had been forthcoming from MMSG and events had taken over – see later item
 - ii) New Waterways Advisory Group. DF reported he had been appointed and will sit on the Navigation Committee – first meeting scheduled for late September which he will be unable to attend.
 - iii) Houseboats DF discussed RBOA position on houseboats to basically discover there wasn't one and it wasn't on their radar and is a minor issue. DF will respond to the consultation request as per previous discussions in Council. DF

3. LICENSING, MOORINGS and CHARGING (default)

- a) **Houseboat Update and Consultation.** The consultation has to be lodged before 30th September, following discussion previously in Council and with SRs advice. DF/SR would do short update article for NNews DF/SR
- b) **New CRT Licensing Terms and Conditions** Council discussed various points raised in correspondence prior to the meeting and generally there were few problems or faults. However the main issue was the Lack of Consultation. It was unanimously agreed to write to CRT outlining our few concerns and comment on

the changes made by CRT – but strongly emphasise our dismay at lack of consultation.

DF

- c) **K & A.** Council discussed the Outline Towpath Mooring Plan distributed by Sally Ash and in particular the lack of involvement of stakeholders in preparing this Plan. Council unanimously agreed to send a review of the document, plus all previous reports from the MMSG activities, to the local chair of the Regional CRT Committee (copy to Simon Salem) for her information and background. This would be sent in the spirit of helping her Committee understand the issues and problems with RMP's.

DF/GR

4. CRT

- a) **Conflict of Interest – Sally Ash** Discussion took place about the conflict of interest issue which is currently the main topic for boaters. The Drifters Initiative to promote use of Canals by new boaters and hirers has only recently come to light despite being in existence for many years. The fact that it's not high profile should perhaps indicate a failure however the issue is that that BW (and now CRT's) Head of Boating sits as an unpaid Director on its Board. It was decided unanimously that DF should write to CRT expressing our view on this but not put anything in the Press or N News as other sections of interest groups were playing very hard on it.

b) **Executive Pay**

There was general discussion on the concerns that CRT Directors were still overpaid in the market although it was accepted that CRT were subject to TUPE laws. Council were concerned that the Property Director seemed exempt which smacked of way round performance bonus.

SR asked if we could compare with the structures of the National Trust DF will do Agreed that DF would write expressing our concerns and asking specifically on the Property issue and how the announced bonus was paid for a recent deal and how that would be for the future.

DF

Very little confidence in Council that there would be any significant change in the percentage of Directors pay against the old BW

- c) **CRT AGM.** Scheduled for 27th September but no one able to attend.

5. PLANNING for 2013

Council debated the issues around lack of volunteers for Council roles.

DF explained that he had taken on the web address for Continuous Cruisers and the Webmaster in the short term.

It was agreed that little could be done until after the AGM, and recruitment was known.

Members of current council indicated that they would carry on, except Richard Carpenter who did indicate that he would continue to act as General Secretary and as the Office base for NABO if requested (permissible within the Constitution). His commitment to Council Meetings would be hard to keep given his business interests.

It was agreed that the nomination process should point out firmly that we faced issues.

6. FINANCE

SP reported our current balances as follows

SANTANDER Current Account	£3,767
BARCLAYS Current Account	£4,190
Barclays Deposit Account	£13,742
TOTAL	£21, 699

SP reported that our Liability insurance premiums were due and the latest quotes were £1263. He explained that this covered members travel when on NABO business, public liability and legal protection etc. It was in line with previous years. Council approved the budget.

A debate took place about our accountant's recent report that we were dropping our balances quite quickly and revenues were underperforming against costs. The cost of the revised NN had an impact on that, but we our accounts also reflect the impact of Legal Challenges and an increase in attendance at Meetings and attendant expenses. Increases in fees were considered although in general it was felt that this might be a negative impact. Increased income from advertising would help and it was agreed a review of expenditure with perhaps a limit for number and types of attendance at meetings with CRT etc might be required following the AGM.

7. WEB MATTERS

Following the resignation of John Slee Council debated the immediate and longer term issues. DF had taken over the e mail addresses for web and CC'ers. RC pointed out that the programme used was called Joomla and was not the easiest to work with following introductions of simpler programmes now available. We may have to consider employing a specialist to host the site and do detailed work. There may be a need to simplify and use a new programme for the future.

Concerns for the start-up of members lists, payment on line, Paypal, Twitter and Facebook all of which were under JS remit. It was pointed out that very few members had joined on line and so it was crucial that Melanie carried on the parallel system. RC will inform Melanie. All a task following the AGM, and an appeal for volunteers to come forward to look after matters.

8. ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

RC reported that he had now got two bookings from advertisers in NABO News, promising a minimum of six issues per year. The back page for Midland Chandlers at £1250 for the year and inside front cover from Barrus for £1000. He was trying for the inside back cover at £1000 and was hopeful that a couple of leads might result in a booking once they have seen the September issue.

9. NABO NEWS

As part of the debate on costs there was a suggestion that reducing costs by doing one or two fewer issues might be a way to solve budgets. Agreed this would be a possible topic for the AGM but that NN was our main organ and measure of value for membership. A closer look at content and pages might help.

DF reported that a new member had some ideas on quality and print who would speak with Peter in due course.

RC reported that Peter had already a good start on articles.

The following articles will be written and forwarded to PF by 16th September

Comment and article regarding new Terms and Conditions featuring a couple of main points plus a cartoon	Geoffrey Rogerson
Houseboat article on anomalies?	DF/SR
AGM	
Resolutions	
Application Form for Council	
Venue	
Instructions to venue, procedure to see nominations on web only.	RC
Small thanks to John Slee	RC
Executive pay response	DF
piece on BSS procedures	DF
Chair Piece	DF
CRT piece	DF
Response from John Dodwell	Peter to take what he feels and needs
NOTHING on HSE and Bridges – felt too sensitive at this time. – just a moving on piece from Peter as circulated	
Simon Greer response	SR

10. AOB

- 1) AGM – agreed to have AGM at Bradford on Avon at the Beef and Barge. Room free and buffet at £5.00 per head. RC to arrange details. Agreed to invite Local Area Manager as guest (DF), and hold informal discussion group inviting Canal Taverners, Local Trust etc. RC
- 2) SR reported he had had informal meeting with the facilitators of Lee and Stort and CRT consultation. He explained they had held informal talks with many involved and a full formal meeting was to be arranged.
- 3) SR also said he would write an observation for a future NN on the impact of the Olympics on boaters and practice up to, during and following the events.
- 4) DF explained that Examination procedures were being completed and should be published before Xmas. He also reported that he had been asked to Chair the Technical Committee of BSS which he was favourable towards.
- 5) DF reported he had been asked for some submissions to the new CRT Council from NABO and Council agreed he should do so, all felt supplying recent articles from NN which outlined our position in a number of areas. SR also requested that we ask for clarity on FOI for the future and how they will control expenses.

Meeting finished at 3.00pm

Approved
GJR