

# Minutes of a Council Meeting of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Held at the Titford Pumphouse, Engine Street, Oldbury at 10.45am on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>  
March 2015

**Present:** Mike Rodd (Chair), Peter Fellows, Phil Goulding, Stephen Peters, Mark Tizard, David Fletcher (intermittently via phone). Members, Allan Richards, Graham Holmes, Alison Tuck and Paul Howden (Roving Canal Traders Association), Ivor Caplin for part.

1) **Apologies for absence:** Geoffrey Rogerson, Richard Carpenter, Trevor Rogers  
2) **Minutes of last meeting**

i) Minutes 24<sup>th</sup> January approved unanimously. Actions are complete unless recorded below or updated in agenda.

ii) Matters Arising and actions:

2(ii)3: EA flood risk consultation – the 3 Thames reps are taking this forward with TUG.

2(ii)4: CRT mooring sales. Still there but a partial climbdown by CRT in that except in “hot-spots” moorings will not be auctioned.

3(i) a: K&A review - there have been 3 meetings re: visitor moorings on the K&A but no money apparently available and hence no action.

3(i) d: Mayer judgement - Geoffrey raised questions to Jackie Lewis but she has largely ducked the issues raised.

3(i) e: National Boating Associations meetings with CRT - we will meet RBOA before the meetings, they are keen to work with us.

MR/MT

3(i) e iii): NABO Council agenda and minutes - Mike and Mark will edit the minutes for the website.

4(i): CRT Liverpool link consultation - David raised it with NAG, but no official response.

4(iii): Dredging - publish a list of contacts at CRT so that boaters can direct their comments. Mike and Mark will raise it at the next meeting with CRT.

MR/MT

5(iii): Overpayments - now largely sorted out. Thanks to David and Helen.

6(iii): Charges for overstaying on visitor moorings on Thames – it was confirmed by EA that you are allowed to moor for as long as there is a red board warning. Mike commented positively on the EA user Forum meetings. The use of car parking companies to monitor Thames moorings is to be extended from 4 to 22 sites.

7(iii): Parliamentary group on CO - no further action.

3) **Policy Discussions: Matters requiring agreement and action from this meeting**

i). Reaction to the continuing CC PR disaster and our response

Mike/Mark had written to Ian Rogers copying Richard Parry and was surprised when Richard responded within 10 min. Mark spoke to Ian expressing this and found that Ian had approved the letter to CC boat owners, and didn't seem to understand what all the fuss was about. CRT has been bombarded with letters from London boaters asking how far they should move. NBTA are saying this could be a defence in any future court cases if CRT doesn't tell them, but CRT is unwilling to give an exact figure. Until recently all discussions with CRT have used km but this seems to have become miles. Their latest statements says that the minimum range is from 15-20 miles.

Confusion reigns and CRT staff don't seem to realise the problem they have created. Overall, a PR disaster that also reflects badly on NABO because of its support - although the open letter to Richard Parry has been well-received by boaters. NABO thought it had agreed a phased approach, first targeting boaters who don't move, then those who move 5-20km, but CRT has approached all CCers and many have reacted badly, claiming they are being accused of potential criminality when they are in fact bona fide navigating. So CRT has lost the initiative. Some boaters are suggesting they keep a travel log in case they are spotted in the same place having returned there from a cruise. There was discussion of how all this relates to winter mooring permits and the confusion on the K&A because prosecutions are being brought in relation to places visited, not distance travelled.

The discussion moved on to court cases: Alan noted that CRT had failed to get the agreement of National User Groups and then NBTA published the Mayer judgement, saying navigation between two places was acceptable. CRT had to withdraw the Tony Dunkley case and he will show CRT's evidence to NABO. There was discussion of movement by boaters who have a home mooring. Mike has spoken to Jackie Lewis, who confirmed that the 'clock was reset' when a boater returned to a home mooring. It was agreed to publish the response from Jackie to this issues. Mark, Mike and Graham each gave examples of a small core of boaters who refuse to move very far, and Mike also noted that many liveaboards on the K&A are moving in line with CRT's requirements, mostly younger boaters who have adopted a canal way of life.

PF

ii). Response from recent NINF meeting

Mike reported that this was a useful meeting, although the majority want CRT to take over EA river navigations, with NABO in a minority of one.

iii). Response on Mayer.

Mark had distributed the legal summary from the Community Law Partnership - nothing to add.

4) **CRT Matters**

- i) Mike had attended the NUF meeting and reported good presentations on dredging and property management. CRT is also good at getting HLF funding. It has moved away from the 'National Trust for the waterways' thinking and stopped using chuggers.
- ii) Cycling. CRT has recently turned down some funding for towpath improvements because it considered it would create a racetrack. There followed a discussion on towpath cycling and David reported that it had been raised at NAG, but no conclusion yet. David will prepare an article for NN.
- iii) The K&A pilot finishes this month: Mike suggests it will be quietly forgotten!
- iv) T&Cs: These will be discussed at the informal National Boating Organisation's meeting with CRT. There was discussion of ACC making information public.

DF

5) **Membership, promotion and marketing**

- i) Attracting new members: There have been several new members in the last few weeks. The need is to turn people contacting the Facebook page into members. Mike reported that Richard is working on how to use Facebook to reach new groups of people. The discussion focused on a) what is valuable to members, when there is free information available on the web (including NABO website) and b) how to balance transparency in giving out information while retaining value for members by restricting public access. Alison described the RCTA website, having an open section, a

member's section and a secret groups section. She felt the main benefit of membership is NABO's ability to represent her interests. Phil thought the main benefit of membership is advice and representation. Alan noted that NABO is doing more on the web than AWCC and ACC. Graham suggested giving membership forms to coal boats to hand out. Mark suggested other options, including donations instead of membership fees, with the facility to donate on the Facebook page. Phil suggested a free first year's membership. David suggested a reduction in fees for not receiving NN. It was agreed to put a loose membership form in the next issue of NN. The main expenditure is printing and posting NN and more members (currently ≈10%) could be encouraged to take it online to reduce costs. Mike will consider the points raised and prepare a paper for the next meeting. If it contains proposals for the AGM, it will need to be approved by the June meeting.

PF

MR

- ii) RCR: Mike reported that Richard has had discussions with RCR to increase their technical input to NN and he considers it might be feasible to double the number of adverts.

**6) EA Matters**

- i) EA expect a 30% cut after the election.
- ii) The River User Group report has been circulated. It was thought to be useful with important information.
- iii) The NABO rep is on the working group for a new Customer Charter.

**7) BSS Matters**

- i) David reported that the next technical meeting will be in April, to consider the hire boat code and CO alarms.

**8) Finances**

- i) Stephen reminded council that the financial year ends in March and all expenses claims should be sent now. ALL
- ii) Accounts. Stephen reported that we need someone to prepare them. Mark and Phil thought it would not be difficult work and David said he would look into what the accounting programme can provide, but it should be straightforward. Stephen will ask Helen if this is something that she could do. DF
- ii) Auditor: The RBOA auditor had quoted £360. Stephen had contacted James Sterkel, but he is possibly not aware of what is needed and Stephen will contact the other members on the list sent by David. If these are not available/suitable, Mike has other contacts to approach. SP
- iii) Current balances: SP
  - Barclays current account - £5820
  - Barclays deposit account - £8756
  - Santander - £1679
  - Total - £16,255

**9) Web matters**

- i) A start has been made to upgrade the website software. Alison offered to look at it and advise as necessary. It was agreed that as a library, valuable content should be for members only. AT
- ii) The cost of a transfer application of £20 was approved.

**10) NABO News**

Articles so far for the April issue:

Single-handed in the Fens - Helen.

CRT Acts of Parliament - Stephen.

Bermuda Triangle on the Thames? Louis.

EA mismanagement of Thames boat registration - Louis.

NABO's comments on the proposed changes to CRT's licence T&Cs

Helping boaters in trouble - Mark and boater, Emma Robertson.

3 or 4 letters on CRT's CCEr letter

Alison will write an article on roving traders.

PF

AT

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**AOB**

- i) Mark raised the issue of winter mooring permits - members like them but they are illegal and effectively a new type of licence. CRT made £300k from them this year. He also thought the stoppage 'season' was extending to the period covered by the winter permits. He asked for views of the meeting: Alison was in favour of the permit, Phil and Graham were against. Peter didn't like the idea of a stoppage season.
- ii) Alan raised the issue of customer service standards. Ian Rogers says they are under development and Ivor confirmed they have not yet gone to CRT Council.
- iii) Alan asked about the Waterway Ombudsman Committee as nothing has been heard for 8 months and no reply to a Fol request. Ivor had no news. Mark said it was not a requirement for CRT to appoint an Ombudsman, but the Trustees have said they will use the committee. Mike will raise this at the next meeting with CRT.
- iv) Mark raised the question of an appeal process for Section 8 enforcement. Ivor expected it to be in the new customer service charter.
- v) Ivor reported on the role of boating reps on the Council and the work they are doing, followed by a discussion of how to encourage young boaters. Elections for Council members are to be held later this year and he asked if NABO can publicise these among members.

MR

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25/4/2015