

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

Held at the Wolverhampton Boat Club at 10.45am on Saturday 17th ~~September~~ 2015
OCTOBER



- Present:** Mike Rodd (Chair), Geoffrey Rogerson, Mark Tizard, Richard Carpenter, Paul Howland, Phil Goulding, Stephen Peters, Trevor Rogers; Members: Helen Hutt, Alison Tuck (RCTA), Alan Richards, David Lowe (CBOA).
- 1) Apologies for absence:** David Fletcher, Peter Fellows.
- 2) Minutes of last meeting**
- i) Minutes 17th September approved unanimously. Actions are complete unless recorded below or updated in agenda.
 - ii) **Matters Arising and actions:**
 - 2.2(ii) dredging, no action yet. MT
DL is working with CRT on major projects on Staffs & Worcs and Coseley Tunnel due to start soon.
 - Ombudsman committee still has no user reps. NABO had a 'polite response' from CRT who, according to AR, wanted to continue without a committee. As things stand, scheme changed to be ADR compliant but is not recognised by the Ombudsman Association. MR expressed concerns to Ombudsman at NUF meeting; further meeting to be arranged. MR
 - RCR ad in NN; RC meeting them end of October and will ask them to either pay for their ad or provide a suitable deal for members. RC
 - London Rep – DF had produced list of boaters in London area but none known to Council. MT to email them anyway. MT
 - 2.3(vi) automation of bridges on G&S: pilot scheme has slowed down. Boaters largely in favour but locals have concerns (DL thought they simply don't like change). CRT will be testing one bridge over next 18 months. PG
 - 2.4(iii) CRT Council elections. Mike had raised the issue of poor communication with CRT but they seemed not to care, maintaining they had contacted 75% of license holders by email. Perhaps the new Director of Communications will sort out the problem. There are only 8 boater reps in the running; is this because of lack of interest or non-receipt of invitation to stand? MR said Ian Rogers and Mike Grimes are aware of the situation and pledge to act.
 - 3(i) individual meetings between NABO and CRT: being actioned. Mark taking Mike Grimes out for a trip. MT
 - 3(ii) winter moorings. Mike's response to Canal Boat had been published.
 - 3(iii) Invoice from Shakespeare's for legal advice on T&C, £1,800, approved for payment. HH
 - 5(iii) input from Regional Reps – Mike had contacted all, one response. Agreed there needed to be a co-ordinator to keep in touch with them regularly. Someone to be appointed after AGM. ALL
 - 6(ii) Mike had written to Rory Stewart, good response saying transfer of EA to CRT not on the agenda for now.
 - 6(iii) EA Thames moorings; Helen had seen somewhere that these were restricted to 24 hours, not 48 as reported, email to be found and sent to Mike. (Louis Jankel has since confirmed that 24 hours is correct.)
 - 7(ii) BSS risk assessment methodology: no movement.
 - 9(v) Group insurance scheme: mention in latest Bulletin had prompted 4 members to register interest. They had now been asked to send their current ALL

policy details to Hutt Professional for a 'test run'. Helen said it would be helpful if all Council members did the same, to provide a larger sample.
9(vi) NN advertising: RC hoped to have deals concluded with 4 advertisers before the AGM.
11 (i) Stella Ridgway's nomination to CRT Council had gone forward; election day is 2 November.

RC

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

i) Planning for AGM at WBC

No speaker this time, AGM to be finished by lunchtime, followed by Council meeting in the afternoon. Agreed to hold a forum with members to discuss a small number of headline topics, e.g. environment, enforcement, moorings, towpath issues, community engagement, maintenance – perhaps 20 minutes on each. To be confirmed to RC in time for agenda to be issued on 24 October.

MR

There were 11 nominations for Council.

A Minutes Secretary was needed.

Mike said he was prepared to stand for a further year but his time would be more constrained because of increased K&A duties.

RC can produce NABO business cards for those who need them.

ALL

RC had had further recruitment leaflets printed (albeit with the now extant freepost address on them!).

ii) CRT Terms and Conditions.

Mike had had a fairly quick response from Ian Rogers making it clear that CRT wants no further meetings to talk about this issue.

Problems included issuing licences for share boats – currently only two names are allowed - and lack of or poor definitions of terms such as 'cruising', 'bona fide' etc.

The case of Wingfield was mentioned; boat removed after CRT won ruling.

There was lengthy discussion on home moorings, ghost moorings, etc., but the upshot is that new legislation is required but that cannot happen.

Geoffrey is compiling a catalogue of 'illegal' mooring signage and asked for photos to be sent to him.

ALL

Agreed that (a) Mike's letter and CRT's response be published in NN; (b) Mike to write again emphasising CRT is not answering NABO's questions (c) members' views should be canvassed at the AGM.

iii) Richard Benyon's appointment as Chair of APPG was not welcomed as he would not be critical of CRT. However, Mike has written to congratulate him.

iv) The Community Law Partnership, represented by Chris Johnson, was discussed.

They act on behalf of boaters (as well as gypsy and traveller communities), providing legal aid where required. They have done good work in London. Agreed NABO should have a formal meeting with CLP to share information.

GR

4) CRT Matters

i) Vince Moran's retirement had been announced, with no direct replacement being appointed. CRT announced its intention of coordinating winter work, by integrating activities of contractors, staff and volunteers. Alison reported that there was no supervision for Adoptions. Mike suggested she speak to Julie at CRT.

ii) NAG meetings: see David's report for the Operations Group. Mark said the first reconstituted NAG (Licensing & Moorings Group) meeting would be held next Thursday and would look at customer service survey, enforcement policies, customer survey, priorities for next 6 months, winter moorings. ACC

is no longer represented and has been replaced by various continuous cruisers. RBOA had asked if they could nominate a replacement if their representative leaves – yes. Alison is also part of this group and she queried if the old job description still applies. Mark said it was up to the reps to make the new NAG work.

- iii) Council elections: there are 8 boater candidates. Is there a question of legality if not all licence holders were aware of the process due to the whole operation taking place over the internet? Alan had a spreadsheet from the previous election which showed that around 26% had voted out of 28,000.
- iv) Winter moorings: Mark reported a lot of press coverage. When CRT announced that only designated areas were to be used this year, they said the price would not vary much. However, in Birmingham, Cambrian Wharf was £268 and Sherbourne Wharf £300. Some marinas are undercutting CRT rates. There are very few designated winter moorings on the K&A and in London; it was felt there could be more. Geoffrey reported that a stretch of permit holder mooring between Avoncliff and Limpley Stoke on the K&A had been removed because of concern that, if the water level fell, boats could be caused to list to the point of sinking!
- v) London: CRT and Hackney Council had created pontoons providing 8 boat spaces, costing between £9K and £10K; however they had mis-measured the total space to be taken up and not left room for mooring safely at the planned sanitation station. Kings Cross moorings – only London boaters had been consulted. HH reported on London Canal Forum on 14 October, which included progress on the enforcement programme; a presentation on the hydrology strategy; reorganisation of visitor moorings on the Lower Lee, the opening (with no visitor mooring) of the Island Loop around the Olympic Stadium, Waterworks River opening/booking system; dredging of parts of the canal west of London to allow more casual bankside mooring; and community engagement (online consultation).
- vi) New CC requirements: slow progress but definitely improving. A small panel in Milton Keynes CRT office assesses each individual case and recommends for a 3- or 6-month licence; if boater starts complying, he/she moves up to next category but remains under close scrutiny. In London, the number in this process is less than 20. CRT's declared objective is to get and keep boats moving as they should, not to remove them from the canal.
- vii) Corporate structural changes: 2 new directors appointed with Ian Rogers promoted to director; realignment of engineering/structures led by good people. NABO had to make sure boaters' voices continue to be heard. Partnerships were not working in general, with the possible exception of West Midlands and the North East.

5) **Membership, promotion and marketing**

- i) Making better use of regional reps: there had been no response to the request to supply updates for NN. Agreed that terms of reference needed to be drawn up and a co-ordinator appointed.

ALL

6) **EA Matters**

- i) Graham Paterson had attended a recent NUF meeting and reported that it was a good forum although many items are on hold because of potential 40%

budget cuts. A major issue that had arisen since was the removal of loose lock ladders and fire extinguishers following a health and safety assessment. Mike had written a strongly disapproving letter to the EA Chair and the matter has since attracted a lot of media interest.

MR

7) **BBS Matters**

- i) Hire boat requirements: The Technical Committee has developed changes to BSS requirements for hire boats and this was now out for consultation. Proposed revisions to the Hire Boat Code were being held up as The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities has to handle these: Of particular concern was boat stability and the training of hirers.
- ii) Risk assessment methodology: TR reported that there was no progress.

TR

8) **Association reports**

- i) Paul Howland for RCTA reported they had held their last scheduled floating market in 2015. They have been asked to organise a Christmas Market in Birmingham and have invited Mike Grimes and Amanda Crosland to attend. Traders have also been asked to participate in the 'Share the Space' campaign to encourage cyclists to slow down on the towpath.
- ii) RBOA has a new Chairman, Mike Pritchard, who is based in Chichester and is a coastal boater. Alan Wildman is a Vice Chairman.
- iii) CBOA Chairman David Lowe reported on the encouraging progress of the development of the Port of Leeds, which should be up and running next year. This includes widening the lock to 'Eurowidth' to enable freight boats (carrying aggregate, timber etc.) to reach Leeds. CBOA is now working on a similar project for the River Severn, with an inland terminal near Worcester. The problem of dredging in certain areas is automatically sorted – if a freight boat can navigate, so can others. Netherton Tunnel had recently been cleared of an obstruction. The Association has a new secretary who has a shipping background but owns a narrowboat.

9) **Finances**

- i) Following James Steckerl's audit report and recommendations, the following changes to procedures were approved:
Membership subscriptions – accounting and recording procedures: a memorandum prepared by Helen in June 2015 was circulated and approved. A signed copy would be lodged with these minutes.
Richard to sign and date each schedule of cheques received; these to be filed with the accounts at year end.
All invoices and expense claims must be approved by another Council member before being paid by the Treasurer; as most documents are digital and payments are made online, this would have to be done by means of email.
From April 2016, new cost centres to be established. Helen to put forward suggestions at next meeting.
Subscriptions paid in advance: agreed this accounting practice would be discontinued at the end of the current financial year.
- ii) It was agreed to pay James an honorarium of £100.
- iii) Current bank balances were circulated to Council prior to the meeting.
- iv) Helen reported on her recent meeting with David. On the membership ledgers, most old creditor and debtor balances had been dealt with, leaving around 12 still to be resolved. David will write again to around 20 members

HH

DF

who have continued to pay the correct amount into Santander since April, pleading with them to switch to Barclays.

10) Web matters

David has reported separately. Approval was given to pay Heart Internet £114. He requested up to date input for the Achievements page.

ALL

Richard had raised concerns about spam emails but it was decided to take no action at this stage.

11) NABO News

Having dealt with the last issue, Mike recorded his appreciation to the editor, proof readers and Chris Pink (layout) for their hard work.

Articles for the next issue:

Byelaws (x2) (Stephen)

AGM reports and results of discussion groups

Letters

John Dodwell speech

EA letters and comments on lock ladders etc.

T&C exchange of letters

Priorities

Insurance scheme (Helen)

Reminder re switching to Santander (David)

CRT Council election results, if known in time

Survey of illegal and misleading VM signage (Geoffrey)

Enforcement update (Mark)

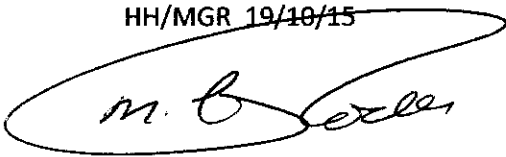
11 AOB

- i) The Lakeland Leisure Group has put in a revised planning application for a 120- boat Marina at Hungerford, with no permanent residential moorings.
- ii) Noted that the new CRT moorings web site has gone live, with a large number of moorings on a buy-as-you-go basis. Alison pointed out that you can't buy two adjacent moorings if you have a pair of boats! Noted that the new system was better for boaters on benefits.
- iii) A new application for Life Membership had been received, although this category no longer exists. (Although Council said 'keep it', DF reported that it is not possible to accommodate this and we subsequently discovered that the applicant was already a member!).
- iv) Phil raised the issue of safety/break-ins whilst boats are moored to the towpath. Some police forces (e.g. W Mercia) have a phone app for reporting incidents.
- v) Mark asked for comments and photos – preferably controversial, to stimulate debate – for Facebook

ALL

The next meeting of Council will be on the 14th of November at Wolverhampton Boat Club, following on after lunch from the AGM.

HH/MGR 19/10/15


14/11/2015