

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

Held at the Weighbridge PH Alvechurch Marina Worcester at 10.45am
on Saturday 23rd January 2016

Present: Mike Rodd (Chair), Phil Goulding, Paul Howland, Stephen Peters, Helen Hutt, Trevor Rogers; Mark Tizard, David Fletcher. Members: Les Tizard, Frank and Gillian Spragg, Alison Tuck.

1) Apologies for absence: Peter Fellows, Richard Carpenter, Stella Ridgeway, Geoffrey Rogerson, David Lowe, Allan Richards

2) Minutes of last meeting

i) Minutes 14th November approved unanimously. Actions are complete unless recorded below or updated in agenda.

ii) Matters Arising and actions:

Item from 2(ii)

g. Regional reps. Tony Parrot is considered as possible London Rep. Mark will speak to him as Stella is indisposed.

MT

q. Hungerford Marina. It was noted that the scheme has been approved but with a long list of largely environment requirements. It remains to be seen whether the developer considers the scheme viable.

Item from 6

Venue for Council Meetings. Helen noted that two other locations have said that they can accommodate us vis Tamworth CC and Waterways Experience Apsley SGU. Richard to consider

RC

Item from 9 (i) List of members for Joan Jamieson. Not done, David to do.

DF

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

i). CRT Mooring restrictions

CRT are wanting to discuss changes to mooring arrangements, particularly short term moorings. Mark and Mike had recently taken Mike Grimes and Matthew Symonds for a boat trip. The back ground is that CRT need more tools than just enforcement as this is not addressing congestion issues. Boats are now moving more but are circulating back to the same areas. Mark presented a paper on this, in preparation for the forthcoming NAG who are to look specifically at the visitor mooring framework. The NAG will cover these issues.

Free short term visitor moorings.

We currently have 2, 5, 7 and 14 day moorings. CRT want to move to 2 and 7 day only. 14 day moorings will no longer be declared visitor moorings, and will be considered as an any other part of the towpath.

Council commented:

There should always be a principle of free visitor moorings.

Time limit moorings should only be where there is a need to control demand.

Terminology should be considered, 2 nights and 7 nights is clearer than equivalent days.

Loss of specific 14 day moorings should not result in loss of good towpath moorings.

These need to be maintained and available even though no longer classed as time constrained visitor moorings. Perhaps another term.

There is a dearth of good moorings, and consideration should be given to

maintenance so that further areas near visitor moorings can be used.

No hire boat only moorings.

There should be a mandatory framework, procedure to ensure national consistency of local decision making.

Short stay premium moorings. (paid for)

CRT wish to consider extending the numbers of these. An example is Llangollen Wharf and basin where £6 is currently charged with a limit of the number of nights.

Views were split but these points made.

There is a general nervousness of where this is going. We don't want to see widespread paid for moorings.

It was noted that Llangollen works well and is a good control of the moorings.

In principle the need was understood, providing that some extra facility was provided, e.g. power, water, disposal, prebooking and not just one of these.

Prebooking by prepayments was considered a useful idea (e.g. Paddington Basin), as it open up the Regents Canal to visitors.

It was foreseen that hire boat companies might block book and therefore achieve hire boat only moorings through the back door.

Residential Moorings.

CRT are saying that they have to respond to the demand that some just want to live on their boats and will only move the minimum as the licence requires. They want to look at how to create more moorings.

Council commented

Council are supportive on new mooring provision.

These should not impact on navigation or to take away existing visitor moorings. It is difficult to understand how this can happen due to high utilisation of sites with access.

CRT previous policy has been not to encourage new on line moorings which result in navigational impact. Has this changed or just set aside?

We suspect that any such moorings would require planning permission due to land usage issues, as well as residential status.

How can this be funded when the main issue of the target customer is achieve a no cost mooring? Are other boaters going to fund this via their licence?

General Towpath Mooring

CRT wish to remove 14 day visitor moorings. Everything will be 2/7 days or unsigned 14 days.

Comments as above.

Mark has the action to take these points to NAG

MT

ii) SE Mooring Consultations:

The SE consultation on moorings organised observations on 3 sites, Stoke Bruene, Berkhamstead, and Braunston. Richard Parry has committed last year that proposals would be evidence based. Unfortunately the observations failed to note whether there was free space at the time and CRT have said that they cannot deduce this from the boat number data! So we are not much further on with this.

It is not clear whether this is led by SE partnership or NAG.

MT

iii) Prep for meeting with CRTs Mike Grimes

Covered by above.

iv) Winter moorings

CRT have reported that revenue has been maintained this winter. Take up on high cost and low cost moorings has been better than expected. CRT have been asked for roving moorings.

These comments were made:

There have been problems with valid customers being denied access because of

lack of enforcement.

CRT should continue with the policy of not taking all visitor moorings for winter moorings. This needs to be recalibrated following proposed changes to visitor moorings. Best to avoid 2 day moorings altogether.

Inconsistency in allocation of moorings is noted.

No support for roving winter moorings.

v) Regional Representatives

Held over pending Stella's return. It was noted that we need someone who is able to overview what is going on in Oxford.

vi) AGM Forum discussions

Nothing extra noted.

vii) Effects of recent flooding

CRT have started work on flood repair. We offered support for a joint CRT and National Boating Organisations fund raising campaign but CRT did not want it. IWA and RBOA also refused to join a joint campaign. CRT have stated that they cannot ask government for additional funds as their agreement with DEFRA precludes that. But in the northern area, Local Councils are applying for and getting fund for connected repairs like bridges.

CRT are reported to be diverting funds from the dredging budgets to cover immediate needs.

DF

This will be discussed in David's NAG in March

4) **CRT Matters**

i) Report on NAG meetings.

Mark reported on the Licensing part. The content is very varied and not concluding anything. CRT are not listening, and apparently hiding behind partnership activities. Some are capable but others are not. CRT are with one hand nominating members as individual and then with the other considering representatives as speaking for organisations like NABO. Mark has concerns over the value of the meetings.

MT

David reported that the Operational side was very different and focuses primarily on how best to spend the maintenance budget.

DF

ii) CRT Council elections.

We consider this a success with Stella duly elected and no larger group dominating. However, it was noted that only 6% of boaters voted, down from 24% and this must be regarded as a failure. David observed that this was probably due to insistence of CRT to use email and web system. We know that the boating world is not in this place. This has implications for many things that CRT want to do electronically. Apparently the staff election was also poorly utilised.

As noted above under notes of last meeting.

iii) Terms and Conditions.

Nothing to report

iv) National Ombudsman scheme.

Mike asked for meeting with Andrew Walker and this was agreed also with Steve Chariot, Chair of the over-seeing Ombudsman Committee. These people reported that the scheme was operational and that up to 100 cases were being dealt with per year. There has been a 3 year hiatus over the governance, due to mal administration by CRT. The EU Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive came into force in July 2015 and requires most Ombudsman schemes to obtain certification from a "competent authority". CRT's competent authority is the Trading Standards Institute and certification will mean that the scheme now meets the requirement of the Directive and the related UK regulations. Details of the cases

dealt with can be seen on the web site. The Ombudsman explained that he can only rule on aspects of the administration and not on points of law. E. G. have they applied the Terms and Conditions, but not are the terms legal? They can also advise on a view as to whether the processes are right. They observed that failure to consult over changes to the Terms and Conditions was not correct. It was agreed to have a further meeting in 12 months. Mike agreed to do some publicity over the scheme.

MR

5) **Membership, promotion and marketing**

i) Update of attracting new members. There is no significant increase in numbers. Helen commented that the pamphlet has the wrong address and the wording is poor. We are to look at rewording

DF/HH/
RC

ii) The web site wording is poor at the moment and we particularly need to advertise our recent successes. E.g. EA firefighting, T and C, Stella election etc. Those leading these items please provide a couple of paragraphs.

All

iii) Santander bank account.

Helen request to stop any further chasing on this item. David noted that the whole purpose was to stop payments from long lost members. Helen doubted that closing the account would achieve this. David noted that there is a continuing and growing liability on the Association with payments coming to us.

DF/HH

iv) Insurance.

Helen reported that the proposed insurance scheme was proving non viable. The customer requirements have proved to be so diverse, that a single provider could not cover the requirements. It was considered to attempt to obtain discounts from established providers.

HH

6) **EA Matters**

i) It was noted that Chairman has resigned over issue on the handling of the floods. We did not like him, so no loss there..

ii) It was noted that EA have confirmed that the ladders and fire extinguishers are to be reinstated on the Thames Locks. A success for us again.

iii) RTA meeting was held on 29 December and the five year plan for the Thames waterway was signed. We are unsure as to the value of this as EA are in turmoil over budgets, staffing etc.

iv) NNUF meeting was held in January. It was not a good meeting, with EA not listening, and no decisions made. Michael Shefras is now saying no to CRT on the Thames, a change in position.

v) It was noted that the planning application for the house boat park at Windsor has been withdrawn. We had objected.

vi)

7) **BSS Matters**

i) Hire boat requirements.

The consultation is now complete and will be reported on shortly. Work continues to finalise the ECPs with a view to publication in April. The scheme will go live in 2017. This has no effect on private boaters.

ii) Risk assessment.

The BSS office have promised paperwork and the next meeting is in February.

TR/DF

iii) Meetings.

There have been TC, AC and MC meeting in November and December progressing the work of the BSS. The next AC is in February, and MC and TC meetings are in March.

MT/TR/
DF

8) Association reports

- i) RCTA. Paul reported that planning is in hand for the 2017 markets with mixed responses from CRT areas. On 4 Feb there is a meeting with Gary Stephens from the CRT business team. 2015 was a good year with new venues e.g. Burton on Trent. The event was well received by residents.
- ii) RBOA Nothing to report.

CBOA: David Lowe provided a written report noting that CBOA and HNBC are working with NAG on the question of strong stream advice – to get it standardised around the regions. One region in particular (SW) just closes the waterway rather than adopting the official position which is that it is for the skipper to decide, having regard to advice given (East Midlands CRT are very good at that – you can go unless it’s become impossible because flood gates are closed, and EA likewise). CRT (Stuart McKenzie) is developing an excellent system which will provide real time information on water levels and strong stream for the rivers, not just giving current info but predicting ahead e.g. rise or fall. It was also noted that HNBC is working with NAG on paddle gear spindles as some non-standard ones have started to appear again on the GU. Also, that CBOA is working with CRT on the future dredging programme (meeting at Hatton 27th Jan).

9) Finance

- i) Expenditure on ytd vs budget

Accounts were presented by Helen for the first 3 quarters. Various items were discussed and guidance given. Income is down a little, and legal costs exceed budget.

HH

- ii) Next year budget

Helen continues to plan. She does not want to budget for a loss. Membership is losing 5% pa, and there is no sign of recovery. Legal cost and advertising revenue are key factors.

HH

- iii) Current balances:

Barclays current £6,561
Barclays deposit £8760
Santander current £570
Total £16,272

- iv) Audit report items

Helen and James have met to agree audit recommendations.

PayPal deduct a fee for every payment and it is proposed that only the nett amount be show as income. Rather than the gross figure, and then an expense set against this. Agreed.

HH

Cost centres are proposed for expenses to facilitate cost control and understanding of expenditure. Helen proposed some details. Helen to consider if AGM should be a separate cost centre. Agreed.

HH

Expense forms. A revised form was discussed to fit in with the above. Some suggestions were made. Agreed and Helen will further consider to start in April 16.

HH

Expense form and invoices must be endorsed by another Council member. This to start immediately. Agreed

All

9) Web matters

- i) Web site software. The web site is now running on the latest available software in all categories. Back ups are in place.
- ii) Data base clean up. Ex members from before 2015 have been removed from the web site so that we do not have any unnecessary data on the Web. There

is no confidential data on the web site. Records are kept on David home computer and he will further consider if these can be readily encrypted. Copies for portable use are kept on an encrypted usb chip.

- iii) Facebook and Twitter support. We have had an offer from the NN art work man Chris Pink's partner to help with these systems. Agreed that David will identify a scope of work to assist. DF
- iv) Spam. Helen reported loss of emails to spam. David will add email addresses to the white list if this is a problem. Phil reported not getting emails to his AOL account. David will investigate. DF

10) NABO News

Articles so far for the January issue:

Last item from Stephen's articles.

CRT legal costs per Geoffrey

Ombudsman Mike

Definitions and terms Phil/ Mark

Thames lock ladders and FE Mike

Membership issues David

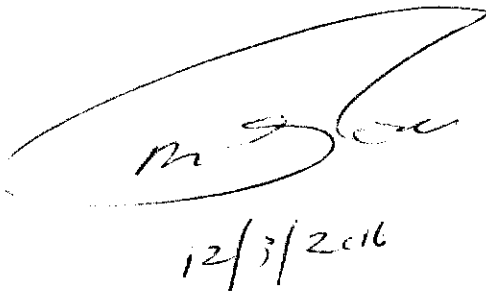
Helen suggests an item in a box calling for a Council minute secretary.

11 AOB

- i) Nothing to report for once.

The next meeting of Council will be on 12th March, venue TBA, probably Wolverhampton again, if available. RC

DF 25/01/16



A handwritten signature, possibly 'M. G. C.', is written in black ink. Below the signature, the date '12/3/2016' is written in a similar cursive style.