

**Minutes of a Council Meeting of the  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS  
Held at Wolverhampton Cruising Club, at 10.45am  
on Saturday 21st January 2017**

**Present:** Stella Ridgway (Chair), Helen Hutt, Peter Fellows, Phil Goulding, Paul Howland, Mark Tizard, Mike Rodd.

Members: Alison Tuck, Ken Hylins, Frank & Gillian Spragg

1) **Apologies for absence:** David Fletcher, Richard Carpenter, Keith Astley(CBOA), David Lowe (CBOA)

2) **Minutes of last meeting**

i. **Minutes** for 12th November 2016 approved unanimously. Actions are complete unless recorded below or updated in agenda.

ii. **Matters Arising and actions:**

Barclays account: It was agreed that Mike will be added to the signatories, together with Mark, Richard and Helen.

HH

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

i. **CRT's progress on legal matters**

Mike reported that there had been no follow up on the meeting with Ian Rogers: clearly we have to drive any relationship. SR noted that the next CRT Council meeting was in March.

SR

It was reported that there was much chatter on social media with CRT appearing to continually opting for expensive, not-very-well thought-through processes, which end up being extremely costly to CRT. There also appears to be inconsistency still across the country regarding 6 month licences – most persons granted 6 months licences then appeal and get 12 month ones? Seems a pointless exercise. It is also clear that, as in the past, if you have a home mooring, then you are largely ignored by the enforcement officers.

ii. **CRT Licensing review**

Mark reported that the Navigation Operations NAG was meeting next month to discuss this but there was concern that CRT would simply table their proposals and seek NAG's support, despite Ian Rogers saying everything was up for review. It was decided that we should firm up NABO's views so that we are in a position to approach the review in a constructive fashion: To this end it was decided that:

1. **No zonal pricing**
2. **Agree that charging by area ie length x breadth should be looked**
3. **Agree to license bands – suggest limited to 4**
4. **Only one license fee (no difference whether home mooring or not)**
5. **The prompt payment discount should be kept.**
6. **Other discounts should be reviewed based on merit and removed if no justification**

7. **Shorter term licenses ie 6M, 3M or 2 weeks and payment by standing order should be increased accordingly to take into account additional admin costs. Car tax as an example.**
8. **A £10 or 20 pound welfare optional payment (with gift aid) should be added to the license paperwork. Funds to go into a boaters welfare accounts jointly controlled by the welfare officer/waterways chaplaincy to help boaters in need and at risk of S8 enforcement.**

#### 4) **Reports on Key Issues**

##### **i. NAG Licensing & Mooring**

See also above 3 ii. Mark also reported that the concept of bookable moorings was clearly going to be used widely and we needed to keep a sharp eye on this. He noted that the earlier work in London showed that unless payment was involved, many boaters would book but then not actually arrive, hence causing additional problems. Mark also reported on the extensive consultations going on in London regarding the congestion problems there: Besides introducing some new moorings, it was evident that many 14-day moorings would be reduced to 7. Mark reported also on the need to CRT to do more on boating “etiquette” – there are many reports, especially in London, of boaters who simply do not understand some very simple concepts in boat handling, tying up, mooring etc.

The increasing issue of rental boats was receiving attention from CRT but Mark felt that their ideas for introducing a “peer-to-peer” hire boat-like licence might work for the upper end of the market, but would be largely ignored by those who rent their own boats out simply for income generation, specifically renting to people who take them for pure accommodation reasons. The Council felt that the issue is important and would only keep increasing. Thus:

- It was essential for CRT to identify boat being rented out.
- The BSS requirement should be the same as for hire boats
- There needs to be a proper enforcement process with associate information being widely available
- When applying for one’s licence, there should be a specific statement asking if the boat is to be used at any time for renting out.

**DF**

Finally, the idea of suggesting that, when paying for one’s licence, a donation of say £10 could be made and the money raised be made available to CRT’s welfare officer or to the Waterways Chaplaincy, for helping boaters in difficult circumstances, was discussed and supported in principle.

##### **ii. NAG Navigation Operations Activities**

In his absence, David submitted the following:

*“He attended a NAG Ops meeting on 7 Dec 16. CRT Waste disposal. The core of this is around recycling which is improving, but not as they would like. Some locations work well, and others appear impossible to manage.*

*Overall volumes are up 22% in three years, so there is a budget problem too. They are reviewing, and likely changes will be:*

*\* Coming away from a single contractor*

- \* Removing recycling facilities on sites that are not responding.
- \* Reconfiguration of site to improve capacity and security to deter fly tipping particularly from non-boaters

*Spindles and pawls. Action is passed back to CRT to determine policy on the way forward. No more pawl stops will be fitted this winter. There is a bit legacy issue over the design of spindle tapers, and copycat engineering, and much work needs to be done to standardise. There is also evidence of widespread use of the large windlass square on small tapers, and this the significant cause of accidents.*

*Winter stoppage notes. Programme for 17/18 s in preparation in accordance with previous philosophy notes, which were agreed.*

*RCR. It was noted that not all was well with the relationship with CRT*

*EA. Unofficial comment is that the cost has been determined at £15m per year, and it really up to DEFRA whether they will pay, yes or no.*

*No change in position on vegetation. Much work to do to get consistency across the system and importance that local group express their needs and wishes.*

*CRT plans some more boater training videos. Proposed subjects are tiller arc safety, tunnel safety, and lock cilling. They propose to sink a barge for this last one."*

Members noted that vegetation management was still an issue with great variations in quality and timing. Much seems to depend on the whims of the local Waterway Manager.

It was also reported that CRT is planning, with local authority funding, to reduce the navigational width of the tunnel near Birmingham University so that there was more space for the cyclists and walkers – the towpath there being extensively used for commuting. It was emphasised that NABO should always oppose such reductions in the navigation but if the proposal was going ahead, then CRT should understand that better approach moorings needed to be available and that dredging the canal before and in the tunnel would be essential .

Ken Hylins reported that he was due to meet CRT to discuss issues relating to disabled access on the Macclesfield canal.

DF

### **iii. Update on CRT/EA coming together**

Mike reported that there was little progress and that a sum of £15million was being mentioned as the figure that CRT should receive per annum. Given the state of EA's navigational assets, this seems low. It is clear that CRT's Trustees support the takeover but Mike's impression was that EA felt this was now just a political decision regarding the funding and of low priority for the EA, given especially the Brexit issues. Richard Parry was meeting with the Thames User Group on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February, and Phil was asked if he could attend on behalf of NABO.

KH

PG

Mike also reported on the new Thames scheme regarding Visitor Moorings. Following the experimental work in the previous year when a small number of visitor moorings (owned by either the EA or a local authority) were charged for and monitored by a Car Parking Company, the scheme had been extended to over 20 sites. However, the booking, charge collection and monitoring had now been given to a new company set up by an active committee member of RBOA. EA now says this is an “experiment” which is why they did not have to call for tenders etc.

**iv. Report from Boater Representative on the CRT Council**

SR noted that the next CRT Council meeting was in March.

**v. Feedback for NABO Regional Representatives**

Nothing to report. PH had contacted all representatives and would seek regular input.

SR

PH

**vi. Reports from RCTA and CBOA**

No reports had been received. It was noted that RCTA’s membership fee was outstanding for many months. It was agreed to immediately stop sending NABO News to them and also not to offer them space in the News.

HH, PF  
& DF

**5) Web matters**

In David absence, he had submitted the following:

*“The bulletin went out at the end of December without rejections. There continue to a few BTInternet related problems, and I will look again in February. There are outstanding issues about error messages during PayPal transactions, and I will look at also in February. I will ask for input to bulletin next week and send out a couple of days late on or about 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Otherwise the site is running ok and backups were taken at the end of December”*

DF

Stella noted that she was looking at the content of our front pages.

SR

**6) BSS Matters**

Mike reported that he had been unable to attend the previous Technical Committee meeting but noted that the new Hire Boat Requirements had gone live, inspectors trained and things moving ahead. He also described work relating to electrical aspects with an important issue being the legal need to protect the inspectors when working on any boat. The issue is simply how to ensure that there is no danger to the inspector if live, high voltages could possibly be present. One option would be to insist that the owners are present but that would effect many boat owners who live a long distance from their boat, or could not get time off work. The solution will be that inspectors will have to have an assurance from the owners that, if they can’t be present, they will have to undertake to assure the inspector that they (or

an appointed agent) have disconnected all potentially dangerous sources of voltage other than the normal 12 or 24 volt dc.

Work is continuing of other matters relating to the increase in the use of high voltages and higher powered electrical devices. Without the appropriate electrical, expertise, the problem of inspection are very serious.

7)

**Finance**

**i. Budget for 2016/7**

Helen tabled a paper setting out the present 9 month situation, showing that membership fees were not far below budget and that with no expenditure on legal fees, we were slightly in the black.

**ii. Current balances:**

Barclays current account	£4797.25
Barclays deposit account	£13,766.12
PayPal account	£585.58

8)

**Membership update and Recruitment**

Membership is still decreasing slightly, mainly because of our ageing population! However, it was noted that Ken is doing a great job on recruiting new members!!

It was decided to distribute the next NABO NEWS via various coal boats with a small incentive to the operators if they attached new members. 300 extra copies of NN would be printed for this exercise.

DF,PF

9)

**NABO News**

Articles for the February issue, copy date 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

- Stella's column
- Re-issue of legal article of T&C's
- Louis Jankel
- Oxford canal experience
- Something on the Birmingham tunnel issue
- Crofton mechatronics project
- NABO's view on the licensing review

SR  
PF  
MR  
PG  
AT  
MR  
MT

10)

**AOB**

i) It was agreed that in the NABO Handbook the statement of 3000 members needed to change slight to reflect a "readership" of 3000.

PF

ii) The next meeting was on the 11<sup>th</sup> March. It was suggested this should be at Tamworth, if available?.

RC

MGR 22/1/2017