

**Minutes of a Council Meeting of the
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS**
Held at Tamworth BC at 10.45am
on Sunday 10th June 2018

Present: Stella Ridgway (Chair), Mark Tizard (Vicechair), Paul Howland (Vicechair), Helen Hutt (Treasurer) Peter Fellows, Mike Rodd, Phil Goulding, Alison Tuck, David Fletcher.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Richard Carpenter

2. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

- a. Minutes approved from 22nd April.
- b. 3b. vii. Closing of NAG L&M. Chair concluded not to write to CRT on this, as it has not yet been announced.
- c. 3b v. London consultation is still not issued. It is noted that the London Mayor has announced new charges for driving pre-2016 road diesels in London inside the N+S Circulars. There has to be impact on boaters in the central areas.
- d. 4 iii iv Capability to Cruise. It was noted that Denise Yelland has now launched this.
- e. 5. Iv Credits from past members. This is complete now.
- f. No other matters arising not on the agenda

3. **POLICY DISCUSSIONS: Matters requiring agreement and action from this meeting:**

- a. **Re-engagement with CRT** We now have a date booked with Jon Horsfall on 20 June in Leeds. Stella and Paul will attend. The agenda items identified are:

CRT reorganisation
Boater contact points.
Disenfranchisement of boaters
Purpose of CRT v boaters
Forums (based on model by Nick Worthington)
Licence increase
Ongoing engagement on licenses.
Auctions and mooring pricing
Ongoing engagement e.g. 3 monthly with Regional Directors?

b. **License Review**

- i. There was discussion on the CRT increases noting that it is not at all clear what boater can do to get the most cost-effective deal being in mind changes in prompt payment discounts and discounts for electronic payments. Also, just where the 5% increase comes from. It was noted that EA are increasing registration by 7.5 to 10%.
- ii. Boaters are felt to be ambivalent on this. Even widebeams are accepting the 20% increase.

- iii. CRT are charging cost of living changes in advance of Government data. This is an unsatisfactory way of doing business.
- iv. The discount for disconnected waterways remains at 40% and this was felt to be surprising. Be silent.
- v. The decision of prompt payment discounts ins one for CRT as only they can judge the value to themselves of enforcement, cash flow and the cost of borrowing. It is noted that most boaters claim take advantage of the available discounts.
- vi. CRT licence renewals by phone are efficient, but if a boater sets up a payment method, they will assume that they can do this again next year, unless they are told otherwise.
- vii. CRT bye laws require display of licence, but CRT are generally not bothered, so long as the boat can be identified. They are taking action against the ghost boat(er)s.
- viii. Alison and Mark will study the license increases and work out what is best. Article required for NN. **Action Alison and Mark**
- ix. There is to be an item in NN asking members to give views. **Action Mark**

c. Strategic Changes

- a. Partnerships. This is still not clear but the idea appears to be 6 Regional Boards one each per Director. As an example, the K&A partnership has been dissolved and it is apparent that members are being selectively invited to join the Boards. We need to find out more. Stella will ask via CRT Council.
- b. New Logo and tag lines. There has been a lot of unfavourable social media comment. However, it was noted that rebranding is common practice when organisations make major changes. It helps with image and team work to focus on the future and not the past. It was suggested that we should not engage in overt criticism. However, it is clear that there is considerable cost in signage and the like. It is also apparent that boaters are not being carried with it, and there is no mindset of stakeholder engagement. Alan Leighton's statement that the canals are free, has not gone down well with boaters.

d. Mooring Auctions

It was noted that CRT are ratcheting up charges. They appear to have a policy of auctioning off a mooring, and then using the high bid as a benchmark for nearby moorings. There is anecdotal evidence of some long term moorers in trouble as the cost is getting above what can be charged for housing allowances. We are back to social cleansing. NABO has never liked or agreed with mooring auctions.

e. Middle Level Bill

- a. It was noted that there are many boats on the Middle levels who have moved there because there are currently no charges. It is for this reason that NBTA are fighting this case as they want to preserve this position. March Council have had problems and they have taken action so that long term moorers are not blocking the water front.

- b. The bill is now with the HoL, and the hearings are now set for June. These are a four-day hearing starting on 25 June and will be held by senior Lords who should be respected. There is no programme of events so it is difficult to plan, and anyway, Mike cannot attend for that periods. We need to declare names by 15 June. The commissioners are asking us to withdraw our objection about provision of facilities, but there is no basis to do so. There is no expectation of new facilities as there is nowhere to put them. All that is needed is to guarantee maintenance of the existing sites. Mike will ask the Commissioners if they will give is a written undertaking, whence we will withdraw. Otherwise we have to find a way to attend. **Action Mike.**

f. RTA board paper

- c. The recent RTA Board paper was tabled for discussion. This makes revised proposals for governance, election of the Board. Council agreed that the paper was a great improvement and requested that Mike reply positively. When this goes through we can then pay our membership fee. **Action Mike.**

4. Reports on Key issues

- a. **NABO Awareness** There was a discussion of Towpath Talk. Janet is encouraging and like the content. Shall we ask her for a free advertisement? Yes. There are opportunities to write more, and Stella is putting something together on Disenfranchisement of Boaters. **Action Stella.**
- b. **Quality control in repair works.** What is going on at Minworth and Marple, where control of decision making and delivery has fallen down. The recent revelation that lock 11 at Marple now require a major repair, after 16 has been closed all winter. And CRT new about it in 2017. There is concern that Central engineering are not talking to the local teams etc. Stella and David will ask in the coming meetings.
- c. **NAG Operations** There was a vegetation meeting in May. Progress is slow on committee work, and it is uncertain what effect the new organisation will have. There is a full meeting next week in Northwich and the agenda is: New Structure for engineering and new regional boundaries. Asset Related Injuries Report, update on Pawls and Spindles Update, Update on Strong Stream Warning System update. There has been no progress I have an ongoing discussion with CRT on Navigation Stds. There is no progress in the last period. Then we will go to the Middlewich Breach site.
- d. **BSS**

There was an AC in June and David and Alison attended.

The main thing to report was the approval of a risk document on CO alarms. BSS will not consult on this issue in late 2018, and it should be expected that they will be requirement in 2019. AINA was put under pressure to sort out the issues surrounding license enforcement on tenanted boats. They cannot rely on BSS to do their policing. If owners lie about the status of boats, it is not the examiner's problem. AINA is also finalising the Hire Boat Code wording and the consultation continues to slip.

- i. The issues around gas regulations / use of bubble testers and examination protocol were discussed. BSS wants to hear the issues. There will be a TC in July. There will be a virtual meeting of MC in July.
- ii. It was noted that there are continued difficulties with tented boats. There is no classification in CRT licencing for these boats unless they have a residential mooring. There are almost none of these. This drives the issue underground and the boats often only have private licences and BSS. BSS is in limbo on this.

e. Boater rep activities

- i. Stella reported that there will be a meeting in June, yet to be confirmed. There has been no response from the Parliamentary discussion Group to review liveaboard boater issues. Stella will chase up.
- ii. It is reported that Ken Hylands is active and done good work in helping boaters, including one case of keeping a boater out of Court. Is needing some guidance.
- iii. Stella will attend the Ombudsman annual review as a boater rep.
- iv. Stella will attend the EA National User Forum in June

5. Finance

- a. The treasurer tabled draft accounts for 2017/8, along with explanatory notes. The final figures are yet to be confirmed as we go through the audit process but they will not be far off what is presented here.
- b. Contrary to as reported in the last meeting, it has been agreed with the auditor that we will not revert to splitting membership income according to the period to which it belongs.
- c. The Treasurer also provided a draft budget for the coming year, for Council's comments and approval. The expected membership income is reduced to reflect the current trend. Also, the cost of meetings is reduced in expectation of more teleconferencing. Other items remain largely the same, including £2,000 for legal fees although this hasn't been used in the last couple of years. Council approved the budget.
- d. Council express their delight and gratitude to the treasurer for the professional work and presentation.
- e. The insurance is due and Council approved the payment of £639.24 for the premium. Action Helen.
- f. Balances on 19 April are:

Barclays Community	2,428.34
Barclays Deposit	3,770.74
PayPal	509.00
Redwood Deposit	15,000.00
TOTAL	21,707.88

6. Web

- a. The web site is running on the latest software in all categories. Back-ups have been done. Mail for the last bulletin was again rejected some for hotmail, live and outlook addressees. I sent them on separately. There was one unexplained interruption to mail distribution. An https licence for web site.

- b. David became aware in the May that there was an ongoing issue with Eastern Bloc countries IP address attempting to break into the web site through the sign in. The number of allowed false logins has been reduced before lock out and blocked about 50 offending IP addresses. The attempts continue but are greatly reduced in number and repetitions do not happen. David will continue to monitor. Nobody has complained about lack of service or being locked out.
- c. The web site was down for one day in May because of a bug in a Joomla software upgrade that conflicted with the picture banner on the site. It was fixed by a change in the code.
- d. Further progress on configuration of the new membership software has been made, with dummy data loaded and emails configured. Test emails are being transmitted. Web pages are available to view by super users and the membership team, and users. The plan is to load the main data base in June and swap over but continue to use paper renewals for time being.
- e. GDPR rules. We launched this in a special Bulletin in April, repeated in May and in the latest NN. Response is steady, but there is a long way to go. Currently about 40% agreed. I would like a paper return document (tear out in the next NN) as those not on email have not been asked. Paper renewals will request compliance.

7. NABO News

The next issue is due with a copy date of 28 April.

Items

Marple flights – Stella

AGM Notification – hold for September issue

Technical Article – acquaintance of Peter

GDRP – David

Cost CRT Licence – Alison and Mark

Marginalised Boaters - Alison

Ask members about views on license review – peter

Web software - David

BSS and gas testing - Stella

7. A.O.B

It was noted that Sue Burchett, previous Chair, has said that she is not going to renew in July. She is no longer boating or involved with the waterways. Thanks were recorded for her service. Stella will write to her. **Action Stella**

Meeting concluded at 4pm.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Saturday 1 September Tamworth BC (booked)

