



**MINUTES of a MEETING of the COUNCIL
on SATURDAY 11th March 2023
by Jitsi 10.00am to 1.00pm**

PRESENT: Council: Mike Rodd (Chair), Anne Husar, Peter Braybrook (minutes), Peter Braley (part time), David Fletcher, Alan Douglas, C J Green, and John Sadler;
Observers: Steph Maton, Colm O'Hanlon, Mark Tizzard

1. **Apologies:** Phil Goulding, Ken Hylins, and Helen Hutt (oveseas); Peter Fellows failed to connect.. (Connection issues were experienced by others)
2. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 14th January 2023**
 1. i) Approval of the minutes: The Minutes of the meeting were Approved
 2. ii) Matters arising from the minutes

None

3. Policy discussions: matters requiring agreement and action from this meeting

i. **Support for boaters** Anne Husar reported that the current view is that the best outcome seems to be a reduced grant which will be presented to CRT for the next ten years. A discussion ensued on the continual statement by CRT that there is a difference between the Home Mooring and a Continuous Cruiser license. Whilst NABO's intervention corrected the License consultation FAQs to reflect this other areas of the CRT website continue to incorrectly state this. Peter Brayley pointed out that CRT are entitled to charge different rates for different classes of boat.

It was also pointed out that the government's Fuel Grant was still not available to continuous cruisers, despite CRT offering to help. Peter Braybrook said he was going to write to the Attorney General about the interpretation of the 1995 BW Act with respect to the fuel grant. The pressure arising from NABO's extensive use of social media has been successful, will be continued and CJ was thanked for her efforts on Twitter and Anne's on facebook.

The chair brought into the discussion the issue of CRT's status as a charity which is in doubt. CRT are optimistic that they will remain a charity but there are several issues that arise from this including the lack of transparency about board selection is required of a charity. If it is found that CRT cannot be a charity the consequences are massive but could result in CRT reverting to government control.

ii. **Heritage and infrastructure** We continue to put pressure on CRT to restart their Heritage group. Anne Husar reported that Braunston Stop House is under threat again. Navigation Yard in Northwich is being sold as there are apparently no other viable proposals even though an active campaign group have tried to submit them. Anne asked everybody to keep their ears to the ground on future disposals of land or buildings.

iii. **CRT boater's survey of facilities.** The outcome of the survey has been published in the recent Boaters Update. It is clear that showers and washing machine etc will not be replaced when they breakdown. It is obvious that where private facilities exist close to CRT's (for example pumpouts) they will be closed. Money will be saved.

iv. **Support for NBT for fuel aid :** - Peter Braybrook will write to the Attorney General to ask her to advise on the law. It is obvious that CRT's discrimination is the root of the problem with BEIS

v) Limits of Navigation This is outside our experience. David will keep a watching brief.

vi) Water Quality This arose from a request on the BCN to test for phosphates which encourage plant growth. The waterways are designated under law as EA's responsibility for water quality. David will take this to the Chairman of NAG.

Vii) Gas Cylinders. Calor have withdrawn some of the smaller sizes. BSS is very aware of the problem and have raised the issue with Calor and are meeting them. David gave some of the alternatives but their dimensions are different and they are not generally available adjacent to the waterways. Other alternatives are available at a larger cost. The small bottle turn around is very long and this makes it uneconomical. It is evident that Calor is trying to get out of the small bottle market.

4. Reports

i. Meetings with CRT

a. **Boaters Rep meetings:** Helen Hutt is an elected rep

b. **Meeting with Matthew Symonds:** These meetings are constructive. MS admits that consultations are about how much money they can get from the boating community. Unfortunately he has gone on sick leave. We hope he returns soon. The next meeting is at the end of April.

c. **Regular Regional meetings:** Anne keeps her eye on the CRT Events page and will advise of notices. Anne had a face to face with Tom Freeland and it was agreed that the Birmingham moorings consultation was rushed and would be reconsidered. The WM Forum meeting is being considered for a Zoom meeting as many cannot make face to face.

ii. **Stoppages and winter works programme** Phil Goulding was not present to update council. Mike Rodd mentioned that he had asked for dredging to be included in the work of the winter works programme.

iii. **Welfare Officers report:** Ken Hylins reported by email. See Appendix. Mike emphasised that in some areas particularly Ken's work is getting relevant changes to CRTs rules for disabled boaters.

iv. **Regional Representatives reports:** Ken Hylins reported that in the NW it appears that there is general demotivation. Basic services are being done but without enthusiasm. This is a natural consequence of financial pressure. Ken's work is resulting in Membership is growing with two or three new members each week.

v. **Media & Publicity:** CJ reported that she has picked up several issues including a FOI that indicates CRT are not basing mooring restrictions on historic data. Steph introduced herself and indicated that she is an activist and was responsible for the FOI. She indicated that she feels that more active action is required and would like to join a small direct action group. Facebook has an additional new moderator, Peter Rendall. There are about 3500 followers. Anne stated that Social Media is a good place to keep things on the boil. Instagram is also taking off. Social Media was agreed as the way to go forward. The type of direct action was discussed. Smaller actions would lead to a national effective response. Peter Braybrook indicated that AWCC and IWA are looking to run campaigns and activate their memberships very similar to the SOS campaign of 2010

vi. EA Mike reported that he had a very lengthy meeting with EA to emphasise the help that boaters could provide. He emphasised that boaters are the only non government source of funding. In his opinion EA is in a worse state than CRT.

vii. Navigation Advisory Group **NAG**. We no longer have a representative. There has been no progress on a replacement. This was raised with Matthew S who said that they were looking for different skills.

viii. **Boat Safety Scheme (BSS)** David is still chair of the Tech Committee and will chair the next meeting. Mike attended the last Advisory Committee in lieu of Peter. David's contribution was acknowledged as outstanding and the main thrust of the meeting was on the Calor Gas Issue mentioned above. This has been passed to BSS TC for immediate action.

ix. **Web & GDPR** David has submitted a report (see Appendix). The website gets less hits than facebook and twitter but complements social media. He will give links to any who want to post on the website.

x. **NINF** This continues to provide a useful contact meeting. Michael Stimpson is the general secretary. This will provide a good platform for organisations working together.

xi The next APPGW meeting is to be held on 28th March and will discuss the influence of the

waterways on the environment. All are welcome to attend. This is on Teams and Mike has contact details.

5. **Finance** (See Appendix.) In Helen's absence, Mike indicated that we are very much going to budget. He emphasised the need for prompt expenses claims as we head toward the end of the financial year.

6. **NABO News:** John said that he is may be looking for additional articles and reports as soon as possible. Steph volunteered to do an article on possible direct action.

7. **AOB**

None

8. **Next meeting: 22 April 2023** Venue is the Tamworth Cruising Club (To be confirmed)

9. The meeting closed at 12.17pm

Peter Braybrook/Mike Rodd/Anne Husar

11 March 2023

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 FINANCE REPORT Helen

Helen reports "Although they will be somewhat out of date by the 11th, here are today's bank balances as of 1 March 2023

Barclays current a/c	£ 3,311.18
Barclays deposit a/c	£ 4,627.97
Paypal	£ 201.48
Redwood	£ <u>15,975.25</u>
TOTAL	£ <u>24,115.88</u>

Outstanding: Awaiting invoice from Wizard for NN artwork (£150) and payment from RCR for February ad (£250).

Quite a flurry of new members in the last few weeks to offset those we have lost.

The end of the financial year, 31 March, is fast approaching! Please can you make sure I have any claims for expenses to the end of March, before the end of April.

Helen

APPENDIX 2 WELFARE OFFICER, KEN HYLINS

Hi Mike here is my report for council

Please accept my apologies for not being present at this important time .

1/ I have now renewed my links with the gypsy travellers my original contact had left their service .

2 / I have also forged links with McMillan cancer support .I made them aware of the difficulties you can have in accessing long term care ,without a postcode, and the obligation if a CCer to move or a marina based boater .This subject is as some of you know is close to my heart .This in effect builds up my contacts and extends NABO s profile .(This means I have the contacts and can then help a boater at this very stressful and uncertain time)either by referring them to McMillan or dealing with the respective managing authority.

3/ I have also forged similar links with the British heart foundation .This again came about by a boaters need . I have had an experience of this situation as many of you know .This again broadens NABO s profile and again I can support a member at this stressful and uncertain time .

4/ I am at present supporting two members with the advanced stages of cancer and I have managed to secure a long period of overstay so they can obtain chemotherapy..Then I also have regular chats offering support and often sharing my experience with them .

5/The other area I have been active is that of CARTS discrimination against an elderly boater. He had been put on a restricted licence thus an act of discrimination as nobody thought to look into the reasons ?.This you will be glad to know has been resolved he will now get reasonable adjustments and the respect he deserves.

Finally I have been contacted by another elderly boater who needs support in dealing with disability issues to which I will investigate Regards ken

APPENDIX 3 WEB AND GDPR DAVID FLETCHER (By email)

Dear all

The web site is running on the latest software in all areas. Backups have been done. The software checking site integrity is reporting clean every week. There have been no security challenges. The Captcha challenges mentioned in January on the web site have gone away.

There were to interruptions on the site in February caused by compatibility issues with php software versions. The ISP changed this without telling me. I have made some changes to overcome the situation. One key bit of software that has proved to be a problem is the country blocker that stops access as a block. I have now put this in place in another way. I block countries like China, Russia, Belarus, Albania because of the amount of unwelcome attention. Otherwise the site is OK

There have been a very few mail delivery problems. Please do report them.

I requested support from Council in February to upgrade the storage capability on the site. Support was given and I have implemented this.

I will be working on the site again this year to consider alternative to simplify the workload.

I recommend that we test the ISP market in 2024 and not renew with Siteground unless they are considered the best option at the time. Their storage is unusually mean.

David