

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

**Saturday 7 October 2023 at 10.00am
BY ZOOM**

PRESENT: Mike Rodd (chair), Anne Husar (Vice Chair), Helen Hutt (Treasurer), Peter Braybrook (Gen Sec), Ken Hylins, John Sadler, David Fletcher, C J Green, Sharon Wells, Mark Tizard (observer)

1. **Apologies:** Alan Douglas, Phil Goulding,

2. **Minutes of the last meeting**

i) Minutes of last council meeting on 2 September 2023 (Distributed) were approved as a true record.

ii) Matters arising: None.

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

i) **CRT Licence Increase and surcharges;** social Media response etc.

This was spoken about at a meeting with Matthew Symonds and detail was published later in the week. Full pricing will be given sometime on November. The increases impact all canal users. We agree that CRT have the legal right to set the license fee, but have always contended that there should be one license fee. We should write to CRT giving our views of the divisive nature of the increases. We should also take legal advice on the subject. It was noted that the "impact assessment" issued with the press release was very inadequate especially with respect to vulnerable boaters. It was agreed that the chair with David's assistance, would write to CRT. A note to our solicitor will be drafted and circulated to council for comment. It was noted that NBTA are holding a meeting on Monday evening.

ii) **Fund Britain's Waterways** - Mike reported that the event in Birmingham and Gloucester Docks follow up got a lot of publicity. The party conferences will not be attended for lobbying. Sir Michael Fabricant has now become a government supporter and now seems to be in full agreement with the government's position. The flotilla to Parliament will be about 20 boats which is less than hoped for. The membership of FBW is now about 100 organisations including many non boating organisations. The petition has slowed down and requires more publicity. IWA is in turmoil which hinders the progress. Les Etheridge is staying as chair of FBW. It was suggested that if we can be in London to aid publicity that would be welcome.

It has been agreed that lock keepers and other CRT personnel can have FBW leaflets and stickers to give out.

iii) **Calor Gas situation** – David Fletcher reported that results have been received from the survey that has been completed. There has been little feedback from Inland Waterways. The largest problem is the coastal fleet who particularly need small bottles. Calor are intransigent. Camping Gaz regulators are not suitable for inside spaces. Old Calor bottles are available on eBay and other marketplaces. BSS are not being proactive on this subject at present. The problems of gas bottles on decks have been picked up by CRT's inspectors. There is no report from the recent fire. Mike reported that this has been discussed at BSS Tech committee and the chair is putting pressure on getting the safety aspects publicised. BSS are doing a market survey on the availability of gas.

iv) **Energy Support Grant and liveaboard boaters who are not CC's.** Matthew Symonds indicated that he could add liveaboard boaters who pay for a leisure mooring to the list of continuous cruisers based on sighting data. Unfortunately there is no clarity on the position and minutes of the recent meeting with him are not yet available. The fact is that the government said it was all households and this discrimination needs to be eliminated.

v) **Changes to Constitution;** The changes have been circulated. As the Council are in agreement the proposal to accept them will be put forward, proposed by David and seconded by Helen.

vi) **CRT Boat Data:** sighting and position recording. Inaccuracies have been found in the data recorded. When CRT have been notified of inaccuracies these have not been rectified. It was suggested that we publicise that we need to keep our own record of boat position. There are some apps that may help. A legal opinion was requested on whether winter moorings count as a home mooring.

4. Reports

1) Meetings with CRT

- a) Boaters Rep Meeting. The next meeting is coming up next Thursday, Helen will circulate a report after the meeting. It was noted that the recent Boaters Update insensitively buried the increase in license charges down the page. It was noted that the process for the increases will be challenged at the next meeting. It would be fairer to have an across the board increase.
- b) Meeting with Matthew Symonds: The recent meeting has resulted in mistrust because Matthew has asserted that confidence has been broken when he did not make it clear that some issues were confidential. There were no new issues. It was emphasised that this avenue is important to NABO and the next meeting should clarify confidentiality issues as this is an opportunity to feed into the CRT system at a reasonably high level. Mike will respond to the notes when they arrive and try to ensure that amicability is restored.
- c) Regional Meetings: Next WM Meeting on 17th October 2023. Peter will attend. Anne will be meeting Tom Freeland before then and will take questions.
- d) Stoppage and Winter Works programme In Phil Goulding's absence there was nothing to report. It was noted that the stoppage programme is changing very frequently and it is necessary to keep checking when planning cruises.
- e) Facilities: The CRT review has highlighted some sites that can be removed and still meet the necessity to be one day's cruising apart. The trial of contactless payments has worked well and will be rolled out across the country. More facilities are needed in London but new sites have failed to be identified. It was noted that the one day travel requirement falls down as soon as there is a stoppage on the system. Telemetry for level monitoring of septic tanks was suggested but costs would be high.
- ii) Media & Publicity: 1600 views were received to the tweet on license increases. Boaters are responding to tweets regularly. There is no control over the ads that pop up. Facebook received over 6000 hits and loads of comments were made. New group members are coming on every day. There are also more joining NABO. Sharon said that Instagram was stable and she had little to report.
- iii) Welfare Officers Report: Ken Hylands reported that he continues to support numerous members regionally. He has been in contact with Equalities Commission but they do not consider that there is discrimination because it is not ethnic, religious or racial. He is in touch with traveller contacts.
- iv) TNUF There has been a complete change in the approach of EA management. Mike has found that there has been some good debate and airing of issues. EA have issued a very large strategy document which outlines how the Agency should work with volunteers. This has been badly received and set aside as useless by most users.
- v) NAG. We have no report as we have no representative.
- vi) BSS Mike has attended a recent Technical Committee and Peter will be attending the next Advisory Committee on 31 October. A new chair is to be appointed to AC.
- vii) Web & GDPR. A report was circulated and David had nothing to add. It was confirmed that renewals can be made through the website. David will sort any sign in problems on receipt of an email.

5. **Finance:** Helen reported that there have been 9 new members this week. A budget comparison is included as Appendix 1. The balances reported are as follows:

Bank accounts:	
Redwood deposit	£19,475.25
Barclays current	£ 2,805.05
Barclays deposit	£ 1,148.73
Paypal	<u>£ 709.37</u>
Total	£ 24,138.40

6. **NABO News:** The closing date for the next issue will be after the AGM. It was noted that there was a delay with the present issue because of health issues. There were other factors reported including the availability of proof readers. The chair commented that the change in style of the magazine since John took over has been refreshing. The editor is attempting to keep variety in the magazine.

7. **AOB: I)** Helen informed the meeting that she will not be a CRT Boaters Representative from the end of her current term.

ii) Hire Boat Licencing: It was asked whether the licence fee increases will affect the hire boats. Helen said that they would be affected alongside all private boaters. It was noted that there are complicated relationships between hire companies and CRT. They have also had some bad years.

8 Annual General Meeting: Phil Goulding will be standing down from Council.

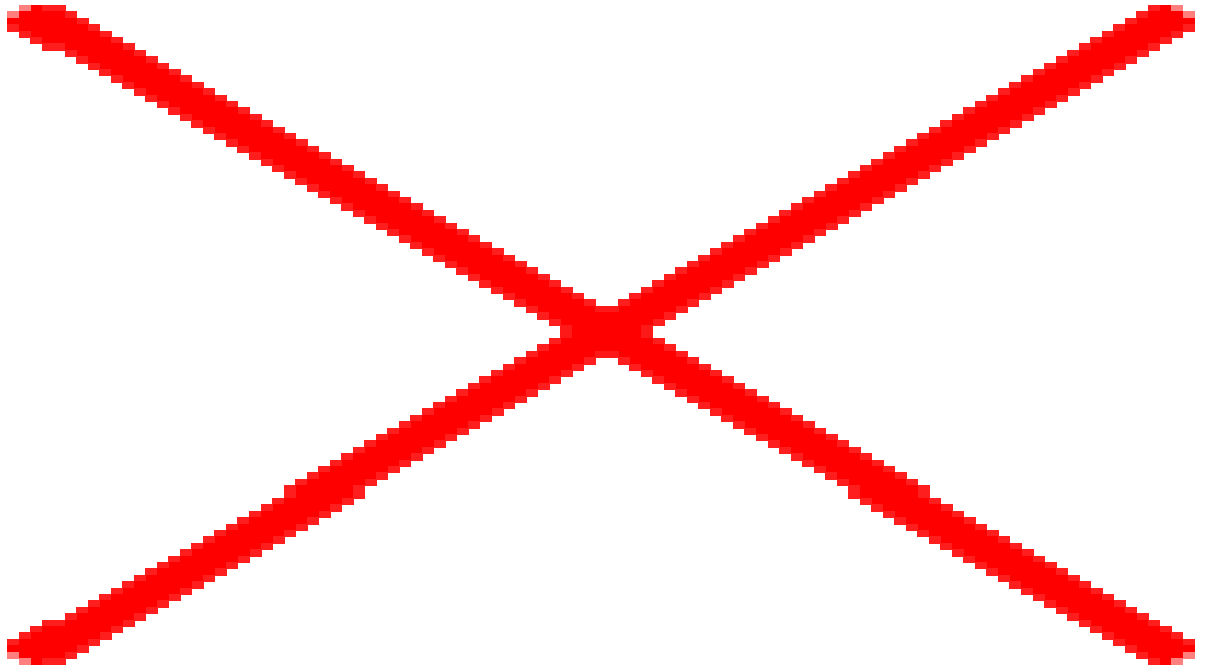
8. Date of Next Meeting after the AGM , 18 November 2023 at Tamworth Cruising Club

The meeting closed at 12.26pm

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 Treasurer's Report

Budget Comparison



APPENDIX 2

Web Report

By email

The web site is running on the latest software in all categories. Backups have been done.

The software checking site integrity is reporting clean every week. There have been a flurry of new members in the last month.

There continue to be spam mails often addressed from support and/or administration suggesting that accounts suspended. These are all false and should be deleted.

I have have made no further progress on the new web site on the WordPress platform having been away. The next thing is to testing a membership system which is the most critical factor. In due course I will ask Council members to participate in trial of importing data, and receiving bulk emails. These systems must work before things can go live.

The new constitution document has been circulated and is on line.