

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 16th January, 1993 at The Port 86, All Saints Street, Hockley, Birmingham, commencing at 10a.m.

Present: Penny Barber, Melanie Darlington, Jon Darlington, Dave Green, Neil Hutchinson, Peter Lea, Stephen Peters (afternoon only), Christine Potter, Pete Sterry, Nikki Timbrell and Harry Winter.

- 1. Apologies: Phil Bland, Thomas Hartney

- 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 5th December, 1992
 - 2.1 Harry Winter was omitted from the list of those present.
 - 2.2 Item 7.4.4: Aylesbury Boat Club should read Aylesbury Canal Society.
 - 2.3 Item 11.3: Nikki Timbrell stated that there should be pump-out facilities (not toilets) at intervals more frequent than suggested by NABO.

- 3. Matters arising from the Minutes not covered by this Agenda
 - 3.1 Item 5.2: Cruising Certificate. Neil Hutchinson suggested that as the members present at the AGM had indicated a lack of interest in the campaigning area, NABO should drop the idea. This was agreed unanimously. Neil's research could be useful in the future.
 - 3.2 Item 5.3: Company limited by guarantee
 - 3.2.1 Dave Green expressed the opinion that NABO could set up the Limited Co. without professional help. He has obtained copies of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of a trade association and circulated them to Jon Darlington and Penny Barber for consideration. JD/PB
 - 3.2.2 Peter Lea suggested that the formation of a Limited Co. would be expensive in both money and time. NABO would have to appoint a Registered Auditor (from outside the Council), and keep proper books of accounts.
 - 3.2.3 Dave Green suggested that the Co. limited by guarantee was necessary to protect Council members from being personally responsible for any libel actions arising out of anything contentious printed by NABO in any of its publications. Peter Lea pointed out that Council members could still be sued on an individual basis, and suggested that a minuted agreement that the Council would pay any expenses arising out of such an action might be sufficient.
 - 3.2.4 It was agreed that legal advice is required, and that we should find out more about the costs of registration and auditing. Dave Green, Jon Darling- DG/ ton and Peter Lea to pursue this and report to the next meeting. JD/PL
 - 3.3 Item 5.5: Survey of insurance companies. Still going on. Discussion deferred to the next meeting. NH
 - 3.4 Item 7.1.9: Possible President for NABO. No-one was very keen on this idea. It was agreed that no action should be taken unless someone suggested themselves by taking an interest in the waterways.

- 3.5 Item 7.1.10: Article for Boat Clubs. Dave Green has written this and it is ready for circulation to 101 Clubs plus RBOA and NBOC. However, there was some objection to the title of the article. Dave Green agreed to redo the top sheet. DG
- 3.6 Item 17.4: Frog Lane settlement. No information so far. Penny Barber to chase up at next RBOA meeting. PB
- 3.7 Item 17.5: Houseboat Moratorium. Jon Darlington has written to John McCormack re BW Bill and to arrange a meeting, but did not mention the Moratorium. Will follow up. JD
4. Treasurer's report
- 4.1 Bank balance stands at £5048, of which £4000 is in the Building Society account.
Income since the last report: Membership renewals £432, new members £144, extra family members £20, sweatshirts and T-shirts £371, donations £43, stickers £63 (total £1074).
Expenditure since the last report: Computer £586, Boater production £246, NABO sign £35, room hire £30, travel £38, other (stationery, post etc) £37 (total £972).
- 4.2 It was agreed to depreciate the computer over 4 years at 25% p.a. PB
- 4.3 Christine Potter is trying to arrange insurance for the computer as an extension of her boat insurance policy with Michael Stimpson. For this she needs a receipt from Penny. CP/PB
- 4.4 Direct Debits. Penny Barber has been investigating this with Girobank. Girobank do not deal with direct debits, and they were doubtful whether NABO could arrange this anywhere. Penny Barber to approach a High Street Bank on the subject. PB
5. Reports from Council members
- 5.1 Membership
- 5.1.1 Total membership numbers unavailable. Those who should have renewed in October but have not are to be deleted from the computer. A paper list is to be kept for future reference. CP
- 5.1.2 The survey to investigate lapsed members has not been done yet. Nikki Timbrell suggested that the survey should be extended to all members to find out why they joined, and which issues they think are important. Nikki agreed to draft a questionnaire and circulate it for discussion at the next meeting. NT
- 5.1.3 Neil Hutchinson suggested that a list of lapsed members should be produced by region, so that the regional representatives could chase them up. A list was circulated for any personal contacts to be identified. All
- 5.1.4 The Treasurer requested a list of the total number of members for each month of renewal. CP

5.2 Boater/Newsletter

- 5.2.1 Jon Darlington reported that Tony Mason of AWCC had been considerably upset by the report in the Boater about the last meeting with BW about moorings, in which Jon had recorded Mr Mason's comments at the meeting. Jon maintains that the substance of the comments were correctly reported. Tony Mason requested that an apology was printed, but it was agreed that unless he offers a statement for publication no action will be taken.
- 5.2.2 The next newsletter is to be produced as soon as possible after this meeting. Jon Darlington and Neil Hutchinson are to continue to work together on this.

JD/NH

5.3 Publicity and Public Relations

- 5.3.1 Pete Sterry is to give a talk to Tamworth Canal Cruising Club on 29th January, 1993.
- 5.3.2 It is hoped that the new family membership will encourage new members. Dave Green reported that it is already being successful.
- 5.3.3 Nottingham Festival, 20-23 May, 1993
- The organisers, BMIF, are looking for an organiser for the Boat Rally side of this event. No enthusiasm for taking this on.
 - Cost of space is £33.20/m² under cover, £20/m² outdoors, plus VAT.
 - It was agreed that NABO's presence was essential, preferably under cover, and that a minimum of 4m² would be needed.
 - Pete Sterry to contact the organisers to try and get a good deal on the cost of the space, with authority to spend up to £150. It was agreed that the increased costs of inside space were not significant compared to being out in the rain.
 - Christine Potter and Pete Sterry to organise cover for the stand over the four days.
- 5.3.4 Rickmansworth Festival, 21-23 May, 1993
- Dave Green reported that the organisers are looking for volunteer help and that there are opportunities for promotion there.
 - Peter Lea reported that Christine Denton will be at Rickmansworth, representing Citroen, who are sponsoring a hot air balloon. She is prepared to offer a ride in the balloon as a prize for a draw for anyone joining NABO and contributing an extra £1. It is not known whether this £1 is for Canals 200 or for NABO.
 - Peter Lea has local contacts and agreed to find out the cost of a stand and more details about the balloon ride draw.
- 5.3.5 Peterborough Rally, 28-30 August, 1993
- NABO has written to IWA to ask whether they have any objection to our presence at their rally, but has received no reply.
 - It was agreed that we would rather not share a stand with the RBOA (as offered), ~~as the RBOA have not had a good press recently. The same thought applies to the Nottingham Festival.~~
 - Christine Potter and Harry Winter have both entered their boats for the rally, and hope to have prominent moorings from which they can publicise NABO.
- 5.3.6 Pete Sterry has been invited to attend a rally at Preston Brook on 27th May, 1993. The invitation has been accepted.
- 5.3.7 There is also a rally at Stratford that weekend, but it was agreed that we cannot be everywhere. However, we can ask all rally organisers if they would be willing to include NABO information in their rally packs. Pete Sterry to draft a standard letter and send it to all rally organisers.

PS

CP/PS

PL

PS

- 5.3.8 It was agreed that all membership forms distributed at festivals and in rally packs should be marked, so that the results can be monitored.
- 5.3.9 Penny Barber reported that 22 sweatshirts and 10 T-shirts have been sold. This represents a profit of £45.

5.4 Regional representation

- 5.4.1 Dave Green has had a letter from a member pointing out that the NRA are proposing to cease the reciprocal licencing arrangements between themselves and BW for the River Nene, following pressure from the Association of Nene River Clubs, who feel that they are at a disadvantage as most have boats over 7' wide. The present arrangements will continue until 1994 (relevant to the Peterborough rally). This would make the arrangements that BW NE region are hoping to promote for boats crossing the Wash and entering BW waters unlikely - although this would be of more benefit to wider boats. Dave Green to write to the NRA and the Association of Nene River Clubs to give our definite support to the continuation of the reciprocal licencing arrangements. DG
- 5.4.2 Dave Green has had a letter from a member complaining about the dangerous nature of the tapered spindles on paddle gear on the Aylesbury arm. There was not much sympathy with this view. Dave to reply. DG
- 5.4.3 Peter Lea has had some correspondence with Caroline Clark (Manager, GU(S)) concerning the 'no mooring for more than 14 days in any one year' rule being applied on the Tring summit. There was some discussion about the legality of applying such as rule (BW have no powers until the Bill is passed) and the underlying problem which is boaters who misuse the system. It was agreed not to publicise the correspondence with Caroline Clark at this stage. Dave Green can raise the issue at the next User Group meeting. DG
- 5.4.4 Neil Hutchinson suggested that members needed more information about moorings outside their local area. If Waterway Managers are approached they are often prepared to be flexible about mooring rules, and if there are problems, members should approach NABO. A general article on the subject was suggested for the newsletter. JD
- 5.4.5 Penny Barber reported on the existence of the West Midlands Canal Forum, and that the User Group of the Heartlands project has a positive attitude to canals, as well as funding 2 canal wardens. She will find out more. PB
- 5.4.6 Two people have complained to BW about the difficulties of navigating from Perry Barr to Gas Street. The BW response to one of these letters is helpful in attitude.
- 5.4.7 Peter Lea asked if NABO was supporting the campaign to increase the length of Thorne lock. Pete Sterry to write to BW from NABO, and Peter Lea to write a few lines for the newsletter to encourage members to write too. PS/PL
- 5.4.8 Nikki Timbrell asked if NABO should be concerned about the proposed low level crossing of the Forth & Clyde canal by the M80, the proposed nine month stoppage on the Basingstoke canal and the everlasting (since Nov 1991) stoppage on the Ashby canal. It was agreed that these were matters for regional representatives, and that Pete Sterry, Dave Green and Penny Barber would deal with them. PS/
DG/PB
- 5.4.9 Jon Darlington produced photographs sent to him by a member supposed to be of the Gym inside the BW offices at Fazeley. Penny Barber to write to BW questioning how such facilities can be justified. PB

6. BW Bill

6.1 BW have published their statements of intent concerning the application of the Bill when it becomes law. The object of these statements is to reassure the petitioners against the Bill, and encourage them to withdraw their petitions. However, in practice the Bill could be applied contrary to the statements, and a Court is unlikely to take these into account. NABO's view is that if BW is prepared to state their policies, there is no reason why these should not be in the Bill itself. Such statements will not persuade us to change our opposition to the Bill.

6.2 NABO have sent their suggested amendments to BW's Solicitor. These have not been looked at yet due to long holiday of Solicitor. Where BW agree to any NABO amendments, those parts of the petition will not be pursued.

6.3 All letters to the Department of the Environment from MPs are receiving the same (irrelevant) reply.

6.4 Lord Strathclyde

- Will not meet NABO.

- NABO must respond to his letters to MPs, as he is misrepresenting opponents of the Bill, and could be influencing the opinions of MPs. Jon Darlington to provide a framework for Dave Green's letter, with input from JD/
Peter Lea. DG/PL

- Lord Strathclyde's letter and our response to be circulated to all MPs known to be in favour of opposing the Bill. DG

6.5 Dave Green has received a notice that the All Parties Waterways Group of MPs has been reconvened under the Chairmanship of Sir Anthony Durant, and will be meeting on 19th January, 1993-to be addressed by BW on the subject of the BW Bill. It was agreed that NABO should contact Sir Anthony to draw his attention to NABO and to ask for an opportunity to give our views to the Group. Dave Green to write a letter and fax it in view of the nearness of the meeting with BW. DG

6.6 Peter Lea questioned why the petitioners against the BW Bill were not all working together. Jon Darlington replied that there had been co-ordinating meetings before the hearings in the Lords, but that NABO (and RBOA) had not been invited to join the Inland Waterways Group of the RYA.

6.7 David Stevenson, the Chairman of IWA has suggested a meeting of 2/3 representatives from each Council. It was agreed that we should meet, and Dave Green should follow up the invitation. DG

7. Document on towpath cycling

7.1 The document responding to BW's consultative document on towpath cycling policy was noted.

7.2 Nikki Timbrell questioned ^{WHETHER THE} ~~the out of context~~ article about this in the recent Boater. ~~It was agreed that it~~ was rather misleading. ~~It was~~

8. Moorings policy

8.1 Jon Darlington questioned the validity of BW's consultation process over mooring policy. Full report in the Boater. It was agreed that NABO must await BW's next move.

8.2 Jon had a long conversation with Waterways World on the moorings issue, so it is disappointing that they did not cover the story, even without specific mention of NABO. The AGM was mentioned in both WW and C & R.

- 8.3 Neil Hutchinson asked what had happened about Stuart Sim's tunnel policy. Penny Barber to mention this in her letter to the Midlands region. PB
9. Boat standards
- 9.1 Harry Winter has attended a meeting with David Allison and others at the London Boat Show on 13th January, 1993 to discuss Draft 5 of the standards. These standards are now harmonised with the NRA and Broads Authority.
- 9.2 A new checklist has been produced. There may be some alterations and rewording before finalisation. The standards have to be approved by the EC before BW can apply them.
- 9.3 A new Boat Safety booklet has been produced. Surveyors are currently working from this. It should be sent to all boat owners by BW, but so far has not, although it is available on request. Harry Winter thinks this may be in case the wording changes again. Jon Darlington to seek assurance from David Allison that all boat owners will get a copy. JD
- 9.4 A discussion followed concerning the clarity of some of the standards as stated in Draft 5. Harry Winter to write a short article for the newsletter. HW
10. Lord Strathclyde
- 10.1 Lord Strathclyde was discussed in connection with the progress of the BW Bill, see Item 6.4 above.
11. IWAAC and the All Party Waterways Group
- 11.1 The All Party Waterways Group was discussed in connection with the progress of the BW Bill, see Item 6.5 above.
- 11.2 Giles Baker has recently replaced David Wain as Chairman of IWAAC, and concern was expressed as to whether Giles Baker is sympathetic towards boaters. Jon Darlington gave some examples of his unhelpful comments in the recent meeting on moorings policy. However, it was agreed that Giles Baker is not to be underestimated as an opponent.
- 11.3 New appointments to IWAAC have not been made yet. David Wain suggested that NABO should have a seat, but the current Chairman might not agree.
- 11.4 Alan West (IWAAC Secretary) has been made redundant. Jon Darlington read a letter from Alan West explaining his position.
- 11.5 It was agreed to raise the issue of IWAAC in the meeting with IWA. DG
- 11.6 Dave Green suggested that we should be careful about our position with regard to IWAAC, as NABO have put forward IWAAC as a body suitable for choosing arbitrators/consultants for BW matters in their petition against the BW Bill. A review of IWAAC ^{has been} ~~was~~ proposed. Dave Green to write to DoE asking for news of this review and asking if NABO may be consulted. Also to enquire as to progress of the review of the functions of NRA/BW on which NABO commented a year ago. DG
- 11.7 IWAAC has a statutory base (1968 Act). The idea was floated of creating a new watchdog body for the waterways, similar to OFWAT, OFTEL etc, which would require a change to primary legislation.

12. NABO's marketing needs

- 12.1 Need to attract new members, and keep old ones. Of the 163 members due to renew in October, 38 have lapsed, rather a high percentage. The apathy of boaters was discussed, as well as the antipathy of some to 'political' organisations. The idea of attracting members by negotiating discounts on (for example) insurance was rejected. It was agreed that we need to maintain a high profile through presence at rallies, speakers and articles.
- 12.2 Neil Hutchinson suggested that regional representatives should systematically leaflet all marinas and moorings in their area. Neil to identify these and co-ordinate activities. NH
- 12.3 Nikki Timbrell suggested that we should have a printed leaflet to distribute, rather than the application form used at the moment. It was agreed that an A4 sheet folded twice might be a good idea, printed in 1 or 2 colours. Nikki to look into design and prices. NT
- 12.4 The use of the NABO logo and the need for printed letterheads was discussed. Peter Lea and Nikki Timbrell were of the opinion that these are important to give NABO a unified, easily identified image. Others questioned the cost. Nikki to obtain quotes for printing letterheads. NT

13. European Boating Association

- 13.1 The EBA is the only boating association recognised by the EC, and if NABO cannot join, there is no other way to have representation within the EC other than via the Government. It appears that 3 members from each country are allowed, and Britain already has 3, one of which is the IWA. Jon Darlington to continue his investigations re cost etc, and the matter to be raised in the meeting with IWA. JD
DG
- 13.2 DGIII will consult/have consulted the EBA over the Directive on Boat Standards. The possibility was raised of NABO contacting DGIII directly about the Directive. DG

14. Any other business (numbered 13 on page 2 of agenda)

- 14.1 Stephen Peters requested recap on Co. limited by guarantee. He offered to talk to Nick Grazebrook for legal advice. SP
- 14.2 Stephen Peters questioned NABO's position re Data Protection Act. It was agreed that we are covered.
- 14.3 Stephen Peters volunteered to be the River Users Co-ordinator. Offer gratefully accepted. SP
- 14.4 It was agreed to pay Jon Darlington £90 for the printer to be used by the membership secretary. It was bought 9 months ago for £105 (inc VAT), but has hardly been used.
- 14.5 Computer insurance was discussed further. Peter Lea knows an insurance broker specialising in computer equipment if Michael Stimpson will not insure.
- 14.6 Neil Hutchinson has received a questionnaire from BW. Nobody else has seen this. It was agreed that there was no point in asking BW why the survey was not general.

15. Next meeting will be on 6th March, 1993 at 10a.m. at The Port 86, All Saints Street, Hockley, Birmingham.