

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 6th March, 1993 at the The Port 86, All Saints Street, Hockley, Birmingham, commencing at 10a.m.

Present: Penny Barber, Phil Bland, Melanie Darlington, Jon Darlington, Dave Green, Peter Lea, Stephen Peters, Christine Potter, Nikki Timbrell and Harry Winter.

1. Apologies: Neil Hutchinson, Pete Sterry, Thomas Hartney.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th January, 1993
 - 2.1 Item 5.3.5: It was agreed that we would rather not share a stand with the RBOA (as offered). Rest of sentence deleted.
 - 2.2 Item 5.3.4: Peter Lea reported that Christine Denton will be at Rickmansworth. Citoen are sponsoring a hot air balloon.
 - 2.3 Item 7.2: Nikki questioned whether the article about this in the recent Boater was rather misleading.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes not covered by this Agenda
 - 3.1 Item 3.3: Survey of insurance companies. A note had been received from Neil Hutchinson to the effect that the survey was still going on, and questioning whether he should continue. It was agreed that Neil should continue the survey and report to the next meeting. NH
 - 3.2 Item 3.7: Houseboat Moratorium. Jon Darlington has had no response from John McCormack about this. The subject is to be put on the Agenda for the next meeting with BW.
 - 3.3 Item 11: IWAAC. Dave Green reported that he had phoned the DoE to ask about the review of IWAAC. The Minister is personally interviewing those who have been asked to join IWAAC, and list will be published at the end of February. The new members have already been approached, so it appears that NABO is not on the list. At the moment IWAAC represented only by Tina van Zeller and Giles Baker. It appears that the new IWAAC members are likely to be from non-boating groups, with David Stevenson (IWA) the only boating representative.

It was agreed that NABO cannot comment on the list of members until it is published. Dave Green to contact the DoE again to find out if it is finalised DG yet. If the published list looks unbalanced, NABO should comment in a Press Release. DG
 - 3.4 Item 4.3: Insurance for the computer. Christine Potter reported that the computer was insured while on her boat, but could not be insured while in a car or at a meeting. The Council agreed that NABO would accept that risk when necessary, but asked Christine to minimise this risk as far as possible. Peter Lea to look into obtaining a suitable case for it. PL

4. Treasurer's report
 - 4.1 Bank balance stands at £5,979, up £929 on last report.
Income since the last report: Membership renewals £832, new members £232, donations £140, sales of sweat/T-shirts £180, sale of stickers £36, extra family members £96 (total £1521).

Expenditure since the last report: Newsletter £160, Letters to MPs £35, Printer and cable for computer £102, deposit for Nottingham Festival £59, postage £84, stationery £80 (total £592).

4.2 An invoice of £439 from Jancraft is yet to be received. So far we have sold 32 sweatshirts and 14 T-shirts, which represents a profit of £66.

4.3 NABO Year End on 31st March.

- Sticker stock needs to be counted.

MD/CP/HW/DG

- Expenses claims should be up-to-date.

All

- Membership list in order of renewal date required to calculate forward element of subscriptions.

CP

5. Reports from Council members

5.1 Membership

5.1.1 Membership stands at 917, but November and December non-renewals have yet to be deducted. These were 40 and 9 respectively. Lists of those who should have renewed but have not were circulated, in case any are known personally. It was suggested that some people contacted have just forgotten to renew, and the advantages of Direct Debits was again discussed. Peter Lea to investigate whether there is any way we can set up Direct Debits, if necessary through a special bank account.

PL

5.1.2 Questionnaire to members. Nikki Timbrell produced a first draft of a questionnaire for discussion. It was decided that the purpose should be to find out which issues the membership want NABO to address. The question of whether we should be addressing local or national issues was raised again, but it was decided that as the AGM took a vote on this, we should not risk antagonising the membership by asking again, even though only a small number of members was at the AGM. Nikki to re-draft the questionnaire and circulate it with the minutes.

NT

How to circulate the questionnaire was discussed (with other mailing, or separately), and whether a reply-paid envelope should be included. Nikki to investigate Freepost and Business Reply Service.

NT

5.1.3 It was suggested that including a stamped addressed envelope with renewal notices might lead to improved results. It was agreed to a trial with addressed envelopes, some stamped, over the next three months.

5.2 Boater

5.2.1 A Boater is to be produced as soon as possible after this meeting, but Jon and Melanie are short of material. Items for inclusion should be ready by next weekend, to ensure that information remains up-to-date.

5.2.2 The disagreement between Jon Darlington and Tony Mason (AWCC) continues, as Tony Mason claims he has been misrepresented. Dave Green to talk to Tony Mason next week, and offer him the option of writing a few words for the Boater, which we will publish provided Jon has the right to reply; otherwise they will have to agree to disagree.

DG

5.3 Newsletter

5.3.1 Neil Hutchinson reluctant to continue writing for the Newsletter. Nikki Timbrell to write a report of the meeting taken from the minutes. It would be easier for the production team if Nikki had a word-processor. Peter Lea offered to lend one - Peter and Nikki to liaise over this.

NT

NT/PL

5.4 Publicity and Public Relations

- 5.4.1 Phil Bland reported on a recent court case heard by the Birmingham Magistrates. A boat owner was prosecuted (and found guilty) for not having a Pleasure Boat Licence. His defence was that he was living aboard and BW had no suitable licence for this situation. The implication is that as Houseboat Certificates are tied to one particular mooring, boats which move around can be lived on, providing they have a Pleasure Boat licence. Jon Darlington to use Phil's report to re-emphasise points about Houseboats for the Boater. JD
- 5.4.2 It was suggested that an unofficial secondary list of boat owners applying to be registered under the Houseboat Moratorium is being kept in some areas. This matter to be brought up in a meeting with BW.
- 5.4.3 Nottingham Festival, 20-23 May, 1993
- Peter Sterry has booked an outside space (too expensive inside), but has a caravan awning for wet weather.
 - A number of people have offered to help, but more are needed.
 - Canal & Riverboat are offering a 1/8 page ad. for £120 in connection with the Festival. Rejected as too expensive.
 - More information and photos are needed for the stand. All
 - Stock of stickers and possibly sweatshirts and T-shirts required for stand. Christine Potter to talk to Jancraft about this, as might be on site to produce them to order. CP
 - Pete Sterry has been invited to talk at the pre-show dinner on May 19th.
 - Well done Pete, carry on the good work!
- 5.4.4 Rickmansworth Festival, 21-23 May, 1993
- Peter Lea reported that a stand would cost £70, with an extra £10 for table and chairs. Nikki Timbrell had been sent a letter offering space at lower cost. Peter to follow up. PL
 - The balloon ride offered by Citroen will be available to the winner of the draw which will be made from the names of all joining NABO at the Festival, provided that they pay an extra £1 (which can be kept by NABO). The draw and ride will be on the last day; if the winner is not there, can draw again. Peter to check that no registration is needed under Lottery legislation. PL
 - The possibility of a general draw was discussed and rejected, as the idea and prize are being donated.
 - It was agreed that NABO should be represented at this Festival. Peter Lea will be there all three days, and others have volunteered.
 - As the stand will be at Nottingham, some display equipment is needed. Dave Green to investigate borrowing a stand, or we could split the existing stand. DG
 - Material for the stand, and some name boards are needed. All
 - Dave Green to produce policy papers for distribution to interested parties. DG
 - A photograph of the Council was suggested. Wear NABO gear for the next meeting! All
- 5.4.5 Other rallies
- Where NABO cannot be present, boats should be leafleted with the permission of the organisers. This should be organised through Pete Sterry.
 - (Item 5.3.7 last minutes) Pete Sterry has drafted a standard letter to send to rally organisers, which was read and approved. Dave Green to write to Pete. DG
- 5.4.6 Publicity leaflets
- Various quotations obtained, and Nikki Timbrell's suggested design circulated. Nikki to send copies to everyone for considered comment.
 - As these leaflets need to be produced by the beginning of May, Nikki to go ahead (subject to comments) as soon as possible, consulting DG on final version. NT
 - The Council approved spending up to £300 for 5000 leaflets.
 - Best non-glossy paper possible, on coloured paper with black ink and a half tone was suggested as the best combination for the best effect.

5.4.7 Letterheads

- 80gsm paper suggested, printed in colour. Prices discussed.
- Nikki Timbrell to produce design for discussion at next meeting.

5.5 Regional representation

5.5.1 Thorne lock (Item 5.4.7 last minutes)

A reply has been received from Ian White (BW NE) stating that the current work on the lock will be completed in such a manner that extension will be possible, pending the outcome of investigation into need for longer lock. Rumour has it that it will not be extended.

5.5.2 A reply received to Pete Sterry's letter about the Forth & Clyde canal - objective to keep canal open. No action as yet on the Basingstoke issue. Ashby canal to reopen soon. (Item 5.4.8 last minutes.)

5.5.3 Penny Barber has received a reply to her letter to Stuart Sim about the gym at Fazeley (item 5.4.9 last minutes), suggesting that NABO were being unprofessional, and that anyone who wished to inspect the modest facilities at Fazeley were welcome to do so. Penny read her suggested reply which was approved. Penny to meet Stuart at a meeting next Saturday. Penny also to raise tunnel policy at this meeting (item 8.3 last minutes).

PB

5.5.4 Pete Sterry will be giving talks at:

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Wolverhampton | 5/4/93 |
| Stafford | 14/4/93 |
| Ellesmere Port | 17/9/93 |

5.5.5 Dave Green has had a letter from the owner of Seabrook Lock Cottage (who has a NABO sign in his garden) who is having trouble with BW over his rent. Dave to reply.

DG

5.5.6 A company called C.A.R.E. are now offering an inland waterway breakdown assistance and recovery service, either £5p.a. and payment for use of service, or £15p.a. which covers callout, mileage and the first 30minutes of service, only materials and extra time charged. Jon to phone them to ask if a NABO members' discount might be available in return for publicity in the Boater.

JB

5.5.7 Dave Green has had a letter from Tom Brock - Jon Darlington to write piece for Boater.

JD

5.5.8 Phil Bland raised the question of the future of the Severn/Trent sewage outfall which feeds the Staffs & Worcester canal. Penny Barber to ascertain facts from Stuart Sim next Saturday.

PB

5.5.9 Harry Winter reported that the "rat-pipe" at Buckby Top Lock (under A5) has been started.

5.5.10 Work on an embankment on the Llangollen has closed the canal - Jon Darlington to write a piece for the Boater.

JD

5.5.11 Stephen Peters has been approached by a member with a boat on the Thames, questioning the engine size restrictions on the Basingstoke ($\frac{3}{4}$ h.p. per foot) and the River Wey (1h.p. per foot up to 20h.p., outboards only). Lack of power considered dangerous on rivers. Stephen to write to the relevant navigation authorities and send copies to the member who raised the issue.

6. BW Bill

6.1 NABO has had three meetings in London with BW's Parliamentary Agent, and Brian Dice has been present at two of these. These long meetings show that BW is taking NABO's petition seriously.

6.2 Dave Green has compiled a document detailing the position over each point of NABO's petition. Of the 29 objections raised in the petition, 1 has been withdrawn by NABO, 10 have been met by BW amendments, 6 are being considered by BW, 8 by NABO and 4 points are unlikely to be resolved.

6.3 Determination of Houseboat Certificates - Number [17] of NABO petition

6.3.1 The conditions under which BW might be able to determine (end) a certificate were discussed. NABO have suggested that determination should only be on the grounds of safety or pollution. BW cannot be sure that these two items would cover all eventualities, but claim that in practice there should be no difficulty, as they have to prove that their reasons are reasonable. The Council agreed that (a) safety and pollution grounds seem to cover everything, but if BW come up with another general concept to be included NABO will consider it; (b) "detrimental effect on amenities" was too vague a phrase to be acceptable, but NABO would consider an alternative form of wording if one is forthcoming.

6.3.2 BW propose an amendment providing for a minimum notice period of 28 days. The Council agreed that there must be a notice period specified, and that 28 days was acceptable.

6.3.3 There is no complaints procedure for appeals in the Bill. We can petition against the contents of the Bill, but we cannot get parts added. However, there is a complaints procedure in the Customer Charter, so why is this not included in the Bill?

6.3.4 BW are considering their position re renewal of certificates, and we have to wait for their response. It was agreed that 12 months notice of non-renewal was acceptable - and if no notice was given, it could be assumed that the certificate would be renewed.

6.4 Transfer of Houseboat Certificates - Numbers [17] and [19] of NABO petition

6.4.1 BW want to ensure that Houseboats are not transferred to the wrong kind of people. After discussion, the Council agreed that it was not the place of BW to be concerned with the control of people, and that we should maintain our position.

6.4.2 It was pointed out by Stephen Peters that the "holder" of a houseboat certificate is not necessarily the owner - in this case the holder would have no right to dispose of the houseboat. This is a flaw in BW's wording.

6.5 Changing the rules for Houseboats - Number [18] of NABO petition

6.5.1 NABO objects to BW deciding with whom it will consult, and suggested that the Secretary of State should decide. The Secretary of State has refused, but BW have proposed an amendment so that IWAAC should decide who should be consulted over changes in Houseboat conditions. The Council agreed that if the words "as appear to the Board" were removed, so that BW have to consult with "such organisations as represent a substantial number of such owners of houseboats.." the clause would be acceptable. This would give us a right to be consulted if we could prove that we were representative.

6.6 Standards - Number [20] of NABO petition

6.6.1 Discussion of the standards issue with Jeremy Duffy has led to a request from David Allison for a meeting.

6.6.2 On consultation: BW amendment requiring consultation before prescribing/revoking/amending standards will meet our objection, providing the words "as appear to the Board" are removed as before (see 6.5.1 above).

6.7 Boats without permanent moorings - Number [21] of NABO petition

6.7.1 Originally BW proposed to refuse a licence to a boat without a permanent mooring unless it is used bona fide for navigation and stays less than 14 days in any one place in any calendar year. An amendment adds the words "continuously" and "or longer period as agreed", which would make it possible to return to a mooring in less than a year, and takes care of winter stoppages making navigation impossible. NABO has suggested that boats should move at least 4 miles between moorings, thereby removing the necessity of proving bona fide use. The Council was divided on whether the 4-mile rule was a good idea.

6.7.2 The Council decided to maintain its objection to this clause, but it was suggested that flexibility could be offered as a bargaining point for other concessions.

6.7.3 Objection (iv) - moving a boat for repair - has been met by an amendment.
Objection (ii) - notice required of withdrawing consent - has been omitted from the document. Dave Green to amend. DG

6.8 Definition of a Houseboat - Number [22] of NABO petition

6.8.1 BW have accepted our point that by amending the provisions of the 1971 Act, they would be creating a criminal offence of not using a boat at all (in the 1971 Act, a Houseboat is anything not used bona fide for navigation). BW are considering this clause again.

6.9 Obeying the Board's officers re mooring - Number [23] of NABO petition

6.9.1 A NABO victory! BW have amended the clause so that boats can only be asked to move on the grounds of safety or congestion.

6.10 Mooring regulations - Number [24] of NABO petition

6.10.1 NABO believes that the combination of conditions in this clause (18) would allow BW to create as many mooring restrictions as they like. BW claim that this is not their purpose, but NABO has undertaken to redraft the clause so that it is not capable of this interpretation, e.g. "that the Board shall not display a notice to regulate/prohibit mooring other than for the purpose of securing safety or preventing congestion".

6.11 Planned works - Number [25] of NABO petition

6.11.1 Boats which need to move to allow planned maintenance work should be given notice. BW proposed 7, then 14 days. The Council believes 28 days is the minimum acceptable - 14 days could be less than the length of the boat-owner's holiday. BW are considering this.

6.12 Criminal offences - Number [26] of NABO petition

6.12.1 The Council objected violently to the idea of criminal offences, but it was agreed that they would rate in a similar way to traffic offences in terms of a criminal record.

6.12.2 The Council agreed that it would accept the introduction of criminal offences, providing that our objections to Clauses 16,17,18 and 21 are met.

6.13 Environmental issues - Number [27] of NABO petition

6.13.1 NABO have been advised that they will not make themselves popular by being against environmental issues, and have dropped the objection.

6.14 Transfer of shares and disposal of remainder waterways - Numbers [28] & [29]

6.14.1 BW have dropped this clause from the Bill altogether.

6.15 Restricted access to commercial docks - Number [30] of NABO petition

6.15.1 BW want to be able to restrict access to and use of commercial docks, e.g. Gloucester, Sharpness, but passage through the docks is now protected by an amendment. It seems reasonable that BW should be able to appropriate parts of the docks for operational purposes or development, and Council agreed to accept this amendment.

6.15.2 There was some discussion about the possibility of extra charges for passage through the docks, but this was dismissed as being as unlikely as charging for passage through tunnels.

7. Boat standards

7.1 NABO has received an invitation to a meeting being convened by the DTI (Environment Unit) to discuss the EC directive on recreational craft. Harry Winter is to attend this meeting. HW

7.2 The EC directive appears to apply to production boats, which narrowboats are not, so we need to make sure that narrowboats are within the EC rules. We also need clarification about whether a foreign boat which meets the EC requirements can be sold and used in this country.

10. Letter to Lord Strathclyde

10.1 There has been no reply as yet to the letter to the Minister from Dave Green. Dave to write to point this out. DG

11. See later.

12. NRA/BW reciprocal licencing

12.1 The Association of Nene River Clubs has responded to a letter from NABO. The issue is to be discussed by their committee, but they feel that narrowboats from BW waters have an advantage over their wider boats which cannot use the locks on the Northampton arm.

12.2 Ian White (BW, NE region) hopes to extend the agreement to any BW waterway, which would allow access to boats which could cross the wash to NE waterways. Ian White and the NRA are to continue talks.

12.3 Meetings with BW - a meeting on standards has to be arranged with David Allison, and one with Jim Kelly on general matters (not the BW Bill). Dave Green to sort out time/venue. Agenda for this meeting to include: mooring policy, Customer Charter, Leisure and Tourism Strategy, Houseboat Moratorium, consultation procedure, signage/marketing, DoE review. It was suggested that we send this agenda to BW before the meeting.

13. European Boating Association

13.1 It is concluded that NABO cannot join the EBA, and that they are not representative of our interests.

14. DoE review of BW/NRA navigation functions

14.1 NABO has heard nothing further after contributing to the review. Dave Green telephoned the DoE to enquire after progress and was told the review was "on hold due to lack of staff resources". It sounds as though the review has been killed for some reason.

11. Company limited by guarantee

11.1 Peter Lea has determined that being a limited company would not protect individual members of the Council from libel or slander, and suggested that the costs of becoming a company would not be justified. Indemnity for Association officers could be written into the rules of the Association.

11.2 Being a company would not protect against insolvency either, as only a legal body can be insolvent. The rules of the Association could state that no officer shall commit the Association to any loan or indebtedness to an amount greater than the amount the Treasurer has in the funds. This is unlikely to happen, unless NABO starts trading or organising large events.

11.3 The possibility of obtaining insurance against any liability arising from damage caused by NABO equipment, e.g. the stand at rallies, ^{was discussed,} Stephen Peters to look into this. SP

11.4 It was decided that if becoming a company limited by guarantee did not protect anyone from libel or slander, there was no point in considering this further at the moment. It was agreed that officers of NABO should be careful not to be libellous or slanderous.

15. Any other business

15.1 Peter Lea suggested that the Council should discuss NABO's long term objectives at the next meeting.

15.2 Penny Barber requested that leaflets for sweatshirts and T-shirts should be included in every NABO communication.

15.3 A member has offered us the free use of a meeting room (capacity 60) at Long Eaton. It was agreed that it was not convenient for Council meetings, but might be a possibility for an AGM. Dave Green to reply. DG

16. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Sunday 18th April, starting at 10a.m. at the Port 86, All Saints Street, Hockley, Birmingham.