

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

93018

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 18th April, 1993 at the Port 86, All Saints Street, Hockley, Birmingham, commencing at 10a.m.

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

1. Apologies: Neil Hutchinson, Stephen Peters, Pete Sterry.
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 6th March, 1993  
Accepted as accurate.
3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by this Agenda
  - 3.1 Item 3.1: Survey of insurance companies. A note had been received from Neil Hutchinson indicating that the survey was nearly complete. This was welcomed by the Council. Neil to report to the next meeting. NH
  - 3.2 Item 5.1.2: Questionnaire to members. Nikki Timbrell apologised for not having re-drafted the questionnaire, and promised to attend to it soon. NT
  - 3.3 Item 5.2.2: Tony Mason. Possibility of a meeting between Tony Mason and Dave Green. Dave not to pursue this actively.
  - 3.4 Item 5.5.6: C.A.R.E. Jon Darlington has enquired about the possibility of advantages to NABO of encouraging membership of waterway breakdown service, and C.A.R.E. has offered 5% commission to NABO for any member taking out their car policy. There is only a possibility of commission on the boat policy if substantial numbers join. It was decided not to pursue this at present, as the reliability of C.A.R.E. is unknown; a saving on the costs of a policy to members would be better than commission. //
  - 3.5 Item 14.1: DoE review of BW/NRA navigation functions. Dave Green to follow up his telephone call with a letter in the hopes of getting a more definite response. DG
  - 3.6 A number of NABO reporting 'firsts' were noted:
    - The DoE review (or lack of it).
    - Appointments to IWAAC (or lack of them).
    - Freight grants available in the new Railways Bill.This last was picked up by Dave Green, and means that grants could be available for moving freight by water in order to remove it from the roads. NABO issued a press release, which was printed by Canal and Riverboat, but which Waterways World used without acknowledgement. It was agreed that we should get in touch with the editor of Waterways World in order to improve their attitude towards NABO. Penny Barber and Pete Sterry to seek an appointment. PB/PS
  - 3.7 Item 11.3: Insurance against damage caused by NABO equipment. Stephen Peters had looked into this, and sent a note to the meeting. NABO could take out specific exhibitors insurance, which is likely to cost 100-200 per event. This is obviously out of our reach. Could we approach IWA for suitable insurance?

#### 4. Treasurer's report

- 4.1 The bank balance stands at £5549.  
Income since the last report £387: Membership renewals £80, New members £176, Donations £65, Sale of stickers £22, Sale of sweatshirts £25, Family memberships £20.  
Expenses since the last report £817: Nottingham Festival £35, Room hire £15, Boater £260, Sweatshirts and T-shirts £435, Stationery £12, Copying £12, Postage £17, Travel £17, Other £14.
- 4.2 A £50 donation was received from the Greyhound Boat Club. Penny Barber has written to thank them for their generosity, unlike IWA and AWCC who also received funds.
- 4.3 Peter Lea announced additional expenditure of £70 for the stand at Rickmansworth, and £61 for the carrying case for the NABO computer.
- 4.4 Annual accounts: Penny Barber now has all the necessary information. A question was raised concerning the Auditor, as he is retired and no longer has a practicing certificate. Jon Darlington to investigate whether he is still acceptable. JD
- 4.5 Direct debits: Peter Lea reported his investigations. It is possible to set up a Direct Debit system, either using a paper or computer system. It costs 250 to register, and 12-15p per entry. However, somebody has to give an unlimited guarantee for any loss or damage to an individual or the Bank. Once that person has been accepted as guarantor, it would be difficult to escape. For a standing order, the amount is fixed, so a guarantor is not required.

Dave Green expressed the opinion that we could not proceed with either, and the Council agreed. The responsibility of being a guarantor is too great for any Council member to undertake, and standing orders would need renewing every time the subscription was raised.

Harry Winter thanked Peter Lea for his investigations. It was decided that we should report our decision to the members, with our reasons. Peter Lea to write an item for the newsletter.

#### 5. Reports from Council members

##### 5.1 Membership

- 5.1.1 There are currently 815 members. The numbers are fairly static, although there is a considerable turnover in members.
- 5.1.2 Melanie Darlington asked Christine Potter if a list could be made available every month of those members due to renew their membership in a year's time. Thus a running list of current members could be maintained without having to print the whole list every time. CP
- 5.1.3 The focus of this summer's activities at Festivals etc. is recruitment of new members.

##### 5.2 Boater

- 5.2.1 Nikki Timbrell expressed the opinion that the last issue of the Boater looked very good using the new Univers typeface.
- 5.2.2 A member had commented that there was no date or issue number in the last issue. Jon Darlington admitted that it had been omitted in error.

### 5.3 Newsletter

5.3.1 Neil Hutchinson no longer involved. Peter Lea to lend a computer to Nikki Timbrell so that copy for the newsletter does not have to be retyped. Jon Darlington expressed his thanks to Peter for this.

### 5.4 Publicity and Public relations

5.4.1 The last Canal & Riverboat article by Dave Green was a bit short. Jon Darlington to write the next one on the Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation into BW.

5.4.2 Norman Allborough (the editor of C & R) has indicated that there has been quite a lot of response from the NABO articles. He has expressed the opinion that NABO is much more on the ball than other organisations, and that we are respected by BW.

#### 5.4.3 Report from the Publicity Officer

Peter Sterry gave a talk in Wolverhampton in the week before this meeting, which was well received. An instant phone call to Jon to obtain a Boater for a member who had missed out also went down well.

Peter has received a considerable amount of pre-show material for the Nottingham Festival. He will have 10 free admission tickets, and would welcome help with the stand. The stand is number 183, near the river.

Peter's invitation to give a light-hearted after-dinner speech to the CBA has been confirmed. He suggests that extracts from Lord Strathclyde's letters should prove amusing!

Peter has also been given 2000 NABO application forms, duplicated free of charge, and asked if the Council would authorise a donation of 10 in appreciation. Although these form will be superceded by the new leaflet, the Council agreed that Peter could donate the money and reclaim it. PS

#### 5.4.4 Nottingham Festival

There will be a Canal & Riverboat feature with a plan of the layout and a list of exhibitors.

Material for stand:

- Photographs - Nikki Timbrell to ask Robin Smithett for some. NT
- Jake Kavanagh's cartoon, which he has very generously produced free of charge for the NABO leaflet, could be reproduced in a larger size and would be eye-catching. NT
- Dave Green has some 10"x8" photographs somewhere. DG
- Samples of T-shirts and sweatshirts required for the stand. A method of taking orders and receiving payment needs to be confirmed. PB
- More stickers need to be ordered. More of the same as before. MD
- Few copies of the latest Boater for display. MD

Membership recruitment is a priority. Boats to be leafleted if possible.

Those attending the Nottingham Festival (Christine Potter and Pete Sterry) require the whole of the display stand, so something else has to be found for Rickmansworth. Could we make a stand for less than the 800 it would cost to buy?

#### 5.4.5 Rickmansworth Festival

Peter Lea has booked a covered inside space, but needs more help to man the stand. He has also booked a table and chairs for 11, which was sanctioned by the Council, as it is not practicle to transport these.

Publicity material required as for Nottingham.

The draw for the balloon ride is OK - it counts as a small lottery as long as all the tickets are sold on site.

Peter has a form to fill in for the Festival programme. It should include a statement of NABO's purpose, taken from the Constitution.

#### 5.4.6 Ashby canal rally

Harry Winter attending, over early May Bank Holiday weekend. He has permission to go round the boats with leaflets. Nikki Timbrell to provide leaflets in time for this. NT

#### 5.4.7 Peterborough Festival

We have heard nothing from the IWA re our involvement in this rally. The Council agreed that we should look into the price of a stand, and although they are expensive, there might be a special price for boaters associations. Nikki Timbrell to write to IWA head office to enquire. NT

#### 5.4.8 Braunston

Dave and Jane Green are going. They could leaflet the boats, but it was agreed that it would be a courtesy to ask the organisers (BW and Braunston Marina) first. Dave to write to them. DG

#### 5.4.9 Leaflets

These should soon be ready for printing. The Council thought they were looking good. All leaflets distributed at rallies to be marked as follows:

- A - Ashby (200)
- N - Nottingham (1000)
- R - Rickmansworth (600)
- P - Peterborough (?)
- B - Braunston (200)

Nikki Timbrell to distribute the leaflets as soon as possible. NT

#### 5.4.10 Letterheads

Nikki Timbrell circulated a possible design for the letterhead, which was accepted by the Council. It was agreed to print 1000 letterheads, in black ink on white 80gsm paper. Nikki to progress. NT

#### 5.5 Regional representation

- 5.5.1 Penny Barber attended a Birmingham user group meeting, which she reported in the Boater. After the meeting she spoke to Stuart Sim about the issue of the Gym at Fazeley. He was apparently rather embarrassed by his initial reaction to NABO's enquiry, but repeated his offer for anyone to inspect the facilities. He said that such sports facilities are usual in that sort of building, cost 4-5,000 to build, and are used by the 60 in the building and other groups.

Penny Barber expressed the opinion that there as no point in continuing with the argument. Other members of the Council disagreed. However, the majority voted to let the matter drop.

#### 5.5.2 End of garden moorings

Penny Barber has been contacted by a member, Mr Banham from Burton-on-Trent, who has out of the blue received an invoice from BW for 160 for moorings. Not only is he objecting to the amount and the lack of notice, but BW also indicate that his licence will not be renewed if he does not pay. He says he is not the only person to have received such a communication from Stephen Goode's office. It was agreed that the issue should be raised in the meeting with BW.

Phil Bland thought that someone was contesting the End-of-Garden moorings ruling near Wolverhamptom. Phil to chase up after the BW meeting.

5.5.3 Phil Bland reported that the Express & Star published an article about the BCN remainder waterways becoming cruiseways, which the IWA and local canal societies have been campaigning for for a long time. The newspaper article gave Stuart Sim the credit.

5.5.4 Harry Winter reported that the Ashby canal is now open, but weedy. A small pleasure boat had caught fire on the Thames recently, but it was thought to be an accident - nothing that could have been prevented by Boat Safety Standards.

5.5.5 Peter Lea reported that David Daines has won his battle with the PLA over the requirement to have VHF on 70' boats when navigating the Thames between Brentford and Teddington. The DoE will issue a Press Release, meanwhile Peter to write a few lines for the newsletter. PL

5.5.6 Dave Green has been approached by a member to suggest that we issue membership cards. It was felt that there was not much point, as there are no benefits, e.g. preferential admission rates. However, the matter to be discussed more fully at the next meeting.

#### 6. BW Bill

6.1 Sherwoods will let us know the new date of the Committee stage of the Bill. The filled Bill is now published, and Dave Green has updated the analysis document (latest version 93016). Please will everyone read this and notify Dave of any errors. All

6.2 Determination of houseboat certificates (ref page 2, paragraph 3). BW has inserted an amendment which gives 28 days for the holder of a houseboat certificate to rectify anything which will otherwise lead to the determination of the certificate. The Council discussed this, and agreed that this period was acceptable. This point, [17ii] of NABO petition, can now be moved in the statistical summary to "Wholly or sufficiently met by BW proposed amendments", making the total of these 8.

6.3 Moving boats for planned works (ref page 6, top paragraph). The BW amendment concerning compensation for loss or damage to boats moved by the Board for planned works appears to apply only to hire boats. The Council discussed this and decided that further clarification of this point was required. This is [25ii] of NABO petition, which can now be moved to "Points on which further discussion is needed" in the statistical summary, making a total of 15. "Points on which NABO should further consider its position" now has a zero total.

- 6.4 Peter Lea suggested that we should meet with BW to discuss dropping some of NABO's objections in return for BW concessions on other points. The Council thought that we should wait for the response from BW on the outstanding points before making any compromises.
- 6.5 NABO should respond to a recent letter from BW emphasising that we are as anxious as they are to resolve as many points as possible before the Bill reaches the committee stage. Another meeting might be helpful. DG
- 6.6 Jon Darlington pointed out that the filled Bill contained an additional power (section 19), the addition of which is not strictly allowable in Parliamentary procedure. NABO could perhaps use this as a lever in gaining amendments.
- 6.7 Section 14 of the Bill, concerning the granting of licences, now allows for 28 days notice, during which time the conditions which are not being met can be rectified, before a licence is withdrawn. The Council considered that 28 days was a reasonable period, but took issue with the wording. It should read "may give notice" rather than "shall give notice", and make it clear the BW will not act without giving notice. The same applies to the clause on the determination of houseboat certificates.
- 6.8 A meeting of petitioners was suggested. However, although there is a list of the original petitioners, it does include addresses, and it is known that many have dropped out.

## 7. Boat Standards

- 7.1 Harry Winter attended a meeting at the DTI on 10th March concerning the EC Boat Standards. Although 143 people were invited, only about 40 attended, of which only 10 actually owned or operated boats. BW was represented, but not IWA or the Broads Authority. The EC regulations are concerned with the standards for constructing new craft at the point of sale, and does not prohibit individual authorities (e.g. BW) from making their own regulations. Harry reported that it was a good meeting, well chaired by Mike Hayter. It was established that stability and floatation tests will not be a requirement for inland craft such as cruisers and narrowboats.
- 7.2 There was an EC meeting on the matter of Boat Standards on 18th and 19th March. The Council discussed whether direct communication with the Commission was possible, and concluded that it was not. The best we can do is to monitor their decisions by receiving documentation. There are representatives from the DTI, DoE etc. sitting on the Brussels committee, who could maybe be approached if necessary.
- 7.3 Dave Green had received a letter from Paul Wagstaff at BMIF, requesting NABO's views on the Level 5 Standards, and suggesting a possible meeting. BMIF will be responsible for setting up, training and maintaining a list of inspectors able to issue Boat Safety certificates for boats on BW, Thames, Fen and Broads waters. These inspectors will be either qualified Surveyors, experienced boatyard owners or representatives from boat clubs preferably with a technical or engineering background. Having such a wide list of inspectors should help to keep down the costs of obtaining a certificate.

It was agreed that Harry Winter should reply to Paul Wagstaff, thanking him for his letter, stating NABO's overall policy re standards, welcoming the inspection scheme, and asking to be involved in the detailed discussions concerning the setting up of the scheme. HW

7A. Monopolies and Mergers Commission enquiry

- 7A.1 Jon Darlington had written a response from NABO about the MMC enquiry, which he circulated. Since a fast response was required, he was unable to discuss it with the Council before he sent it to the MMC, but all Council members are asked to study the document, and let Jon know of any comments. It would be possible to send amendments. NABO maintains that income maximisation is not appropriate to BW's market.
- 7A.2 Dave Green indicated that BMIF has been asked to give oral evidence to the MMC, and that in view of our response, NABO could be asked to do the same. If so, a quick response was again likely to be required, and it was agreed that Jon and Dave would represent NABO if necessary. It was also agreed that it was not a matter to raise with BW at the meeting planned for 20th April.

8. Meeting with BW scheduled for 20th April

- 8.1 Dave Green had written to Jim Kelly with a suggested agenda to include:

- Customer Charter
- Leisure and Tourism Strategy
- Houseboat Moratorium
- Moorings policy
- Consultation procedure
- Signage and marketing
- DoE review
- Policy re land sales

- 8.2 Customer Charter. Penny Barber mentioned that Stuart Sim had had a good response as a result of publishing the Customer Charter. It appears that BW have decided that a national policy of standards is not always appropriate, and that there will be specific standards for specific waterways. These will not, however, be generally available, as BW say they will be constantly under review. Instead, they can be read at regional offices.

It was agreed that progress re both Customer Charter and the Leisure and Tourism Strategy should be discussed at the meeting.

- 8.3 Houseboat Moratorium. Officially, no extension of the Moratorium is possible. Penny Barber reported that the RBOA had sent a questionnaire to all Waterway Managers, and their responses seemed to be reasonable. There has been a problem in London with boatowners not having access to their possessions on their boats after being served Section 8 notices.

- 8.4 Moorings. For discussion of end-of-garden moorings, see 5.5.2. It was suggested that NABO may have upset BW over the issue of offside moorings, as indicated by the report in their latest newsletter. BW want to make mooring prices market lead, but NABO cannot agree.

- 8.5 Consultation procedure. Jon Darlington has formulated a procedure for proper consultation, which he circulated. No other organisation has suggested a formal procedure. The first paragraph of Jon's document is a quotation from BW's own Parliamentary Agent, concerning the duty for BW to consult its users!

- 8.6 Signage and marketing. To question the cost and appropriateness.

- 8.7 DoE review. Ask BW's view.

- 8.8 Land sales. This issue was brought to our attention by a member at Seabrook locks, who has had his rent increased by BW. He offered to buy the strip of land which he rents alongside the canal (on the offside), but was refused.

- 8.9 Lock ladders. It appears that many locks are listed structures, and that planning applications are therefore required before BW can make any alterations, such as putting in a ladder. The semi-circular cut in the lock wall is not considered appropriate in many of these cases. It is possible that putting in ladders, which involves cutting the lock walls, is weakening the structure of the locks. The issue to be raised with BW in the meeting.
- 8.10 Meeting with David Allison re standards. This is still possible, but is there anything to say?
- 8A. Lord Strathclyde
- 8A.1 Jon Darlington to reply to Lord Strathclyde's latest letter.
9. IWAAC
- 9.1 The appointments to IWAAC have still not been announced. It appears that not all those invited have replied yet, but as the next scheduled meeting of the IWAAC Council is at the end of the month, something must happen soon. The Council considered its response to this situation, and decided that Dave Green should write to Giles Baker and express NABO's concern that no announcement of appointments has been made, pointing out that IWAAC cannot carry out its statutory duties until its Council is formed. DG
10. Future policy issues
- 10.1 Peter Lea raised this point after comments from two members who are worried that NABO is only interested in the BW Bill and in attacking BW, and are asking what NABO is going to do after the Bill becomes law.
- 10.2 Jon Darlington was of the opinion that there is no end of work to do, for example currently persuading BW to adopt a recognised consultation procedure.
- 10.3 Penny Barber suggested that as NABO has always claimed to be driven by its membership, we should turn the question round - what do the members want us to address?
- 10.4 Phil Bland reminded the Council that he had originally started NABO because he wanted all boaters to have information concerning their rights etc. This purpose is still important.
- 10.5 Peter Lea suggested that NABO should publish some simple points explaining our objectives in the next issue of the Boater, and have copies available for anyone enquiring about NABO. Nikki Timbrell pointed out that in writing the publicity leaflet, she had had to address this problem, and had come up with three things that NABO membership provides: information, representation and consultation. It was agreed that Nikki would elaborate on this theme in an article for the next Boater.
11. Any other business
- 11.1 Residential boats. Penny Barber is unfortunately unable to attend the next three RBOA meetings, and asked if anyone else could represent NABO at the next meeting in Leicester on Saturday 24th April. Penny to ask Stephen Peters.
- The RBOA are possibly going to establish model residential moorings in Docklands.
- BW has invited suggestions re residential mooring sites.
- 11.2 Council tax. Hammersmith Council has assessed boats in Band G (160-200,000) in line with nearby properties! They have been advised to ask for re-assessment.



- 11.3 Severn-Trent outfall. The sewage works which feeds the Staffs & Worcester and Shropshire Union canals will be continuing in use for the immediate future.
- 11.4 Spare Boaters for Festival stands. Jon Darlington to print some more. JD
12. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Saturday 5th June, 1993, starting at 10a.m. at the Port 86, All Saints Street, Hockley, Birmingham.