

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOAT OWNERS

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 6th November, 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, Roger Hancock, Peter Lea, Christine Potter, Nikki Timbrell.

1. Apologies: Neil Hutchinson, Peter Sterry, Harry Winter.
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October, 1993
 - 2.1 Item 3.7: Penny Barber requested that the wording of the third sentence be changed to "Penny Barber asked John McCormack if the RBOA was prepared to write to WW...."
 - 2.2 Item 5.2.2: Change "to done" to "to be done".
 - 2.3 Item 11.11: Spelling correction "concern".
3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by this agenda
 - 3.1 Item 3.7: Penny Barber reported that the RBOA were very upset by the way this item was reported in the last minutes. It appears that there has been a misunderstanding. The RBOA have said that they will write to WW.
 - 3.2 Item 3.3: Consultation on stoppages. Penny still to chase up. PB
 - 3.3 Item 5.4.2: Harry Arnold. Peter Sterry has written to Harry Arnold to ask about articles required.
 - 3.4 Item 6.1: Relations with IWA. Jon Darlington has written to David Stevenson concerning a meeting with the IWA. It was agreed that it was more appropriate to get a dialogue going with the IWA first, before raising complaints about the statements published at Peterborough. This could be brought up in the context of other discussions. Jon is waiting for a reply to his letter.
 - 3.5.1 Item 15.3: Research for DoE meeting. No report possible from Neil, as not present. Roger Hancock had produced a paper concerning the classification of waterways and the right of navigation. As a result of the 1968 Act, there is no right of navigation on BW waters. Roger still has to look at rivers such as the Derwent etc.
 - 3.5.2 Little consultation is required to remove a cruiseway, although BW are required to hold a public enquiry if a body representing a significant number of users objects and does not withdraw. For commercial waterways, they are required to consult those with an interest.
 - 3.5.3 Dave Green questioned whether there was anything in the BW Bill protecting the consultation procedure for downgrading waterways. Jon Darlington had heard that IWAAC had suggested informally that they might remove BW's obligation to maintain certain standards.
 - 3.5.4 For remainder waterways, BW have a specific duty to maintain the waterway in the most economical way - so if filling in is the most economical, they have to do so. It was suggested that there was a problem with upgrading remainder waterways which at present attract local authority funding. Roger Hancock to look into this next. RH



3.5.5 List of all Inland Waterway Authorities: Peter Lea had heard at the meeting of the Parliamentary Waterways Group that only the DoE has a list. We should ask for a copy if we have a meeting with the DoE.

3.6 Item 16.6: Association of Private Moorees. Jon Darlington contacted this body to enquire how much they were short for the end-of-gardens moorings case. AWCC are apparently making up the difference. Dave Green suggested that NABO should give a token amount anyway, as a matter of principle, and it was agreed that Jon should send a cheque, for a donation with no strings attached.

4. Treasurer's report

4.1 The current balance of funds stands at £7519, a drop of £131 since the last report. Total income £653: new members £112, renewals £408, family members £44, donations £59, stickers £18, sweatshirts £12. Total expenditure £784: Boater production including postage £392, printer £255, switch and cables for printer £31, travel £39, postage £3, stationery £5, Peterborough £32, telephone £12, room hire £15.

4.2 Penny Barber reported that the total cost for the Boater would be £420 when extra postage was taken into account. The postage rates have increased, an extra sheet was used by the printer which meant that those with renewal reminders went into a higher postage bracket. The additional cost of using a printer was about £60-70, but it was agreed that it was worth it to save time and effort, and the result was marginally better. The blurring was due to the bubble jet printer - Roger Hancock and Peter Lea both volunteered information concerning a better paper to use, and offered to send samples to Jon Darlington. Jon had intended to put the logo on the cover, but ran out of time. It was agreed that we could maybe think of a new cover design, but without pictures. RH/PL

5. Reports from Council members

5.1 Membership

5.1.1 Christine Potter reported that she had caught up with renewals etc. 974 Boaters were posted; there are about 200 family members and 11 households with two members. Jon Darlington suggested that the low rate of deletions for June and July was better than before, and that if members stay for more than a year, we are more likely to keep them.

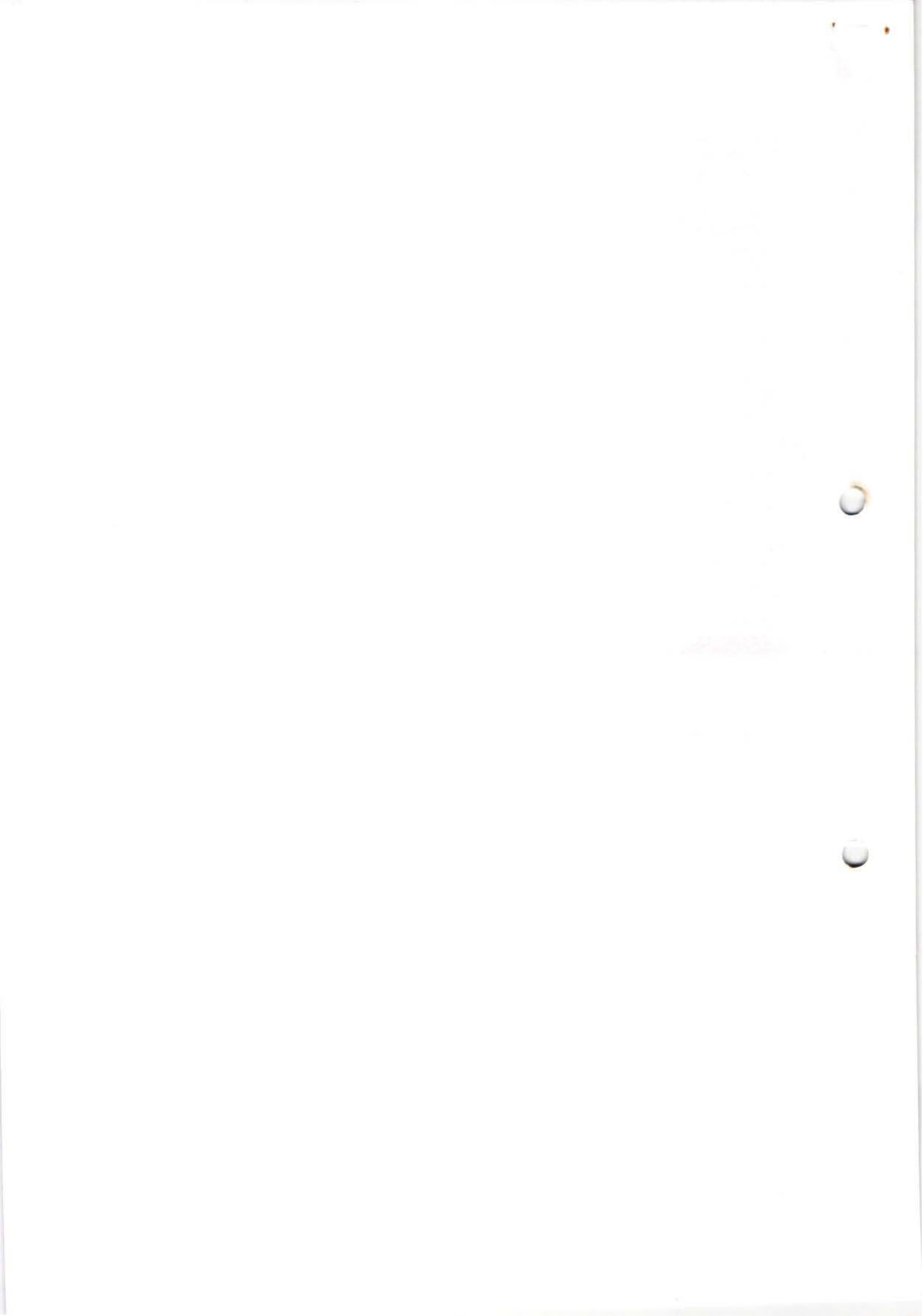
5.1.2 Penny Barber reported that we can implement standing orders, but that the membership number will need to be on each standing order for reference. Database can print out a form with all the details, but this would take time. Nikki Timbrell asked if the new application form should include a standing order form, and it was agreed that it should. When the subscription changes we will have to send a filled-in form to everyone.

5.1.3 The possibility of using credit cards was discussed, and rejected as too expensive.

5.2 The Boater

5.2.1 Dave Green thanked Jon Darlington for his nice piece at the beginning of the recent Boater.

5.2.2 The Boater was mostly about the AGM, and included empty pages because the printer did not use the inside covers. Peter Lea thought it looked good, and that the empty space was good, but it has to be arranged so as to keep in the



lowest postage bracket. Peter Lea also thought the lines could be spaced further apart.

5.3 The Newsletter

5.3.1 It was agreed to wait until after the AGM and the next Council meeting before, ^{producing} the next newsletter.

5.4 Publicity and Public relations

5.4.1 Peter Sterry sent a report - he had nothing to report.

5.4.2 Next year's IWA Festival at Waltham Abbey was discussed. Dave Green went to a meeting at Peterborough for voluntary organisations, explaining what was available for next year. All this information should be in the info pack. We can have twice as much space as this year free of charge, but must hire the marquee from the organisers. It was agreed that we should go, and that we should book early.

5.5 Regional representation

5.5.1 Phil Bland reported that NABO stickers are having a lot of impact.

5.5.2 Penny Barber reported on the progress concerning Mr Russell's fight with BW over mooring charges at Great Haywood. Penny had had a letter from BW at Worcester, stating that mooring fees can be levied under the 1962 Act, and that there was no BW policy that mooring fees would not be levied in winter. BW claim that Mr Russell was offered a mooring which he did not take up. It was agreed that BW are within their rights to charge for their own moorings, and that Penny should go back to Mr Russell to check the facts that BW state in their letter. Phil Bland asked whether if BW have not charged for the last 30 years a precedent had been set, but it was decided that this was not the case.

We need to know more about Mr Russell and the times at which he was at Great Haywood - he is reputed to be a law-abiding citizen. Penny Barber to contact him with a view to a meeting. We should also point out to members that BW will PB and are allowed to charge for winter mooring. We should pursue this interesting case and discuss again.

5.5.3 Kings Norton tunnel will be open all winter, due to overnight working.

5.5.4 Item 5.5.9 last minutes - Peter Sterry has written to BW who report that the Ramsden Bridge sanitary station is now accessible with a BW key. The extra opening of the locks on the Wakefield branch depends on voluntary overtime. Peter has passed this information to the member who contacted us, for comment.

5.5.5 Peter Sterry has heard that mooring is to be restricted in Nottingham near the new Courthouse. As this is the best place to moor for the city and museum, the member who reported this was very concerned. BW say that 48 hour mooring will still be available.

5.5.6 Peter Sterry has also contacted BW concerning the 48 hour moorings at Derwentmouth, to ask that the restrictions are waived when the Trent is in flood and boats are unable to proceed. He awaits a reply.

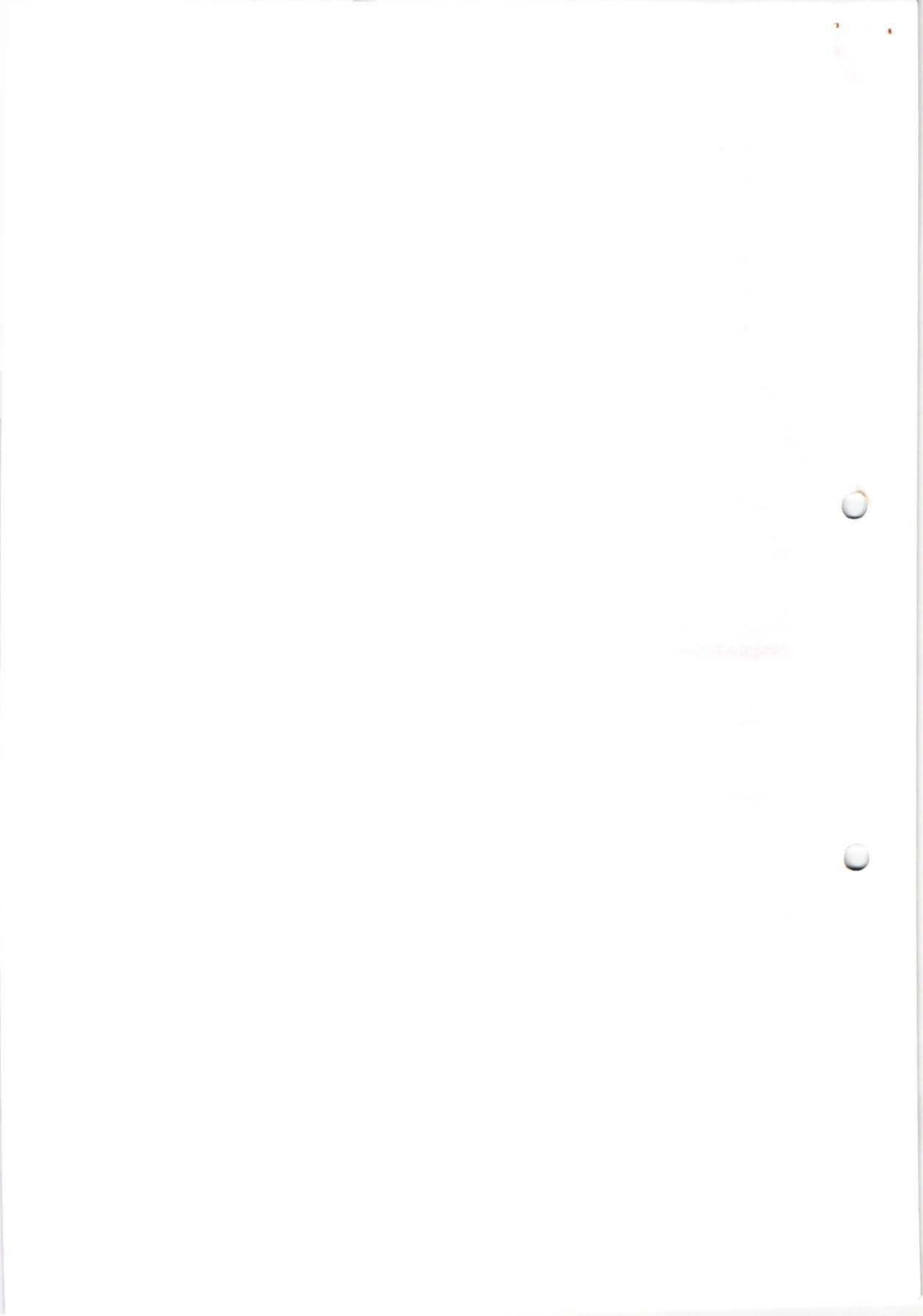
5.5.7 Dave Green reported on progress concerning the Hull Bridge Boating Club's protest about a new bridge over the river. He had received a reply to his letter in support of the Club - the Council are assessing all responses and consider the matter on 5th November.



- 5.5.8 Dave Green has had a letter from a member complaining about the mooring conditions at Napton Marina, and the level of charges. It was agreed that these were not unreasonable, provided they were ruled by market forces, and there was no evidence of collusion between marinas - which would be difficult to prove. The member can choose not to moor there, so we cannot do anything for him, but the contents of mooring contracts and level of charges is something that we could look at. It was agreed to publish a request in the Boater for copies of contracts so that we can make comparisons.
- 5.5.9 Dave Green had heard from a member who had sent about 85 postcards back to BW listing problems. He was also concerned about the glossy BW magazine picked up at Braunston about the GU and S Oxford. BW claim it was produced in response to a demand for customer information. There was not much advertising in it. Dave Green to write to say that NABO was pleased about the communication, but concerned about the glossy publication. DG
- 5.5.10 Dave Green drew the meeting's attention to two BW lock stoppage open days at Stoke Bruerne and Apsley.

Parliamentary Waterways Group

- 6.1 Peter Lea reported on the meeting he attended. It was a well-attended meeting, with representatives of 50-60 boating organisations, 4 MPs, 4-6 Lords, David Hutchings, Giles Baker, David Wain, the Morrells etc.
- 6.2 The RYA presented information about boating on rivers, such as the Thames, Severn and Broads. They are very concerned about two aspects, as reported from members: that charges are going up, and the possible introduction of a driving test and licence for all boaters on rivers. Following the Marchioness disaster, about 50 safety committees were set up around the country, all of which have now reported to the DoE. Many groups suggested this licence; there is an element of EC harmonisation, as a certificate of competence is required in France etc.
- The RYA are very opposed to this idea, and suggest it would knock the hire industry on the head. There are currently many first-time hirers on the river at Stratford, for example. Here there have been no fatal accidents, and other reported accidents have had nothing to do with navigational skills. *many representatives present*
- The safety committees appear to be completely over the top: they have suggested that all liferafts on ~~inland waterway vessels~~ should be equipped with kits of emergency foodstuffs and flares! They relented only after the fire risk of flares was pointed out. *parliamentary committee in London*
- 6.3 There was an opportunity for everyone to question the speaker, the Chairman went round the room. Points were raised about other issues, mainly by letter; if the letter-writer is at the meeting, there is an opportunity to speak about the issue. Minutes are circulated to all MPs and Lords who are members of the Group, so it is a good way of getting a message across.
- 6.4 Jon Darlington had attended an inland waterways RYA meeting, where some of the delegates had been on the safety committees. NABO has not had the opportunity to be involved. A consultative document will be produced by the DoE. This should be put on the agenda for our meeting with the DoE.
- 6.5 Peter Lea commented on how many had attended the meeting, some from minor restoration groups who had travelled a long way. It appears that the Group has been surprised by the level of response from associate members. Why it costs £150 for group membership but only £25 for individuals was discussed.



7. The 1993 NABO AGM

7.1 The Accounts are published in the Boater. Jane Green has produced minutes of the last AGM. The Agenda will consist of approving the minutes, the Chairman's report, the accounts, and discussion of the resolutions.

7.2 Nikki Timbrell reported that David Horne (the member with the boat on the Broads) had withdrawn ^{his Council nomination} due to pressure of work. There were not sufficient nominees to require an election.

7.3 A printout of members at 42 days before the AGM was not possible, but it was agreed to take the membership as at 6/11/93, as there was no influx of new members. Christine Potter to produce a list. Dave Green to produce voting cards.

CP
DG

7.4 Peter Lea has drafted a resolution about associate membership. Peter to present to meeting.

7.5 Nikki Timbrell explained the reason for the resolution concerning a 10% reduction in membership fees for standing orders. The resolution had been reworded by Jon Darlington to be constitutional, but Nikki explained that it stemmed from a Tourism Association meeting which she had attended where a similar resolution was discussed, with the result that the members had voted for an increase in subscriptions, although this had not been the intention of the committee. Penny Barber had problems with the resolution as drafted, and proposed an amendment. At the ^{AGM} meeting, Dave Green to ask Penny for this amendment, and this will be discussed.

Subscription levels will be discussed next. If Penny's amendment is passed, or the whole resolution is lost, we will recommend £8. If Penny's amendment is lost, but the original is passed, we will recommend £9. A discount can be offered to any member by the Council.

7.6 The Auditor is to be the same as before.

7.7 Nikki Timbrell to take minutes. Meeting to be taped.

7.8 The room is available from 1p.m. to 5.15p.m. Meeting 2-5p.m. Tea and coffee to be organised by Jon Darlington. Harry is organising the raffle and prize. Peter Sterry to bring the display stand. Stickers, sweatshirts and pennants are to on sale. Dave Green to make slides if time.

JD
PS
DG

8. River Wey and Godalming Navigations

8.1 Peter Lea had spoken to Tom Chaplin and Jim McDonald about the River Wey, and they reported that the situation was much worse than reported in the press. There is dishonesty and demands for money. A National Trust employee also owns the maintenance yard, and awards contracts to himself. Threats are used, and many people are too scared to complain. The National Trust has set up a committee to look into it.

8.2 Mr de la Haye did not arrive. It was agreed that we should ask him to a future meeting - Stephen Peters to contact him again. It may be an opportunity to recruit new members. Jon Darlington to write up report.

SP
JD



9. NABO involvement in 1994 boat rallies

9.1 Waltham Abbey already discussed. It was suggested that we should attend at least a couple of spring rallies: so far all events had covered their costs from new memberships, and the visibility was good for renewals. The possibilities are:

- Little Venice Canal Cavalcade. London IWA. First w/e in May. Peter Lea to find out if stands are available. *Yes, but haven't found out*
- Nottingham, 19-22 May. Dave Green's new boat to be on display. Christine Potter will also be there. Christine to contact BMIF. *PL*
- Braunston, last w/e in May. *CP*
- Stourbridge, end of October. *5*

It was agreed that the next Council should appoint a co-ordinator.

9.2 Progress on Market Harborough unknown, as Harry Winter not present. It was agreed that it was not practical to organise for 1994, but April/May 1995 might be possible. In 1995 it will be 45 years since the first IWA rally there.

Recent meeting with BW

10.1 Jon Darlington and Peter Lea attended a meeting with BW, represented by Jim Kelly, Ken Dodd and Carl Legge.

10.2 BW offered a presentation about Houseboat moorings. In the SE region, BW are identifying suitable temporary sites for those on the Moratorium, and are negotiating with boat owners about rates etc. It sounds reasonable, there is a period for consultation, and a choice of temporary sites. However, Jon and Peter questioned this presentation: it was not consultation, and as they had not been notified that this was going to be discussed, they were not prepared.

10.3 Jon Darlington's consultation procedure was discussed. BW agreed to come back with an answer within 4 weeks: it has not been agreed within BW. Jim Kelly likes the idea of formalising the consultation procedure, but may vary the details.

10.3 Licence refunds were discussed. Ken Dodd (Jim Kelly's boss) maintained a heavy attitude, with which Jim Kelly did not appear comfortable. Objections have been raised to the £25 administration charge levied on licence refunds. Now BW propose to only refund part of the shortest licence which you could have taken out, e.g. after 5 months, you only get back 1/6 of a 6 month licence (which is 85% of 12 month rate), rather than 7/12 of whole amount. This may be a fair way of deterring visitors taking out a long term licence and asking for a refund, but is not fair on genuine cases. It would be easy to distinguish between the two - by existence of previous licence, BW mooring etc. Dave Green questioned whether it is right to charge 85% of 12 months for 6 months. Peter Lea had lectured BW on consultation, as these proposals are due to implemented from 1/1/94. NABO should write to object, and issue a press release.

10.4 For moorings, you will only get a refund on any outstanding mooring fees if BW can relet the mooring. There is no notice period attached to the mooring agreement, and no information on what level of refund will apply. Roger Hancock has just moved to BW moorings, but has no formal agreement, and will check on whether any refund is available.

RH

Peter Lea suggested that we should write to BW to object about the lack of consultation, the scandalous nature of the refund proposals, giving counter proposals and suggesting 60 days notice for movement of moorings. We should threaten BW with the complaints mechanism if they do not reconsider.

- 10.5 BW are not interested in our Boater's Charter. They do not want boaters to be seen to be given special interest, nor do they want to get involved in the
- 10.6 difficulties of the Charter. Peter Lea tackled BW over the 'secret' waterway standards. It was explained that these were complex documents, which should be explained by a waterway manager before we could have a copy. We could not even have a copy of the skeleton documents. It appears that Jim Kelly is in favour of us having copies of the standards, but the issue is the subject of a BW internal disagreement. Jim Kelly is having a meeting with the waterway managers at the end of January, and has asked us not to publicise their refusal to let us have copies for the moment. We have two alternatives: either to treat this comment as an attempt to buy time, and to go ahead and attack BW, or to wait until February for Jim Kelly's response. It was agreed that we should write to Jim Kelly expressing our disappointment at not having copies now, and indicating that we will change our tune in February if we don't get copies then. Jon has already publicised this issue to members. We should publish a factual article in the newsletter explaining that the standards exist, there is a skeleton structure, with details specific to each waterway; we are in negotiation with BW over copies; meanwhile they can be viewed in waterway manager's offices.
- 10.7 Availability of BW keys: the use of sanitary stations by long distance walkers is encouraged by BW, and there is no problem with vandalism. The GU walk document is low profile, so BW do not see any problem with walkers having BW keys. However, Jim Kelly reports that BW are thinking of introducing a high security key for access to places other than sanitary stations and water points.
- 10.8 On pump-outs, BW were not aware of the different requirements for self pump-outs and coin-operated pump-outs. They will investigate, but would like to have feedback from boaters about their requirements. It was agreed that we should sample opinion at the AGM, and put a paragraph in the next newsletter too.
- 10.9 BW promised to get back to us about mooring classifications by Christmas.
- 10.10 Canal & Riverboat article: it was agreed that this should be about licence refund iniquities, and mention the problem over viewing waterway standards. Jon Darlington to write this, and send copies to Dave Green and Peter Lea. JD
It was agreed that we should also send a copy to Jim Kelly as a matter of courtesy, but not to invite reply.

11. NABO Members Charter

- 11.1 Objections to this were raised at the last meeting, but further discussion was not possible in Stephen Peter's absence. Meanwhile, please send detailed points to Stephen. All

12. Meeting with the DoE

- 12.1 It was agreed that this was a job for the new Council chairman. We now have the safety committee reports and the introduction of skippers licences for private boats on rivers to add to the agenda.

13. Membership recruitment

- 13.1 Peter Sterry investigated the possibility of putting leaflets in Canal & Riverboat. The cost to us would be £425. However, we would have to print 25,000 leaflets, and an advertisement might be more effective.
- 13.2 Nikki Timbrell still to write to canal magazines about advertising. We should have leaflets available at the AGM.



14. NABO membership survey analysis

- 14.1 Melanie Darlington and Nikki Timbrell were thanked for their efforts in analysing the results of the survey.
- 14.2 Peter Lea noted that we had received criticism from members of other organisations who thought we were trying to take credit for everything. We should certainly blow our own trumpet, but be careful to note co-operation. We should be careful not to claim anything which is not ours.
- 14.3 Nikki Timbrell mentioned the apparent intolerance of other canal users which came out of the survey. This is a major problem for some members - anglers, cyclists, other boats. Christine Potter has been asked if NABO could suggest that boaters should slow down when passing moored boats - we should put a piece in the newsletter.
- 14.4 Many members are concerned about waterway restoration. However, it was suggested that there was no need for us to be involved, as the IWA did a good job over this issue. We can support restoration projects as individuals, and could even send money to the IWA restoration fund.
- 14.5 Peter Lea suggested that the subject of Government funding for the waterways should be raised at our proposed meeting with the DoE. The new Parliamentary Waterways Group will probably help with this, judging by the degree of interest at the recent meeting. It appears that Lord Strathclyde is not a member of the Group - we should ask the DoE why not.
- 14.6 Analysis of questionnaire should be used for future reference.

15. Any other business

- 15.1 Dave Green had had two consultation documents from the DoE about managing the coast and development below the low water mark. It was agreed that these topics were not within our remit, but Melanie Darlington agreed to look at them and bring any comments to the next meeting. MD
- 15.2 Dave Green has had a letter from the Dutch Barge Association concerning the proposed water depths in the canals, which they do not consider to be appropriate to different waterways, as defined by the Frankel report and the 1968 Act. Peter Lea to read letter in detail and to write or phone in support. There is some talk of removing BW's statutory obligation to dredge to a certain depth as laid down in the 1968 Act - Giles Baker is reported not to be against this as it would only affect a few boats.
- 15.3 Peter Lea has had a letter from the NBOC concerning the formation of a Transport Trust, an umbrella organisation for all marine and waterway preservation societies. The rules under which transport is operated is increasingly affected by EC regulations. Peter to reply - NABO is not interested in the Trust itself, but concerned about how the EC directives could affect us.
- 15.4 Jon Darlington had attended an RYA inland waterways panel meeting. They are due to have a meeting with BW, and Jon suggested a few topics for discussion, such as waterway standards and licence cancellation fees.
- 15.5 Christine Potter proposed the Council's grateful thanks to Dave Green for his vital contribution to NABO right from its inception. She expressed the hope that we would continue to do NABO credit in the future without Dave.
16. Next meeting will be on Saturday 4th December, 1993, starting at 10a.m. at the Port 86, All saints Street, Hockley.

