



2015 Annual General Meeting of the BHPA

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 7th March 2015 at the Nottingham Belfry Hotel, commencing at 11.00am

These minutes are not to be taken as a true record without referring to the minutes of the Executive Council meeting at which they were approved.

Present:

Marc Asquith
Martin Baxter
Bill Bell
Jennie Burdett
Ian Curren
Mark Dale
Ed Cunliffe
Paul Dancey
Martin Heywood
Brett Janaway
Michelle Lanman
John Nash

Angus Pinkerton
Joe Schofield
Mark Shaw
Adrian Thomas
Dave Thompson

In attendance:
6 Voting members of
the Association

Apologies:
Angus Langford
John Welch

ITEM 1: CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

BHPA Chairman, Marc Asquith, welcomed everyone to the meeting and began by reading out a list of 500 Club winners who he had cheques for. Unfortunately none of the winners were present at the meeting so the cheques would be posted.

Marc then explained the agenda and said that as it was a contested election this year there would have to be a show of hands. Following the formal part of the meeting, there would be presentations, awards etc. and then a general discussion.

ITEM 2: RESOLUTIONS

2.1 That the Accounts and Report of the Executive Council for the year ended 31 March 2014 be approved.

Members voted unanimously in favour and the resolution was carried.

2.2 That four members be elected to the Executive Council from the following five candidates: E. Cunliffe, B. Janaway, A. Pinkerton, J. (Richard) Shaw, A. Thomas.

Members present at the meeting who had not already sent in a postal vote were then asked to vote by a show of hands. The votes at the meeting were then added to the postal votes and the result was: B. Janaway 70, A. Pinkerton 64, A. Thomas 60, E. Cunliffe 52, J. (Richard) Shaw 49.

Marc said the vote was very close, he thanked J. (Richard) Shaw for standing for election and even though he had not been successful this time but he hoped he would try again in the future.

2.3 That Clear & Lane be re-appointed as auditors and the Executive Council be authorised to fix their remuneration.

Members voted unanimously in favour and the resolution was carried.

ITEM 3: AWARDS

3.1 Steve Kynaston of North Wales HG & PG Club had been nominated for an Award of Merit and Marc said he was clearly a deserving candidate. Unfortunately Steve was unable to be at the meeting to accept his award in person.

3.2 The Wings Over A Cloud award for the best article in Skywings during 2014 was awarded to Cyril Stewart for his

article 'How I Came to Fly in the Pre-Worlds'.

3.3 Marc then said there were a couple of surprise presentations for the two longest serving members of BHPA staff. He then gave two PowerPoint presentations for Mark Dale (Technical & Projects Manager) and Jennie Burdett (Office Manager). This went back to the pre amalgamation days when Jennie worked for the BAPC and Mark for the BHGA and included embarrassing anecdotes and photographs.

Although Jennie has retired as Office Manager she continues to work at the office for two days per week. However, Mark is leaving BHPA to make his fortune running his own business.

Jennie was then presented with flowers and a bracelet and Mark received an iPad.

ITEM 4: OFFICERS' REPORTS

Reports from Exec Members were included in the AGM folders and members now had the opportunity to ask questions.

4.1 Chairman

Marc Asquith's report gave an overview of what has been happening within the Association during the last year and thanked Exec Members and Staff for their work.

There were no questions from the floor.

4.2 Treasurer

Angus Langford was unable to be at the meeting and had asked the Chairman to present the financial report on his behalf.

Marc said that the BHPA finances are looking very healthy at the moment but there will be a substantial increase in outgoings during this year as we have just taken on two new Technical Officers and will be recruiting a new member of the office staff shortly.

Bill Morris noted that the reserves, which had decreased when we bought the office premises, are now rising again and he asked what the purpose of the reserves is. Marc explained that we need healthy reserves so that if we are hit by something such as Foot & Mouth we will be able to weather the storm. When there was a F&M issue our membership went into decline and is really only just getting back to where we were at that time. Also, we want to have reserves in case a suitable site comes up for sale. We are just in the process of setting up a totally separate sites fund so that if something happens to the BHPA the sites fund will be safe.

Bill then asked if we have to maintain a certain amount in reserve for insurance purposes but Marc said that this is no longer necessary. Our current insurers just want the premium paid quarterly so we do not have to hold money for a big deposit like we used to.

The subject of staff pensions has been raised by Bill at our AGMs for several years and he again asked if there had been any progress. Marc replied that pensions would be put in place shortly as it is now a legal requirement and the Treasurer has assured the Board that the scheme is ready to implement.

4.3 Insurance

Martin Heywood said it was very good news that pilots now have £5m cover and noted that this had not been difficult to obtain whereas in previous years it had been a struggle.

Our insurers are now going to cover our members for flying microlights so we will have both SSDRs and microlights on our Public Liability Insurance. In order to comply with EU requirements the cover will be £100k as opposed to £50k for our other disciplines.

Ian Curren asked if there is any prospect of the cover for schools being increased from £50k. Martin replied that he would take this up with the underwriters to see if it could be brought in line with the microlight cover. He added that it is never going to be £2m again but he does not think there will be a problem getting cover up to £100k.

There was some further discussion concerning cover for microlights and Bill Morris asked whether this would be an increased risk resulting in higher premiums for hang gliders and paragliders. Marc said we would run the scheme for a couple of years and drop it if necessary. However, an extra two thousand or so members would be good news for the BHPA.

Bill suggested that it could look like the BHPA is being turned into a microlight association by stealth. Would the BHPA become BHPMA? Marc pointed out that many of our members already fly microlights. He said the average age of BMAA members is twenty years older than ours and the only way they will keep going is by saving on administration costs. If we can bring in more members, that will keep us going. Looking back, the BHGA would only have a thousand members now if they had not amalgamated with the BAPC.

Bill agreed that this made absolute sense but asked if Exec were being totally transparent if the plan was to move towards further integration with other airports, i.e. a federation. Marc said he had sounded out the BMAA and they were fundamentally against it, so this was not an option at the moment. However, he felt that there was room for back office services to be combined. He said this happened quite a lot with local councils and was already happening with RAeC and BMFA. Marc said his main plan was to cut costs and increase membership numbers. Bill agreed that it all made sense but warned that Exec should be more transparent with the membership to avoid problems later.

In regard to increased risk, Martin said a lot of work had been done on this and the risk is very small. The business cannot stand still and we have to increase membership numbers.

Bill expressed thanks to Marc and Martin for the work that they had done on this.

4.4 FSC

Angus Pinkerton explained that there had been a problem with reporting back to the membership on Incident Reports that had been received. However, now that the online incident reporting system is in place the number of reports received has increased and the summaries published in Skywings will be more frequent. The date is searchable on the website for anyone interested.

He went on to say that we very rarely hear of a 'new' accident and one of the things FSC will be focusing on over the next year is make members aware of the accidents that do happen, so that they are aware of things that could happen to them.

Angus then said that Mark Dale is leaving and listed many of Mark's responsibilities and achievements during his years with BHPA, including the Technical Manual, Pilot Handbook, liaising with the CAA, running the test rig, etc. He wished Mark good luck with his new business selling drones and hoped that he would still find the time to fly our type of aircraft.

There followed an interesting discussion with John Hunter, a BHPA Honorary Member, who was involved in accident investigation during the early days of hang gliding. John gave an insight into some of the difficulties he had encountered in those early days and Angus said there are no such problems nowadays. Even though we are no longer investigating accidents on behalf of the AAIB, we still adopt their approach that the investigation is to uncover facts and not to apportion blame.

Bill Morris thanked John and said that people like him were the pioneers of accident investigation and set up the basis of what goes on now. In regard to transparency, he said there is hardly any censorship and Dave Thompson added that apart from names being taken out there is none.

John said that congratulations should go to the schools as there are very few accidents nowadays.

4.5 Sites

Ian Curren asked if there were any potential site purchases being considered and Martin Baxter said there were not. Steve Hudson (Derbyshire Flying Centre) mentioned that Rushup Edge may be coming up for sale in the not too distant future.

There was some discussion regarding obtaining a restrictive covenant to fly a site, this would be included with the deeds and valid even if the site was sold. It was pointed out that the site owner would require payment to cover any reduction in the sale price of the land caused by having a restrictive covenant on it.

4.6 Skywings

Paul Dancey said that all the figures were given in his report and asked if there were any questions.

Bill Morris asked if there was a policy of not reviewing products from manufacturers that have not advertised in Skywings. Joe Schofield replied that this is not the case but it is true that he will not run flight tests for any manufacturers that are not supporting the magazine. Bill pointed out that this particular policy, that requires people to purchase advertising, could be seen as a way to bring income to Skywings but may be regarded as blackmail or bribery. Paul added that the number of pages in Skywings is diminishing all the time and we have to be very selective in what we include. Manufacturers want review because it is free advertising for them, all we are saying is that we want them to support us as we are supporting them. Adrian Thomas felt that Skywings should not be carrying reviews that are effectively advertising. Brett Janaway said that this is not the case, there are seldom bad reviews but then there are very few bad gliders these days.

Bill said that he was not suggesting that Skywings was in bed with the manufacturers but he did not think a review and side by side advertising was a good idea.

5.7 Website

Regarding the BHPA website, Ian Currer said it is a wonderful resource but if someone is interested in learning to fly our website is not a very good marketing tool. The sport is not being sold on the homepage. Steve Hudson said he had made the same point to Paul Dancey about a year ago and Paul had made some improvements to the website but it still needs to do a bit more to sell the sport to potential members. Ian agreed to write something for the website.

Bill Morris asked Paul if he had considered having schools' advertising on our website. Steve added that this would be very easy, the schools could sell their courses through our shop and BHPA would make some money from it.

5.8 Competitions

Bill Bell's written report was included in the AGM folder so he did not go through it. However, he did comment on the professionalism of all the various panels in regard to organisation and safety issues. They are making competitions more accessible and safer.

5.9 Admin

Marc Asquith reported that we are now starting to look at some new innovations such as online voting, although this does cost money. The more we can do on line the better.

5.10 School Liaison

John Welch was unable to be at the meeting but his written report was in the folder.

5.11 Paramotor Liaison

Ed Cunliffe's written report was in the folder and there were no questions from the floor.

The being no further matters to discuss the Chairman thanked those attending and closed the meeting.