



2020 Annual General Meeting of the BHPA

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 7th March 2020 at Lilleshall, Newport TF10 9AT, commencing at 2.30pm.

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

Present

Marc Asquith
Martin Baxter
Bill Bell
Ed Cunliffe
Ian Currer
Paul Dancey
Angus Langford
Michelle Lanman
Angus Pinkerton
Joe Schofield
Mark Shaw
Dave Thompson
John Welch

In attendance:

15 Voting members of the Association

Apologies:

Martin Heywood
Mark Meadows
Richard Shaw
Adrian Thomas

ITEM 1: CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

BHPA Chairman, Marc Asquith, welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed those present that the meeting would be transmitted live over Facebook.

Marc explained that the formal part of the meeting would be dealt with first, followed by awards, and finally Officers Reports would be presented.

ITEM 2: RESOLUTIONS

2.1 That the Accounts and Report of the Executive Council for the year ended 31 March 2019 be approved.

Angus Langford presented his Treasurers report.

2.1.1 Angus reported on the large increases we have seen in insurance premiums, £51k in the year to March 2019 and another £105K in the current financial year. Despite the corresponding increase in membership fees we still remain by far the best value third-party liability cover available for the sport in the UK.

2.1.2 Membership in the year ending March 2019 grew from 7266 to 7590 giving us an increase in income of 4%. FSC costs together with other membership costs and office and support costs were all lower than 2018. The cost of Skywings rose from £116K to £125K representing a 3% increase in cost per member – each copy costs £1.37. We ended 2019 with a small surplus of £15k compared with £17K in 2018.

2.1.3 Our overall reserves stand at £550K of which £328K is invested in our freehold office. Our subscriptions are paid

in advance, so we hold considerable levels of cash, but as interest rates are low our interest earnings remain disappointingly small.

We hold reserves to allow us more flexibility in budgeting, to provide a fighting fund if there is a threat to the sport and to allow us to support site purchases and loans. We adopt a policy of maintaining reserves in real terms over the medium term so that surpluses in one year make up for losses in others. We met our goal this year increasing reserves by 2.5%.

2.1.4 It is anticipated that the next few years will be challenging with increasing insurance fees. Last year we had an increase in fees of £20, this year it has been lower at 2.6%, next year's may be slightly more.

2.1.5 It is anticipated that we will see a small loss in the current financial year before the Association returns to a surplus the following year. Notwithstanding the risk of a small loss the Associations finances are in good shape.

Members voted unanimously in favour of approving the accounts and the resolution was carried.

2.2 That five members be elected to the Executive Council from the following six candidates: M Asquith, M Baxter, P Dancey, J Drake, T Prideaux-Brune, S Walker.

Members present at the meeting who had not already sent in a proxy vote were then asked to vote by a show of hands.

M Asquith, M Baxter, and P Dancey were re-elected, and Marc welcomed T Prideaux-Brune and J Drake as new members of the Executive Council. He thanked S Walker

for standing.

M Meadows and R Shaw had chosen not to stand for re-election and Marc thanked them for their input during their time on the council.

2.3 That Haines Watts be appointed as auditors and the Executive Council be authorised to fix their remuneration.

Angus Langford reported that the Haines Watts regional office we use are splitting off from the group to go it alone. We will vote to appoint Haines & Watts now but once the name of the new company is confirmed we may have an extraordinary general meeting to appoint them.

Members voted unanimously in favour and the resolution was carried.

ITEM 3: AWARDS

3.1 The Wings Over a Cloud award for the best article in Skywings during 2019 was awarded to Anthony Moore for 'Chamonix – the big one!' printed in July.

3.2 Dave Tregaskis was nominated for an Award of Merit, by Seb Nicholls, for his services to South East Wales Hang Gliding & Paragliding Club.

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 reported on the breaking news that the government have decided the UK will withdraw from the European Air Safety Agency by 1st January 2021 and return regulatory powers to the CAA. In the long term this may prove to be a good thing but short term it will mean the CAA will be too busy to look at anything else.

We will continue to support the EHPU. In addition to its funding of Europe Air Sports, it funds WG6, the European Accident Database and a number of other major safety projects in which we would wish to retain involvement.

There will be interesting times ahead.

4.2 Treasurer

Angus Langford's report had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

4.3 Insurance

In Martin Heywood's absence Marc Asquith summarised his report.

There has been a significant rise in premium for the 2020 calendar year which has been reflected in rising membership subscriptions. Moving forward we need a period of stability keep premiums at an acceptable level.

4.4 FSC

4.4.1 Angus Pinkerton reported that David Thomson had retired from the FSC. He thanked David for the considerable amount of work he had undertaken developing the Pilot Development Structure. His judgement and expertise will be missed.

4.4.2 Angus also offered thanks to Bill Morris who has retired from heading the Parachute Packers team after 20 years of dedicated service. The course will now move in house and the syllabus reviewed and updated.

4.4.3 He clarified that although his report states the CAA exemption for sub 70kg wheeled aircraft has been renewed this isn't actually the case. The CAA have confirmed that they intend to renew but haven't done so yet.

4.5 Sites

4.5.1 Martin Baxter explained that the BHPA Sites Database is not a National Sites Guide. It exists to identify a single point of contact for each site so enquiries and notifications can be quickly directed to the right person.

4.5.2 The balance on the Sites Trust Fund currently sits at £53,500

4.5.3 The charge held by the Reggie Spooner Trust against Tinto, The Long Mynd and The Bloreng, has now been transferred to the BHPA Sites Trust.

4.5.3 The Bloreng has been subjected to an adverse possession claim over a small plot of land which is not required for flying. After legal advice it has been agreed not to contest the claim.

4.5.4 Martin has simplified the CANP procedure and rewritten the advice on CANP (and NOTAMs) on the BHPA website. He thanked Chris Williams and Pete Logan for their work developing a utility, 'CANP for free fliers'.

4.6 Skywings

4.6.1 Paul Dancey reported that 2018/19 had been a difficult year. This year, however, has seen a marked improvement, with an increase in advertising space booked, together with an increase in advertising rates.

4.6.2 A change in the postage process has allowed us to benefit from reduced postal charges applied to bulk mail sorted automatically by barcode. It has added OnePost to our delivery chain, but fortunately we have been able to maintain our usual delivery schedule.

4.6.3 Members have enquired about the plastic envelopes that the magazines are delivered in. We are reviewing this but are finding that compostable bags are double the cost.

4.7 Website

4.7.1 The website continues to be maintained and updated on a regular basis. There is considerable work ongoing behind the scenes to make it more viewable on tablets and phones.

4.7.2 The Hang Gliding History website which was

originally created and maintained by Terry Aspinall is now being looked after by the BHPA.

4.7.3 Work is currently underway to develop an online joining form. This will initially be for annual members.

Martin Cowley asked about the online version of Skywings. Marc Asquith explained that although it has been online since 2016 the hits are very low. It will be some time before the magazine is online fully.

Martin Cowley asked if it was possible to download Skywings. Paul confirmed that although there had been some issues these were now fixed, and it was now possible to do so.

Julie Drake mentioned that it would be good to have content directed towards free fliers and people should be encouraged to contribute articles. Marc Asquith explained that you do not have to be the best writer to contribute, Joe Schofield is on hand to 'polish' any content submitted.

4.8 Competitions

4.8.1 Bill Bell expressed his thanks to all involved on the competitions front.

4.8.2 Bill explained that the new BHPA Foundation has now been registered as a charity. Its aims are to promote community participation and support those wishing to access free flight, provide relief and assistance to pilots and their dependants in need as a result of an accident, and to establish and maintain a museum of free flight. The Foundation has already received its first donation of equipment.

Angus Langford thanked Bill for all the work involved in obtaining Charities Commission approval.

4.9 Admin

4.9.1 Marc Asquith confirmed that although he has plans to stand down as Chairman he still intends to continue as Admin Director.

4.9.2 We continue to embrace technology and are looking

to enhance our abilities wherever we can. To that end we are looking at digital membership cards which we hope to roll out shortly.

4.10 Schools Report

4.10.1 John Welch noted that many schools are experiencing a drop off in bookings and enquiries since last year. The speculation is that Brexit is making people more cautious on leisure activity purchases.

4.10.2 France has introduced a new system requiring sports teachers to register with a body called 'Arquedi'; a process which takes around three months. This limits the amount of time you can teach in France to sixteen weeks per year. This is likely to impact on schools who rely heavily on teaching abroad and they will have to be sure they've researched and complied with local requirements.

4.10.3 The effects of the emerging Coronavirus pandemic are uncertain but is likely to impact greatly on schools.

4.11 Paramotor Liaison

4.11.1 Ed Cunliffe reported that we now have 786 members with power ratings. With an estimated 2500 to 3000 active paramotor pilots in the UK we still have some way to go.

4.11.2 Low flying continues to be a priority for the CAA. Although breaches are difficult to prove to the satisfaction of the courts, the CAA do prosecute. Ed encouraged all members to fly courteously and within the rules.

ITEM 5: QUESTIONS

Reports completed the floor was opened for questions.

5.1 Andy Berzins thanked the FSC for looking at simplifying the coach revalidation process.

The Chairman thanked members present for attending and closed the meeting at 3.30pm.