



## 2019 Annual General Meeting of the BHPA

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 2nd March 2019 at the Nottingham Belfry Hotel, commencing at 11.00am.

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  
Martin Heywood  
Angus Langford  
Michelle Lanman  
Mark Meadows  
Angus Pinkerton  
Joe Schofield  
Mark Shaw  
Adrian Thomas  
Dave Thompson  
John Welch

### In attendance:

8 Voting members of  
the Association

### Apologies:

Richard Shaw

### 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 2018 be approved.

Before voting commenced Marc Asquith gave a presentation of his Chairman's report included in the AGM pack.

2.1.1 Membership numbers continue on an upwards trend with us popping through the 7500 barrier. Our previous highlight was 8000 which we hope to achieve again at some point in the future.

2.1.2 It has been a difficult time for the Insurance Team with two serious accidents putting up our premium to such an extent that each member now has to contribute an extra £20 in membership fees.

2.1.3 Marc had redrafted EHPU statutes over the summer to provide for an elected Management Committee. This

included a provision that a member of the Management Committee could only hold one post. This years Annual President, Hans Peter Fallesen, had initially been re-elected as Treasurer before being voted as President. When the new Statutes were adopted, he had to resign the Treasurer post to which Marc was promptly elected.

2.1.4 Unusually this year is a contested election for Exec. Marc thanked Andy Berzins and Dave Perryman for standing.

2.1.5 Marc thanked the Technical and Admin staff for all their work, and all the volunteers without whose commitment we would not function.

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

#### 2.2 That four members be elected to the Executive Council from the following six candidates: B Bell, A Berzins, M Heywood, A Langford, D Perryman, J Welch.

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

Marc welcomed B Bell, M Heywood, A Langford and J Welch back to the Executive Council. He thanked A Berzins and D Perryman for standing.

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

Angus Langford advised that this was a change in auditors from Clear and Lane who have worked with us for some time. It is good practice to rotate auditors periodically.

Members voted unanimously in favour and the resolution was carried.

## **ITEM 3: AWARDS**

3.1 Charles Norwood was presented with an Award of Merit for his involvement in dealing with the mid air collision in Macedonia between Innes Powell and Igor Volov. Were it not for his skills and experience in dealing with the aftermath the whole event would have been more traumatic for those involved.

3.2 John Bevan was presented with an Award of Merit for his services to Malvern Aerotow Club. John has been, and still is, the force setting the standard for the club's equipment since its inception.

3.3 The Wings Over a Cloud award for the best article in Skywings during 2018 was awarded to Paul Jiggins for his article 'Chamonix – the Big One' printed in July.

## **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 had been discussed earlier in the meeting

### **4.2 Treasurer**

Angus Langford reported on the increase in costs over the last year, the two main areas being FSC and insurance. With FSC we took a deliberate decision to increase our head count, so our costs have risen by 25% in real terms. Increased premiums mean our insurance costs have risen from a quarter of our total costs to a third.

Our overall reserves stand at £536K of which £332K 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.

Martin Baxter asked if the Site Trust Fund was included in the figures. Angus confirmed that it was not.

Bill Morris asked if there was an indication of what fees would be in 2020. Martin Heywood replied that providing we have no more serious accidents the insurance premium will stay roughly the same, which would mean subs rising no more than inflation. Bill suggested we point out to new members that the plan isn't for fees to go up at this rate every year.

Kevin Gay asked whether the Association could use its reserves to cover the insurance increase for a year. His concern was that the increase would put people off joining the Association. Angus commented that he was not sure this was a good idea as we only have £200k of cash reserves. The strategy had been agreed by the Exec and time would tell whether it was the right choice.

Dave Perryman asked whether it was possible to opt out of receiving Skywings. Marc Asquith responded that we will not offer a membership without Skywings at present.

Andy Berzins asked if there was any record of a non BHPA pilot being sued for an accident. Martin Heywood was not aware of any. Marc Asquith commented that there have been some cases where non-members have been sued but they usually do not own property, so the case is not pursued.

### **4.3 Insurance**

Martin Heywood reported that for the first time in many years we have seen a significant hike in the insurance premium for 2019. This is a result of two large claims which involve member to member incidents. Last year's underwriter was unable to give us a competitive quote, so we have moved to a new underwriter. We now begin the process of building a relationship with the new insurer. It is hoped that our business model of increasing membership will improve our chances of taking the knocks and spreading the risk.

Martin asked members to be aware that the use of camcorders and social media is adding a new dimension to evidence gathering in incidents. Extreme care must be taken in handling any video recording of an incident – preservation is paramount. Any editing is classed as destruction of evidence and may be a criminal offence

### **4.4 FSC**

4.4.1 Angus Pinkerton thanked Dave Thompson for drafting his report and producing the incident analysis. There were 203 reported incidents in 2018, a similar rate to the previous year, showing that pilots are becoming used to the online reporting system. There doesn't appear to be any unusual patterns, though there is a trend for paramotor pilots having accidents to be using smaller, faster gliders, with powerful engines.

4.4.2 The Technical team are working on a project with the CAA regarding paramotor airspace and low flying infringements. The aim is to produce a 'code' highlighting the common rules and regulations in an easy to read format. This will be handed out to anyone buying a paramotor.

4.4.3 Work on the Pilot Development Scheme is continuing. The aim is to broaden the initiative and add in Club Pilot material so that it becomes integrated into

schools.

4.4.4 A Hang Glider Airworthiness Certificate was issued for the Avian Puma 13.5, the first one issued since 2015.

Work has begun on the revision of the PG Flight Test standard (EN926-2). It is believed that the B class has become too broad, the objective is to segregate 'High-End' B gliders from more docile ones.

4.4.5 The CAA application process for tow permits is taking significantly longer as all local air users who may be affected are required to be consulted.

4.4.6 An updated Power Student Training syllabus was introduced in late 2018. This has moved some exercises from the 'Pilot' syllabus to 'Club Pilot'. It also accommodates the use of solo trikes. There is also a trial of a new Hang Gliding Power Training syllabus.

Giselle Arndell asked how much is spent on sending the Technical team abroad to do inspections. Dave Thompson explained that schools abroad pay the same school fees as those in the UK but do not benefit from the insurance cover, so this goes towards covering the costs. They also bring in a lot of new members. With cheap flight tickets it is no more expensive than visiting a school in the UK.

Bill Morris asked if we have any vulnerabilities with Brexit. Angus replied that there are still a great many unknowns. The EHPU still want us on board, airworthiness will not be a problem and the CAA will maintain the status quo. EASA could be more complicated and members going abroad on holiday may have problems.

#### 4.5 Sites

4.5.1 Martin Baxter explained that after three years of chasing the BHPA Sites database is up to date. We have 798 active sites and 74 closed.

4.5.2 Martin has spent a year negotiating with the RAF Air Safety Centre and they have agreed to rewrite the CANP procedure. The decision to publish CANPs as NOTAMs was welcome but has complicated matters and thrown up some issues in translation.

4.5.3 We have been fighting against the Leeds Bradford Airport Airspace Change Proposal since 2014. We have challenged the sponsor on the grounds that they have not followed the CAA process. We await a decision, but have support from the General Aviation Alliance, BGA and the All-Party Parliamentary Group so we remain hopeful.

4.5.3 Thanks to a generous donation from the Lanarkshire & Lothian Soaring Club together with the repayment of a grant the fund now stands at £52,757. No bids for funding have been received.

4.5.4 We used to have a national agreement with the National Trust, but they have de-centralised and agreements are now brokered at a local level. Clubs involved are reporting a trend towards inflated prices and are threatening to withdraw from their agreements.

Ian Currer asked how many clubs were using National Trust sites. Martin explained that there are about twelve clubs using twenty to thirty sites.

#### 4.6 Skywings

Paul Dancey explained that it is a constant battle to remain within budget. Advertising continues to fall, and those we do have on board are asking for bigger discounts to remain. Increased membership means more copies, so increased production and distribution costs. To mitigate this to some extent we have had to reduce the number of pages produced.

Paul thanked all those who contributed to the magazine and also Colin Fargher and Joe Schofield for their hard work.

#### 4.7 Website

The website continues to be maintained and updated on a regular basis. Joe Schofield is now able to post directly into the news column and calendars which reduces the lead time in keeping them up to date.

Kevin Gay asked if there were plans to develop how the website appears on a mobile. Paul explained that the site is old and does need some investment. He tries to develop pages so they are suitable to be viewed on a mobile.

Bill Morris asked when Skywings will go online. Paul commented that this was difficult to answer. We have trialled online but follow through has been poor. Giving people the option to opt in or out will make the magazine expensive and moving completely online has implications for employees.

Dave Perryman asked if it was possible to print his copy of the Skywings but not send it. Angus Pinkerton pointed out that this could cause issues with advertisers if we were not circulating the magazine.

#### 4.8 Competitions

4.8.1 Bill Bell commented that last year had been a good year for competitions. Some great records have been set by Taka Kosaka and Richard Carter amongst others. Bill thanked all the volunteers involved.

4.8.2. The double fatality in Macedonia had somewhat marred the year and highlighted the difficulties in operating in other countries where the resources and jurisdictions are very different to what we're used to in the UK. Partly in response to this representatives from all panels attended a meeting at Merus Court to discuss, develop and share best practice in handling incidents. Following on from this we are planning to improve procedures and pre-competition paperwork.

4.8.3 The family of Richard Arkle have made a generous memorial donation to the HG Comps Panel which will be used to develop new pilots.

#### 4.9 Admin

Marc Asquith gave an update on staffing levels in the office and explained that after a run of maternity leaves we are operating with fewer full time staff and more with part timers. At amalgamation we had an FTE of 10.5, we now have an FTE of 3.5.

We said a fond farewell to Jennifer Burdett who has taken retired after 38 years, we wish her well.

#### 4.10 Schools Report

4.10.1 John Welch reported that 2018 had been a good year for most schools. There is an increasing trend in running trips abroad as well as an increase in the number of BHPA schools based outside the UK.

4.10.2 There has been an increase in the number of schools offering paramotor tuition, and this looks likely to continue.

4.10.3 Feedback about the Pilot Development Scheme is good. It's a great resource for pilots and offers opportunities for schools to promote courses to help complete modules.

Tom Hardy asked if Brexit was affecting schools. John replied that there is too much uncertainty and people are reluctant to talk about it.

Tom asked if there was any mileage in the Association producing a report about the affect and how much of a duty of care would the Association take with schools getting it right. Marc Asquith replied that we will deal with issues as and when they arise. The Technical staff visit schools abroad regularly and will continue to do so.

#### 4.11 Paramotor Liaison

Ed Cunliffe explained that the CAA are getting tougher on paramotor pilots, but as previously mentioned we are working on a communications strategy for them along the lines of the 'Drone Code'.

The big news of 2018 was General Exemption E4653 which allows 'Launching of Self-Propelled Hang-Gliders with Wheels'. The exemption lasts until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 but can be revoked at any time. It is important for all pilots to fly legally and considerately to ensure it stays in place.

Bill Morris asked if the exemption included paratrikes. Ed

confirmed that it does.

Ed encouraged members to attend Parafest in July and the PPG Comps in August.

#### 4.12 EPPS

Bill Morris explained that the BHPA offer a formal qualification for BHPA Emergency Parachute (EPS) Packers through training and examination which currently maintains the numbers of qualified members at just below 30. There is a steady demand for the course, which runs at a small profit.

There has been a drive to educate members about the 'life' of reserves, which is set by the manufacturer, not the BHPA. Since this there has been a decline in 'expired' reserves. However, this year the age of reserve record stands at 22 which is an improvement on last year's 33.

### ITEM 5: QUESTIONS

Reports completed the floor was opened for questions.

5.1 Melvin Leggett commented that they are seeing a lot of foreign speed pilots on the hill, who are reluctant to contribute towards the site and its up keep. He asked if the Technical team could speak to schools abroad and emphasize that when pilots come to the UK they should join local clubs.

Marc Asquith replied that it was a matter for the EHPU to encourage this for all states.

The Chairman thanked members present for attending and closed the meeting at 1pm. He invited Andy Berzins and Dave Perryman to stay and attend the Exec meeting which would follow.