



2013 Annual General Meeting of the BHPA

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 2nd March 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
Bill Bell
Jennie Burdett
Mark Dale
Ed Cunliffe
Paul Dancey
Martin Heywood
Brett Janaway
Angus Langford

John Nash
Angus Pinkerton
Joe Schofield
Dave Thompson
John Welch

In attendance:

14 Voting members
of the Association

Apologies:

Chris Burns

ITEM 1: CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman, Marc Asquith, opened the meeting and read out the names of members who had been drawn in the 500 Club and had cheques waiting for them. Unfortunately none of those in attendance were winners. He said it was nice to have more members in attendance than Exec and Staff.

Marc then went on to say that all members were no doubt aware that Richard Westgate had passed away this year and he said there would be a new 'Richard Westgate Trophy' at the XC League. Marc also mentioned that Carolyn, who was our Accounts Secretary for many years, is very ill in hospital and our thoughts are with her and her family.

The formal business of the meeting then commenced.

ITEM 2: RESOLUTIONS

2.1 That the Accounts and Report of the Executive Council for the year ended 31 March 2012 be approved.

Proposed by Alexander Kirk-Wilson and Seconded by Matt Tandy. Members voted unanimously in favour and the resolution was passed.

2.2 That the following members be elected to the Executive Council: Marc Asquith, Martin Heywood, John Nash, Adrian Thomas, John Welch.

Proposed by Martin Baxter and Seconded by Bill Morris.

Members voted unanimously in favour and the five members elected.

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

Proposed by Jerry Hazzard and Seconded by Bill Morris. The resolution was approved and this concluded the formal business of BHPA Limited.

ITEM 3: AWARDS

Brett Janaway was presented with an FAI World Record Certificate, awarded to Brett and Marshall Hall.

Andy Webster was presented with the National Paragliding Accuracy League Trophy.

Before presenting the Awards of Merit, Marc said we need people out in the clubs to recognise the hard work that their volunteers do and to nominate them for these awards.

The Award of Merit was then presented to Jerry Hazzard (Chairman, NWHGPC) and Matt Tandy (RAF HG&PGA). Neil Bourne (Peak Soaring) was not at the meeting and Bill Morris collected the award on his behalf.

ITEM 4: OFFICERS' REPORTS

4.1 Chairman

Marc said that his Chairman's Report was in the AGM folder and he did not intend to read it all out. However, he did mention that he had first been elected as Chairman in 1994, which made him feel really old now.

4.2 Treasurer

Angus Langford had produced several charts which detailed areas of BHPA income and expenditure over the last nine years. In 2012 membership numbers went down by about 1% and some costs, such as telephone and travel, have increased. Over the year we made a surplus of around £10k.

We have reserves of about £478k and in order to maintain these we need to make £13-15k per year, so our £10k for 2012 is slightly below what we need in order to stay in the same place.

Our revenue has shrunk over the years; we have lost the Sports Council grant and our deposit interest. Over the last nine years RPI has increased so in real terms we have had a 35% drop.

The Exec always think very carefully before increasing subscriptions and over the last nine years subscriptions have only increased by 15%. It is necessary to increase fees to stay on track.

Angus then went through the various graphs and explained the current position.

In response to a question concerning our Sports Council grant, Angus explained that this went down from £30k to £800 because HG/PG is not any olympic sport. Angus Pinkerton added that we had kept our grant longer than other non-Olympic sports we had a contract with UK Sport and Dick Long threatened to take them to court if they did not adhere to it.

Lottery funding was also mentioned and Angus Langford said that this had been looked at but they are not interested in funding ongoing costs, they are only interested in big projects.

In regard to insurance costs going down, Martin Heywood replied that we had some big claims back in the 90s which meant that insurers were paying out more than they were getting in and this is when the insurance caps for instructors were introduced. Since then there was a period of no claims and premiums subsequently dropped as we were seen as a negligible risk.

Alexander Kirk-Wilson asked whether our older members on concessionary rates made a hole in the accounts. Some members felt that it was unnecessary to give the Over 60s a reduced fee. This was discussed and it was noted that as the average age of our members is increasing the Over 60s category will become more significant. This may have to be looked at in future years.

Brett Janaway mentioned that competition pilots in other countries pay much more than our members for their insurance cover and this is the sort of thing that we should be pointed out to our members.

Bill Morris then thanked Angus Langford for doing the Treasurers job so well and there was a round of applause from those present.

4.3 Insurance

Martin Heywood said that over the last decade there have been virtually no claims, however, we have recently had a significant member to member, member to club, hit. Martin had had real concerns that our insurers would back away but the big claim had been with our previous insurers. We are still with Hiscox and on the same basis so we were very lucky. Nevertheless, this will be on our claims history so we have to hope that when renewal comes around again they will still look at us favourably. Hopefully Underwriters will regard this as a freak accident. If this is not the case and we have to go out to the market again, we may have a significant increase in premiums.

Alexander Kirk-Wilson said he had been under the impression that the Public Liability insurance only generated a claim if a member of the public was involved, he thought that there was a waiver so that members could not claim against each other. Martin said that this is not the case, under English law the insurance is to protect everyone.

Martin Baxter said that the requirement for all club members to be BHPA member has created a problem in a few of our clubs where some of their old members want to remain part of the club but it is too expensive for them to keep their BHPA membership running. He also wondered if it would be possible for BHPA to collect fees for club membership on behalf of the clubs, at the same time as collecting BHPA renewal fees. This would resolve the problem of one or the other not being current. Marc suggested that as we only have 39 non-flying members we could reduce the subscription to just cover the insurance cost.

Bill Morris asked about insurance in respect of self-employed people as they would be more likely to claim than those in employment. Martin replied that in this day and age there is virtually no difference between the two groups. There are lots of things that may make one person claim whereas another would not, but nothing that the insurers can really look at.

The matter of the Dunstable claim was raised but the details of the claim are confidential. Dave Thompson said that there was nothing to learn from the accident.

Angus Pinkerton pointed out that a significant number of people who were involved in clubs think that they should resign their club and BHPA membership so that nobody can claim against them but the only thing that this would do would be to take away the insurance cover which protects them.

4.4 FSC

Martin Baxter referred to the online Incident Report which works really well, however, he felt that it would be helpful if a copy was sent to the Safety Officer at the club. Angus suggested that we could not automatically CC the Safety Officer but should add a note on the website saying that they might want to forward a copy to their SO.

Bill Morris said that Exec minutes take ages to be published on the website but in the case of FSC minutes they are never published at all, so how are members supposed to know what FSC are doing. Angus replied that items are published in Skywings regularly.

4.5 Skywings

Paul explained that costs have been reduced by reducing the weight of the magazine cover and he was surprised to find that nobody had complained about it. There was an increase in advertising income which he said was due to Colin Fargher working extremely hard to get the advertising in.

4.6 Website

John Nash is currently in the process of looking at the long term future of the website and Paul will be keeping things running in the meantime. Bill Morris asked about the future of Skywings and whether there are plans for it to be available electronically. Paul felt that if we do this, advertising will drop and we will not be able to sustain a magazine in printed form. He added that this is constantly under review and the Exec are aware that we will reach the tipping point when it will no longer be economically viable to print.

John was asked about the BHPA FaceBook page and he said that this was really to attract new members.

4.7 Competitions

Bill Bell said that it had been a very good year in many respects and our pilots have a tendency to punch above their weight in the world rankings.

Bill Morris asked about the situation with reserves and Bill B replied that he would be improving safety and the inherent problems of legacy equipment, some of which is 20 to 30 years old. The clinics run to resolve the reserve issue have shown up a number of antique reserves and has caused some hang glider pilots to buy new ones.

Bill M asked whether competitors have actually been told that they cannot fly because their parachute is not up to standard. Bill B replied that the Competitions Committee are working with the carrot rather than the stick at the moment and he believes that it is working.

Joe Schofield suggested that there should be another box on the form asking for type and size of parachute. Bill B thought that this was a good idea and said he would look at implementing it.

Bill M then said that Bill B and all the competitions people should be congratulated.

4.8 Admin

Marc reported that the leased line that we had to have when we moved into Merus Court is very expensive. However, we are coming to the end of the three year contract and will be able to renew on favourable terms as they have recovered their costs.

4.9 School Liaison

John Welch reported that the schools have had four bad years, each one getting progressively worse. He is expecting to lose 20% of our schools this year as they have indicated that they will not be renewing. He felt that BHPA should be making an effort to look after schools.

Joe asked John why he is not shutting up shop and he replied that he is doing other work as well because paragliding is not enough to make a living.

4.10 Paramotor Liaison

Ed Cunliffe introduced Dave Hill, Chairman of the Paramotor Competitions Club. Dave explained that he want to bring paramotoring and paragliding closer together, raise the profile of paramotoring and reduce bureaucracy.

Bill B mentioned that paramotor competitions are well worth attending as you can actually see them, which is not the case with hang gliding and paragliding competitions.

Martin Baxter asked if BHPA have a sites database and Marc replied that we do have an old database but hope to get an up to date database when we get a new Sites Officer.

There was a question about reduced fees for schools and it was noted that this was on the Agenda for the Exec Meeting following the AGM. It was suggested that the schools pay a sizeable amount of money for not very much in return. Marc pointed out that they get insurance and Dave Thompson added that it is not just the cover, it is the legal team you get behind it. You get a top lawyer defending you.

As there were no more questions the Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 13.05.