



2022 Annual General Meeting of the BHPA

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 12th February 2022 at Nottingham Belfry Hotel, commencing at 10am.

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
Jenny Buck
Ian Curren
Paul Dancey
Martin Heywood
Angus Langford
Michelle Lanman
Angus Pinkerton
Joe Schofield
Mark Shaw
Dave Thompson

In attendance:

S Blankley
23 voting members of
the Association via
Facebook

Apologies:

Ed Cunliffe
Julie Drake
Tom Prideaux-Brune

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 there would be two parts to the meeting, the first being the formal agenda and the second Officers Reports and awards.

ITEM 2: RESOLUTIONS

2.1 That the Accounts and Report of the Executive Council for the year ended 31 March 2020 be approved.

Angus Langford presented his finance report.

In the financial year ending 31st March 2021 we experienced three full national lockdowns and numerous local restrictions which impacted our ability to get out and fly. During this period, we experienced a very rapid fall off in revenue. Normally we lose 8% of membership but gain the same. Unfortunately, as our flying schools and instructors were unable to operate, we gained no new members to replace those retiring from the sport.

Steps were taken to reduce the association's costs by taking advantage of the furlough scheme. Despite a £46K increase in the third-party insurance premium the associations' overall costs were reduced by £55k. This resulted in a surplus at the end of the year of £74K which has been added to reserves.

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.

In the current year we are seeing a gradual improvement in activity and are now operating fully. We estimate that we will end the year with a surplus of £50K.

Exec have faced a difficult decision over the level of subscriptions. Inflation as measured by the consumer prices index (CPI) is widely expected to hit 7% by April and our annual third-party insurance premium will increase by £107K. Exec share a desire to keep subscriptions to a minimum and we will use £40K of the surplus from 2021 to cushion the April 2022 fee increase but notwithstanding this the average increase will be 7%.

Ian Curren asked whether another increase could be expected in the following year. Angus replied that it is likely we would but hopefully at a lower percentage.

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 five candidates: M Asquith, M Baxter, B Bell, M Heywood & A Langford.

As it was an un-contested election the chairman dealt with this matter en bloc. All five candidates were unanimously elected.

2.3 That Fortus Audit LLP be 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 The Wings Over a Cloud award for the best article in Skywings during 2021 was awarded to Andy Brown for 'Will & Dad's Excellent Adventure' printed in June. As Andy was unable to collect the award in person it will be posted to him.

3.2 BHPA Awards of Merit were awarded to Mark Hobson, Phil & Ross Chettleburgh, Tim King, Brett Janaway and Jenny Buck. Jenny was present at the meeting and able to receive her award in person, the rest will be posted.

3.3 Long service awards were presented to Dave Thompson for achieving 25 years and Stephanie Blankley and Joe Schofield for both achieving 20 years.

ITEM 4: OFFICERS' REPORTS

Reports from Exec Members were included in the AGM folders and had been published on the website in advance for members to review. Members now had the opportunity to ask questions.

4.1 Insurance

Martin Heywood reported that there has been a spot of turbulence in our insurance position, and we have seen another significant hike in our insurance premium taking it now to £534K. Our claims history has taken a bit of a battering and given the reluctance of underwriters generally, in the current cold insurance market, we are not really surprised about the rise.

4.2 Sites

4.2.1 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. We currently have 887 sites registered.

4.2.2 The Sites Trust Fund is ring fenced from BHPA assets and currently stands at £56,500.

4.2.3 The CAA have agreed that from 1st March 2022 our CANP/NOTAMs will be published under the title of 'Gliding (WG)'.

4.2.4 The Lanark and Lothian Soaring Club has recently encountered some difficulty in objecting to proposed wind farms near Tinto. Following consultation with the Scottish Hang gliding & Paragliding Federation (SHPF) Martin has written to the Scottish Government asking them to notify him of any wind farm developments in Scotland so he can notify the local club (and the SHPF), who can then register as stakeholders.

4.2.5 Last year the BHPA was approached by the National Farmers Union with a view to agreeing a code of conduct. They supplied us with a draft which we have amended and sent back. They haven't responded yet, but the situation, and guidance, will be fully explained to members in the March edition of Skywings.

4.2.6 Two years after the publication of 'Landscapes Review' the Government have published a response and launched a consultation. Martin has responded on behalf of the BHPA and drafted an update for the March edition of Skywings.

4.2.7 Martin commented that since his report in the AGM pack was published two further matters have come to light which he wanted to mention.

The National Trust, following advice from Natural England, have banned all flying during bird breeding season (February – September) at two existing sites within the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). He has emailed all clubs with sites on National Trust land to make them aware that this could affect them.

The second issue relates to flying sites on agricultural land. There is a rule, under the Planning Act, that the land can only be used for other purposes for 28 days in any calendar year. This is already impacting on one club site and may affect others. The matter will be discussed at the next Exec meeting.

4.3 Skywings

Paul Dancey reported that advertising income fell by almost 50% during 20/21 compared to 19/20. By keeping tight control of costs and reducing issue sizes, operating costs were reduced. However, this still resulted in a small overspend against budget.

Advertising income is not showing any signs of bouncing back to pre-pandemic levels. On the other hand, membership numbers, and therefore the number of magazines ordered, has risen substantially. As a direct result we are likely to see an increase in net cost. However, the upside of increased membership numbers is that there will be a fall in the average cost of each magazine.

Paul expressed his thanks to Colin Fargher and Joe Schofield for continuing to produce a substantial, informative, and entertaining magazine through such difficult times. Also, members who have continued to support the magazine by submitting contributions for publication.

4.4 Website

4.4.1 Paul Dancey reported that the website had been migrated to a new more powerful server. The migration wasn't as smooth as anticipated and there were several short periods of downtime whilst the issues were addressed. However, as a result of the migration, the available storage capacity has now increased dramatically and the limit on data transfer has been removed.

4.4.2 In collaboration with Steve Uzochukwu RSS feeds for the news page and the competitions and event calendar

have been created and RSS buttons added to the relevant pages. Steve has developed an app to automatically aggregate updates to these pages, together with new official posts on our Facebook page, and make the information available to members via Telegram messages on BHPA Information. This is a means of pushing existing information and is not intended to be a third independent channel for posting official communications.

4.4.3 Paul reported that, following on from the success of the online application and renewal facility, he is working on a something similar for introductory one day membership. It is hoped that this will be available from early April.

4.5 Competitions

4.5.1 Bill Bell began by congratulating Russell Ogden and the British team for winning the FAI World Paragliding Championship. This is the culmination of a five-year plan and has been achieved with limited funding. It is the commitment, training and self-belief of the British Team that has delivered.

4.5.2 Bill explained that after a decade as Comps Director he has decided to step down to allow in fresh blood and new ideas. Commander Jenny Buck will take his place, she has had considerable experience as Team Manager and Meet Director so is more than qualified to take on the role. Bill is not leaving entirely, he will remain in the background, helping out when required.

4.6 Admin

The Admin report was included in the AGM pack, the Chairman expressed his thanks to all the office staff for their work during the year.

4.7 FSC

Angus Pinkerton thanked the Technical staff for their flexibility during Covid. In recognition of their increased experience, both Ian and Mark have been promoted to Senior Technical Officers.

4.10 Paramotor Liaison

Ed Cunliffe 's paramotor report was included in the AGM pack.

ITEM 5: QUESTIONS

Reports completed the floor was opened for questions.

Via Facebook Rupert Sweet-Escott asked if there were any plans in place for a youth drive. Marc Asquith commented that the matter would be discussed at the next Exec meeting but that any suggestions would be gratefully received.

As there were no further questions the Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 10.38am.