Shalbourne Gliding

Committee Meeting 20th November 2014

Minutes

Present: Colin Baines, Steve Barber, Jon Garner, Phil Morgan

Apologies: Stephen Ottner, Nigel Burt, Jim Clark, Pete Smith

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 13 February 2014 were approved.

Matters Arising:

One Pajero remains u/s with battery charging/discharging problems. Consider fitting a battery isolator.

Winch Driver manuals were now being updated by Richard Dann. Noted that the manual for the Reserve Winch would have significant differences from that for the Main Winch.
No progress had been made on site security. It was considered that weaknesses outside the club's control would render any action by the club ineffective.

Correspondence

CB reported that feedback from the SWAG forum was very positive, with the Military very keen to work in co-operation with other airspace users including gliding. It was important to maintain a presence on the group.

Officers Reports

Reports (appended below) had been prepared and circulated in advance. Points arising:

Safety: there had been a incident when a cable was retrieved without authorisation from the winch driver and another when the winch driver took up slack despite a stop signal. There were no consequences, bit it served to remind members that cables should never be moved except in accordance with standard practice or with the permission of winch driver and launch point.

Treasurer: it was agreed to write off bad debts (mostly members who had left with accounts in arrears) over two years old. It was also agreed to treat credits dormant for over five years (mostly members who had left with accounts in arrears) as donations to the club, whilst keeping a record and making repayment if demanded. CB would contact the owner of the abandoned glider to seek mutually acceptable resolution of unpaid trailerage fees.

Future winch provision

There was an extended discussion. The winch is the club's most critical asset, but maintenance depends on the voluntary effort of club members, of whom there are very few (just one or two) with the skills necessary, but with increasing difficulty in being able to commit themselves sufficiently to ensure ongoing serviceability of the winch. Replacing the engine would help, but would not provide the necessary assurance indefinitely. It was agreed to investigate the possibility of purchasing a new

winch; advice would be taken from suppliers and funding opportunities sought; this may include asking for gifts/loans/debentures from club members and would probably involve raising fees in general.

The discussion highlighted a more general point about the nature of a voluntary club against the background of the changing expectations of society. In a voluntary club, it is not possible to meet members' expectation of turning up, flying and going home: members need to volunteer more of their time to meet the background needs, including equipment and infrastructure maintenance. Alternatively, it would be necessary for more such services to be bought in. Either way, members should be prepared to change their expectation.

In a similar vein it was noted that the management of the club was too dependent on a few individuals, but there was little sign of interest from other members. A more positive succession plan should be developed.

Subscriptions and fees

There was a discussion about fees, with some committee members feeling that ab-initios and early solos were shouldering too much of the financial burden, whilst longer-standing members contributed financially far less. However, the picture is complicated, and no conclusion was reached. There was also a discussion consequent to the decision to investigate replacement of the winch, which would require finance. As that project is not even started, it was not possible to justify any change to members' annual subscriptions or flying fees, especially as both had been increased in recent years.

However, Trial Lesson fees had not been changed for a long time, so it was proposed to raise a weekend Trial Lesson to £75 and half-day course to £145, evening group fees should rise to £35 adults £25 juniors.

Sport England bid

CB had submitted the bid for funds to re-finish the Puchacz and the Vega. The outcome was expected in approximately 12 weeks.

Annual Awards

As in recent years each committee member should nominate one club member to receive an award, with their reason for awarding it. The Awards Dinner would be on 16th January 2015 at the Plough, Shalbourne.

AGM

The AGM is to be on the 27th February 2015 at 7.30pm. Venue tba (the Plough if available).

Any Other Business

Pre-launch communications continue to be unreliable. SB would progress purchase of a professional PMR solution similar to other gliding clubs.

Next Committee Meeting

Thursday 22nd January 2015

OFFICERS' REPORTS

EQUIPMENT AND AIRFIELD

Skybrid Winch

The winch had a major service in February and the collapsed wooden floor replaced with checker plate. An improved cable tow out tensioning mechanism was fitted. It has performed well over the summer, the fitting of a new starter motor having solved starting problems. The radio continues to perform erratically. A new pair of cables was fitted in the summer. Late summer servicing was put off in the expectation of fitting a recon engine, but as this had not happened by October the winch was given another full service.

The cable has twice sawn through the roller box whilst being retrieved at acute angles. A fix has been devised to prevent this from recurring. A tow bar has been fitted for towing the tow-out trailer. Recent investigation of a complaint of poor braking revealed a worn out brake lining on the left drum which has been replaced. It would seem sensible to reline the other brake asap.

As it had not been expected to continue using the existing engine a compression test was carried out which returned reasonable results (i.e. above specified minimum). Due to distortion and erosion of the mating faces the exhaust has been blowing gaskets every few months. The manifold has now been re-faced, which should cure the problem.

Depending on the way we use it, this engine could last for another year or three. Probably the worst damage is done by running the winch on load with a cold engine. Unfortunately there is little evidence of winch drivers keeping the engine warm between launches. It will inevitably become more expensive and time consuming to keep this engine running.

It is hoped to fit the replacement engine over the Christmas break. If this does not happen, then other options will need to be considered.

Reserve Winch

Problems experienced with the tow out brakes were mainly due to lack of use. The problem was finally tracked down to corrosion in both master cylinders. These have been replaced and the braking is now to spec.

The winch has a good engine, power train and winding gear (i.e. adequately serviceable), but is inferior to the Skybrid in that the smaller drums provide lower gearing and are prone to throwing loops, especially if the cable is released under tension. The lower gearing causes the rev limiter to operate in light winds, or when recovering falling cables at high speed. This is contrary to engine and gearbox longevity, but by all accounts typical of Tost winches.

A reported cylinder head gasket failure is currently under investigation.

Vehicles

Winter protection is completed, but servicing is overdue.

A hole in the Land Rover foot well has been repaired. The vehicle is running well.

The Pajero remains inert in the front of the container due to a charging problem. It is suspected that the alternator needs replacing which is a complex job. There being no volunteer to fix it the vehicle is likely to stay there indefinitely. Decision required – dump it or pay for it to be fixed by a specialist.

The Shogun rear exhaust has been replaced and the rear seat removed to improve access. The vehicle is running well.

The collapsed seat in the Trooper has been repaired and the vehicle been is running reliably. The tyres have little tread left and do not perform well in slippery conditions. Cost around £400 for a new set of 31x10.50R15LT including fitting. A decent second hand set will be difficult to find.

Trailers

The Puch Trailer has been overhauled and refurbished and a new heavy duty PVC pitched cover fitted. Modifications have been made to enable Ka13s and the Ka8 to be transported.

The Vega trailer has been fitted with new mudguards and the ramp hinges and door locking mechanism repaired. There is a collection of straps and chains in the front of the trailer, the purpose of which is unclear.

Generator

The Generator has been serviced and the exhaust system and shut down mechanism repaired. No known problems.

Launch equipment

There is a good supply of drogues, strops and spares.

Mowers

The Hayter mower, our only serviceable unit, has been serviced and sharpened.

Gantry cranes

The new gantry crane has been modified to allow better access to the winch shelter. The condemned crane has been retired to Dingly Dell.

Club house

The lower water supply tank has been cleared of leaf litter and the lift pump serviced. The water system has been drained for winter.

The workshop door has been fitted with a new closing mechanism.

The roof will continue to leak when the wind blows rain up the corrugated sheets. That’s life.

Toilet Block roof

A recent attempt to stop it leaking has not worked. Further damage to the wooden structure will occur unless it is repaired properly.

Winch shelter

There is a flapping panel left over from last years wind damage. Peter Ellison may provide a means of repair.

Site security

No progress has been made on electronic protection methods as none could be found that would not be dependent on members to activate/deactivate them. Despite regular reminders it is proving impossible to persuade other Moordown Farm users to close and lock their various access points on a regular basis. This is regularly taken up with our landlord.

Hangar

The new hangar packing regime works well. It is proposed to lay a concrete strip to provide safer parking for the Puchacz.

The eaves, which were cleared of combustible and unwanted material a few years ago have become cluttered again. A request will be made for members to claim/identify any useful property and anything remaining will be scrapped/burned.

Following the clear out it is proposed to fit out the old generator enclosure to store rigging and tow out gear and trestles in an organised manner.

Site general

A new grass cutting regime is in place to ensure the grass is kept to a safe height. No further hay making is envisaged.

The surface of the east side of the airfield continues to deteriorate and a dangerous ridge has been marked with cones. An offer of 40 tonnes of top soil to re profile the worst parts has yet to materialise.

The landlord is proposing to erect a wooden stock fence around the field on the western boundary.

CFI

Both Pete and I attended the CFI meeting at Lasham earlier this month, I have a copy of the latest safety presentation which will be shown to all members in the near future.

As we know the EASA FCL has been put back to April 2018. Meaning we carry on as we are but the BGA hope that pilots will still transition to a LAPL(s) or SPL license as soon as possible.

Information about the new Trial Flight rating and how to gain it will be published in the next few months. Selected solo pilot who have the required experience will be able to fly trial lessons after training but will not be able to instruct at all.

There are going to be courses at Lasham where FE's will need to attend two sessions to transition their BGA FE rating to the EASA version. Currently only Pete and I are FE's but there may be demand to add another, if so I will approach a suitable candidate in due course.

The CAA has announced that SERA (Standardised European Rules of the Air) which were due to come into effect on the 4th December 2014 will be delayed meaning that the impending rule to stay clear of cloud (and so seriously restricting climbing to cloudbase) etc. will not come into effect for a few more years.

We need to increase our instructor numbers, currently we have one BI (Chris B) going through the FI course. Chris hopes to complete his rating around the middle of next year and Nigel has expressed an interest in going for his FI rating as well.

SAFETY

Fire extinguishers serviced by Alan Holden

Emphasis on look out - overflights continue and always will - communications sent out and to be followed up. Apologies(ish) received from Canberra/Hunter formation.

Continue winch launching initiative from BGA, communications to be sent out over winter.

Rig and DI, British glider pilots are continuing to fly gliders with important bits missing (main pins, tailplane connections etc). Communications to follow of the essence that rig and DI is not to be interrupted.

I will be putting something out about aerotowing (tug upset this year)

Concern raised over having to align drums on reserve winch by inserting hand.

TREASURER

The out-turn for the accounts year October 2013 – September 2014 had shown a surplus of £3668, which was very pleasing especially given that JPC's wings had also been re-covered.

Working summary at 19 November 2014:

Revenue account summary

Income

	Budget	Actual
Course	£1,200	£0
Flying	£23,760	£25,398
Goods	£610	£1,028
Membersh	£15,525	£15,847
Misc*	£0	£195
Social	£650	£576
TL	£4,808	£5,105
trailerage	£2,870	£2,888
Voucher	£2,484	£4,423
TOTAL	**£51,907**	**£55,460**

Income above budget **£3,553**

* misc income = contributions from POs for diesel for workshop heat at ARC time

Expenditure

	Budget	Actual
Admin	£1,495	£1,444
Aircraft	£10,400	£10,339
Airfield	£2,600	£2,683
Course	£0	£0
Equip	£2,400	£2,496
Fuel	£4,200	£4,330
Goods	£580	£1,142
Insurance	£6,700	£6,596
Launch	£600	£1,133
Misc*	£600	£480
Publicity	£700	£748
Rent	£15,100	£15,233
Safety	£900	£690
Social	£700	£576
Subs	£2,552	£2,762
Telephone	£186	£196
Midweek ir	£800	£944
TOTAL	**£50,513**	**£51,792**

Expenditure above budget -£1,279

Overall outcome

Total income	£55,460
Total expenditure	£51,792
Surplus of income over expenditure	**£3,668**

Current cash position (at 19 Nov 14) is

At bank:

Current account £14941
Deposit account £11000
Paypal £3245
Total £29186

Major mandatory expenses expected before March (when subscriptions come in):

Rent (Dec) £3507
Insurance premium (Feb) £1697
Puch 4000hr inspection £2000+ (wide estimate)
Ka8 5-year inspection £1500 (wide estimate)
JPC annual inspection £600 (estimate)
Diesel (Dec/Jan) £850 (close estimate)
Accountant £800 (close estimate)
Total £11000 (estimate)

Assuming that other (relatively minor) expenses are offset by flying fees, that means we have in the order of £18k discretional spending power. Obviously I would not recommend we spend all of it. If we said we'd spend no more than half, it still means we have up to about £9k we could spend if we considered it sensible. With that in mind, what are the priorities to discuss?

Addendum to the minutes

There was no Aircraft report presented to the meeting. This report was circulated subsequently by email:

All aircraft are currently serviceable. Future plans:

- *HCF: It is hoped that the Puchacz will be re-finished, subject to a successful application for a Sport England grant; if successful, funds should be available in February. Its total flight time is now almost 3900 hours, which means that at the normal rate of usage, it will reach 4000hrs in late summer 2015 and require a 1000hr check. As this is likely to require inspection holes to be cut, it is proposed to complete the 1000hr check before re-finishing and renewal of ARC. It is therefore intended to commence the inspection in the near future with a view to completing the work before other aircraft need the workshop space in February. It should be re-finished and returned to service in the spring.*
- *JPC: due for Annual inspection and ARC in February*
- *DHA: due for 5-year inspection in February*
- *JMX: due for Annual inspection and ARC in May*
- *EGF: due for Annual inspection and ARC in July. The application for a grant from Sport England also covers re-finishing of the Vega, which will be undertaken after February when funds are available.*