Shalbourne Soaring Society

Annual General Meeting – 15th February 2013

Apologies

Pete Smith, Claire Willson, Graham Tanner, Paul Prentice, Mike Slatter, Andy Brind, Paul McGrory and Liz Sparrow

Approval Minutes of last AGM

The minutes of the last AGM on the 24th February 2012 were approved with no amendments. Proposed by James Hunneman, Seconded by Chris Keating

Matters Arising

The catering facility has not progressed. It would need someone to take this on, plan it, source a suitable vehicle and run it. Otherwise it has the potential to become a liability to the club.

Chairman's Report, Colin Baines

In about 13 months time EASA Flight Crew Licensing becomes a reality. We've seen the proposals and can only hope for as much good news as possible in what BGA can negotiate for us in the meantime. More good news is that Phil is still prepared to take us through the process. Please do not underestimate the amount of work and responsibility that involves. Radical changes in the formation of instructors and Flight Crew Licensing will require the eyes of an eagle and the patience of Job to keep us legal.

More bad news comes in the form of increased pressure on airspace. Smaller airports are seeking to cash in on the endless procrastination about increasing London's runway capacity. Right now Lasham are preparing for battle with Farnborough over their proposal for an airspace grab that would severely threaten gliding operations. Everyone in UKGA will need to be on their toes if we are not to be erased from the airspace map.

Another threat is the age profile of glider pilots. Within ten years many of us will be on gardening duties. This means that to survive, smaller clubs (and that means the average UK gliding club), will either have to recruit younger members at an unprecedented level, or amalgamate with other clubs. Our publicity machine will be working harder than ever this year to attract new members, so please treat any new faces on the airfield like royalty; they are the future of gliding.

Some good news at club level is that we have never had such good aircraft, equipment and facilities and the completion of two reliable winches and the recent purchase of a spare winch engine means we have arrived at a place we have been striving for, for the last four years. We should all be grateful for the blood sweat and hernias that so many of our colleagues have invested to make it all happen. At this point I should mention that this year Andy, Bill and others persuaded the CAA auditor that our aircraft repair facility is faultless. As you can imagine that is no mean feat and they are to be roundly congratulated.

Also Hugh Browning and his team continue doing a sterling job on the Safe Winch Launch initiative and such is its impact that it has now being adopted by gliding clubs worldwide. The work of he and

his team continues to save lives and prevent a lot of the grief and expense resulting from accidents. (And incidentally, helps keep our insurance premiums affordable). You will be hearing much more about this from the Phil and colleague instructors in the near future.

So here we are, all set for the year ahead – all we need is some fair weather and for that I will hand you over to our Treasurer.

Stay legal, stay safe and enjoy your gliding.

Fly safe and have a great season.

Treasurers Report – Steve Barber

As usual, I'm afraid the Statutory Accounts are not yet available. And as usual, I take the view that cash and cash-flow are more critical to solvency than the theoretical overall view provided by the Statutory Accounts. From the cash point of view, I can say that we had a satisfactory year considering the weather, having come out slightly ahead on the regular ("revenue") business, on a reduced turnover of £46k (that's more than 10% down on the usual turnover of over £50k).

We did in fact spend about £4000 more than our income. That was because we completed the winch conversion project for £4700, to move the Tost off the Bedford bus chassis onto a new purpose-built trailer (though in the end, adding a cab was an idea too far). We had decided to do this on the basis of the previous year's good out turn. We did this to increase the reliability of the equipment – the winches are after all our most critical assets – by reducing the amount of kit (especially engines) that need maintenance; however, it has also increased the total value of our assets as it is now a saleable item

One reason we did OK despite the poor weather (which impinged more on soaring and TLs more than the number of club launches) was the sale of Vouchers – well in excess of expectations again. There is one area of concern though – Trial Lessons.

The number of Trial Lessons is well down – partly due to people pre-purchasing vouchers rather than paying on the day, but mainly due to the lack of Trial Lesson Evenings. We only had seven last year, and most of these were for scouts so the flights are £20 instead of £30. Furthermore, organising teams to run the evenings has proved to be frustrating and exasperating headache. So the suggestion is to aim to do less of them, and raise the income instead by raising launch fees to £8.50 and soaring time to 30p/min (we will continue to offer the 3-for-2 deal on launches)

I am not proposing any change to the membership fee, although we may have to review this if there is a nasty surprise in any of our fixed costs such as insurance.

Looking into the current year, I think it is worth mentioning again that although we are not a rich club, we are at least in the position of owning in full everything we need (except of course the airfield), and having money in the bank. On this last item, we decided to take precautionary action regarding the winch engine. We cannot operate without a winch. Although we now have a serviceable reserve winch, we still felt a little bit at risk in that if we had a major engine failure we would be down to one winch and having to find a replacement or carry out a lengthy repair in a hurry. Suitable engines are quite rare, but a particularly good engine became available, so we

decided to buy it – although this used a tad over £2k of our cash, there is still £15k readily to hand, and of course we have the asset of a good saleable engine on the books. The plan is to fit it to main winch, the rebuild the existing engine to hold in reserve.

As usual I would like to finish with some thanks - as always to:

- the instructors who give up their own flying to get others into the air
- those who keep the gliders flying - particularly Andy Brind, and the other inspectors
- those who keep the machinery working – particularly James and now Colin, Paul B on cables & rings, Paul P on parachute packing etc, Ken on various oddments
- the Board and others who help with the administrative and managerial aspects of running the club (this is a time-consuming business)

I am pleased to say this list includes pretty well all club members. If you haven't done all that much, perhaps it's because you don't have time, or live too far from the club. You could always help with an extra donation.

Apologies to anyone I've missed – there's sure to be someone.

I'll end, as is traditional, by asking everyone to fly more and take care, in the air and on the ground, not to break anything – especially not yourselves, each other, or anyone else.

Questions were invited.

It was asked how many TLEs were lost due to the weather. Steve advised that overall we were two evenings down on last year but only one had had to be cancelled.

On the purchase of the new winch engine it was asked if the intention was to install that now and then keep the old Skybrid one as a reserve. James Hunneman confirmed this was the intention.

It was suggested that when the accounts are available they are e-mailed to club members. Steve agreed that this could be done if members want them.

It was noted that the underspend on airfield expenditure could be put down to the lower than expected grass cutting costs. Concern was expressed at the length to which the grass had got at times and some discussion took place around what was acceptable. It was stated that the Duty Instructor has the final say on the day as to whether the grass length makes it unsuitable to fly.

As regards to the old bus winch chassis, no buyer has been found yet but Ken Hansell is trying to find one. There is a potential buyer for the Leyland bus.

CFI Report – Phil Morgan

Phil reported that he had attended the recent CFI meeting at Lasham and this had highlighted notable accidents in 2012.

There were 3 fatalities and 5 serious injuries some of which arose from spins, cartwheel on launch and heavy landing.

The importance of having a hand on the cable release during the launch was stressed as was the need to release immediately if a wing goes down, do not wait for it to hit the ground.

Other incidents arose due to glider integrity including a disconnected elevator, loose tailplane, aileron linkage detaching in flight loose articles and there were 12 instances of canopies opening in flight.

It is important to understand the importance of correct rigging, DIs and pre-flight checks without interruption or distraction.

The BGA has issued a Safe Winch Launching DVD which will be shown at the clubhouse after flying in the near future.

Phil also reported that this year the club will offer training in XC flying and this will be actively encouraged. The glider of choice will be the Puchacz as it is fitted with the Oudie but the other two seaters could be used. Four instructors have volunteered to help run this. Of course XC flying is not restricted to the two seaters and encouragement will be given to the using the Vega and even the K8.

This training is open to all members regardless of experienced and Phil would appreciate hearing from those interested.

It was suggested that where single seaters are used a "lead and follow" exercise could be used. Phil agreed that this was an option subject to a proper pre-flight briefing.

Ken Reid asked if consideration could be given to seeking a grant for radio installation in all of the gliders. It was agreed that this could be investigated.

It was also suggested that perhaps there could be a CFI approved mini triangle to encourage people to move away from the airfield. Phil advised he is open to any suggestions.

Election of Officers

Position	**Member**	**Proposed**	**Seconded**
Chairman	Colin Baines	**Richard Dann**	**Stephen Ottner**
Treasurer	Steve Barber	**Chris Keating**	**Bob Boyd**
Airfield officer	Vacant		
Aircraft Officer	Jim Clark	**Colin Baines**	**Phil Morgan**
Publicity Officer	Stephen Ottner	**Steve Barber**	**Richard Dann**
Safety Officer	Pete Smith	**Nigel Burt**	**Bob Boyd**
Equipment Officer	Vacant		
Secretary	Nigel Burt	**Bob Boyd**	**Ken Reid**

Steve Barber advised that at present we only have 4 directors which is the minimum requirement to meet our legal obligation. Stephen Ottner offered to become an additional director and this was accepted.

Proposals

Steve Barber proposed increasing the launch fee to £8.50 and the flying fee to 30p per minute while retaining the three for two launch offer. There is no proposal to change to membership fees at present.

The rationale is that TLEs are becoming increasingly difficult to man. While the TLEs can be a good source of income it is the same few members that volunteer to run them. The increase in flying fees will place less reliance on TLE income and also reduce the pressure of finding crews. The intention is that we will reduce the profile of these evening on the internet but will still consider approaches. Also the aim is to state in advance what dates we are prepared to run any evenings so that people can plan and so make themselves available.

Trial Lessons at weekends will continue and voucher sales are good again this year even if they don't all get taken up. However, the conversion rate to club membership is very small and there is more potential for conversions from those who turn up "on spec". It was suggested that, rather than pushing the current £69 half hour or two launches flight, flights are offered on a sliding fee scale basis, say £40 for the first then a lower amount for the second and so on. These would be single launches up to 15 minutes. The month's subsequent membership needs to be made more prominent and any 'joiners' aware that anything paid for these flights is reworked at club rates.

Steve advised that the proposed fees are comparable to similar clubs and although the launch fee is slightly above average, we do tend to get better launches. Taking the two increases together, based on last year, the extra income would be around £1200 annually.

It was suggested that there should be a cap on the flying fee for cross country flying so as not to deter potential takers for the "XC club". It was thought that there was already a cap in place, but the details were not to hand; it was agreed that two or three hours would be reasonable. (It has subsequently been determined that the cap already exists at 3 hrs, by pre-arrangement with the duty instructor).

There being no further discussion, Steve Barber proposed acceptance of the new rates. This was seconded by Colin Baines and carried unanimously.

Any Other Business

Colin advised he is still trying to get a direction sign to the club located on the green in the village. (This has subsequently been agreed by the Parish Council.)

Mike Thorn, Chairman at The Park, has suggested a form of competition claiming points for out and return flights which pass The Park. There would then be a prize for the holder of the most points on the National Ladder.

Meeting closed at 2110hrs

Subsequent to the meeting a note of thanks had been received from Bob Boyd for the work done by the committee