Members meeting 31st July 2024 19.30h

at Vernham Dean Millenium Hall & online

In attendance in person:

- Simon Zielonka SZ
- Phil Morgan PM
- Richard Dann RD
- Gillian Brind GB
- Jonty Hitchman JH
- Jamie Minx JM
- Terri Cook TC
- Rowland Pantling RP
- Chris Humphrey CH
- Ken Reid
- Ken Porter
- Andy Brind
- James Walters
- Adrian Neary
- Peter Dinham
- Martin Selby
- Bill Cook
- James Hunneman

In attendance online:

- Tim Robson
- Rob Sharpe
- Jacques De Toit
- Claire Wilson
- Pete Smith
- Michael Tennant
- Steve Gaze

Apologies:

- Graham Tanner
- Stephen Ottner
- Alan Pettitt
- Nigel Burt
- Liz Sparrow

1. **Welcome**,
   Meeting started at 19.45pm with SZ welcoming everyone and explaining that the meeting had been called after the incident of the club being asked to vacate the airfield. Also, how to avoid this happening again in the future.

2. **Summary of events from 26.04.24 up until commencement of flying**

On 26/04 the landlord, Ringo, contacted the Secretary to ask for her and the Chairman's addresses and email addresses. A notice was then received by both committee members requesting that the club vacates the site by 01/05 as the licence had not been renewed. Negotiations had started at the end of 2023 but had not concluded. Ringo was then away until the end of May. SZ met with Ringo once he was back and discussed options including another licence to fly and the possibility of a lease. The main reason for not getting a lease from the landlord is Inheritance tax (IHT) issues as a lease would mean that the airfield would no longer count as farming land. It was noted that this would become a moot issue if the Labour Government removed farming reliefs and it would become more beneficial for the club to be on site. SZ used Shennington Gliding Club as an example to discuss with Ringo how a landlord could work with a gliding club for mutual benefit. SZ has offered to take Ringo to Shennington GC after the harvest and Ringo was open to this suggestion. Security of tenure that a lease would give the club would enable grants to be sourced to improve facilities. Ringo's position could change if the new Labour government bring in new rules regarding IHT. After 3 months the new licence has been signed and the rent has stayed the same as last year £15,000 per annum. The delay was caused by Lawyers and not by the committee or Ringo. Ringo would like to see the club grow.

SZ advised that he did not think that discounted membership types should be continued but that this should be for discussion and agreement by the Committee at a later date.

SZ does not see a large engagement with club members and asked how we could engage with more members? Membership retention is an issue that needs to be addressed also.

SZ is writing an article for Sailplane & Gliding regarding the club. SZ is also writing to the clubs that have welcomed and supported Shalbourne members during the last 3 months.

3. **Members views re the club going forward**

A member asked if Ringo had said why he asked the club to leave. SZ stated that the right people had not been speaking to Ringo.
Another member asked for an apology from SZ for his failure to secure a new licence. SZ refused to apologise as he felt that there was no indication that this is how Ringo felt and would only apologise if he had known Ringo wanted to speak with him.
JH stated that as a club there is a responsibility to discuss options with members and Ringo.

A member said that the current issue is that the club is not thriving and the discussion should be around how to get more members engaged again. Once the club is thriving again then would be the time to discuss the possibility of a lease.
JH agreed that the club needs to be better at being a basic club before considering growing.
Another member asked how the membership numbers can be increased to a level that the facilities can be improved.
JH said that the club was thinking more creatively ie having solar power now and how to overcome the other issues and make the club more attractive.
A member suggested that a poll is held to see whether there are enough people to fly on the weekends. This was hoped to ensure there are enough people to fly on at least one of the days at weekends.
Discussion took place regarding duty pilot roles and lack of winch drivers.
RD asked if anyone wanted to organise an evening for work colleagues this could happen in August as the Scout evenings had been cancelled in June.
It was discussed how to retain new members, feedback had been received saying that new members wanted more flying. This led on to a discussion about improving the launch rate and number of flights in the day. PM said that the biggest thing was that the pilot is ready when the glider is on line and starting to fly earlier. CH thought that due to member numbers on some days the club would run out of members wanting to fly due to personal budgets etc
SZ stated that Members flying should always take priority over trail lessons flights.
JM has sent out an email requesting members to inform him of any good practises that have been witnessed at other clubs ie refuelling winches and vehicles at the end of the day.
Having a gazebo has made it a more pleasant experience for members and Trial Lessons.
More members need to be trained to drive the winch.
SZ proposed looking into a lease There will be no cost at this early stage and the BGA supply legal advice free of charge to clubs.
A member asked for some examples of what could be achieved with a lease. **Action SZ to contact BGA to see if they have any to share.**
A member suggested a welcome back to Rivar weekend and Wednesday with reduced launch costs, perhaps in September. **Action Committee will consider this.**

4. **5 Year strategic plan**

SZ presented 3 options for consideration as follows:

1. Licence to Occupy
- Current Arrangement
- No Security

- No Rights
- Limited Funding Options

2. Lease
- Security of tenure
- Formal Agreement
- Strong Rights
- Fixed Term
- Long Notice Period
- Good Legal Framework
- Funding Available

3. Tenancy at Will
- Informal
- No Fixed Term
- Some legal framework related to property and contract law

SZ was seeking a mandate from the membership to start investigating option 2. SZ advised that Ringo is happy to consider a Lease if there are benefits for him.
SZ felt that if the club continued operating under option 1 there was a high risk and inevitability of club failure.
Option 3, whilst providing a marginally better legal position than the current licence it did not provide security of tenure and therefore limited investment possibilities and opportunities for growth.

MS proposed that discussions should commence with Ringo (as per option 2). This was seconded by JW

5. Pigeon hole questions

How viable is moving to another site?
It should be considered however it would be costly and take time to get permissions etc.

Why can't we stay at Middle Wallop?
There is a reciprocal arrangement with MW however members can only visit occasionally and are not allowed to join.

How many members have we lost? More private owners flew at alternative sites last Sunday than at Rivar.

The club needs members to come back to Rivar to fly, some private owners have said that they arrange their flying weeks in advance ie before Rivar was flying again so had already committed to alternative sites last weekend.

Volunteers especially instructors need to know that their time is not wasted. What are the committee doing to stop this?
The club will poll members before the weekend to try and get commitment from members.

6. **Chairman's position going forward**
   SZ is standing down as Chairman and is not willing to stay for more than a couple of weeks. The club needs to find a new Chairman. SZ happy to continue liaising with Ringo regarding a lease if the committee would like him to.

7. **AOB**
   RD thanked Martin Selby for all his efforts as Membership Secretary and Trial Lesson Coordinator.

   TC had sent the committee the projected figures showing that there is not much in the bank. RD hopes that some good flying will happen to get the club through the Winter.

   TC announced that she would like to step down. She recommended that there was a second person who could access the bank account.

   Meeting finished at 9.27pm