Shalbourne Soaring Society

Committee Meeting 24th January 2013

Minutes

Present: Colin Baines, Steve Barber, Phil Morgan, Nigel Burt

Apologies: Steve Ottner, Pete Smith, Jim Clark

Correspondence

Following an e-mail request from Randle, Colin has been in correspondence with the police concerning the theft of the diesel fuel from the generator tank.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were approved subject to the following addition to the Treasurer's report:

It was agreed that following the completion of the work to the second winch the value in the books should be increased to £10,000

Matters Arising:

The launch equipment guide has been completed.

Winch driver training remains an outstanding issue. **(Action: PM)**

There have been no further reports of the flarm issue with the Puchacz.

Officers Reports:

Treasurer – Steve Barber

We ended the year up about £1k on revenue, but down about £4k on capital, assuming we treat the expenditure on the winch conversion as Capital expenditure. On this assumption, we should revise the value of the reserve winch; I think we mooted a value of £10k at the last meeting but is not minuted (we either need to note this as an amendment to the last minutes, or agree it formally at this meeting).

So in cash terms we are about £3k down on last year, but the book values (and more importantly, the likely real values) of our assets will have increased. £3k is "in the noise" - the variance of some items from their budget (hoped-for) figures is more than this: look at the low income from club flying and TLs, but the high income from voucher sales. Considering the poor weather in 2012, I consider it to be a satisfactory outcome and I see no need at present to recommend changing the fees (although there always has to be the caveat that if it becomes clear that things are not working out as the season progresses then we may need to do something - the most likely scenarios are either a further reduction in membership numbers or a sudden increase in fixed costs.)

Steve commented that the number of launches had been close to the planned target and were similar to last year. However, trial lesson launches have halved, not helped by the weather conditions. Also the number of trial lesson evenings were down but again this has been partly due to the weather. Only two or three of the evenings were not for the scouts.

CFI – Phil Morgan

The New Year brings many changes to the instructing and skills testing of club members.
We have already seen a change in the content of the Bronze Exam as from 1st January the number of questions has increased and the qualifying bronze legs are confined to the history books being replaced with number of flights and flying hours.
Other changes are on their way and to help with their introduction there is a CFI's meeting at Lasham in early February where I'm sure (hoping) that some clarity is forthcoming……watch this space!
In other news Nigel Burt will be looking to go on a course soon to become a BI and Chris B will be going on an Ass Cat course later in the year. Selvam has recently soloed and there are a few others getting very close to following in his footsteps.

Equipment – Colin Baines

James Hunneman has purchased a spare winch engine and accessories for c£2 000. The plan is to fit the new engine to the Skybrid and then recondition the existing Oldsmobile V8 and keep it as a spare.
The 'Reserve Winch' is now fully serviceable and has been successfully used without major issues.
Trevor Greenwood is to finish painting when conditions permit.
The left hand Skybrid drum brake has been rebuilt for correct adjustment.
Paul Bryant is to fit cable end buffers to the Skybrid launch cable as soon as conditions permit. CFI to monitor their use.
A hoop and spokes have been commissioned from the local blacksmith to replace the damaged guide rail on the Skybrid winch.
James Hunneman has fitted a new gas filler valve on the Skybrid.
Following a gas leak, a new gas delivery nozzle has been fitted to the gas reservoir by the suppliers.
Protective gloves and goggles have been provided to be used when filling winch gas tanks and a notice recommending their use placed near the gas tank.
Ken Hansell has obtained some used street lamps to replace the faulty hangar lights. These will be fitted when conditions permit.
The front end of the caravan is coming apart. Temporary repairs have been made. A more permanent job will be done when conditions permit.
A scrap merchant has offered £700 for the National Bus (less transport costs). It will be removed as soon as conditions permit.

Airfield – Colin Baines

The club house roof appears to be leaking sporadically (puddle on floor – no other explanation). Inspection/repairs will be made when conditions permit.
Stephen Ottner has asked a tree surgeon along to assess condition of overgrown trees behind club house and hangar.
Ventilation of the red container is still outstanding.
Ringo has been requested to ask drivers of heavy plant to keep off the short grass to prevent potholes from deteriorating.
The feed from the club house gutter to the lower water reservoir has been repaired.

Trial Lesson Evening Management

There are concerns over the running of Trial Lesson Evenings (TLE) due to the small number of club members that assist with these. This has led to difficulties in finding enough people to run them. While these can be a good source of income we cannot run them without the support of more club members.

It was suggested that rather than just accepting bookings for "random" dates we could specify the dates on which we are prepared to run TLEs and potential groups then sign up to these dates. By announcing these dates now to the membership it may be that there would be a greater willingness to sign up to assist in advance.

This led to a discussion on what would need to happen to member fees if we were to reduce the availability of TLEs. It was suggested that the launch fee could rise to £8.50 and flying time to 30p per minute while still retaining the 3 for 2 pricing for same day launches. This would need to be reviewed on an annual basis.

AGM

The AGM is on the 15th February in Shalbourne Village Hall at 7.30pm. It was agreed that encouragement should be given to members to offer their services to the board.

Any Other Business

The annual dinner had been a success and there does not seem to have been any adverse feedback to the change in the awards.

Next Meeting

26th September 2013 – Venue TBA.