The GM commenced at 20:13 on the 8th November 2023

**Present;**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Area Role | Delegate for Club |
|  |  |  |
| Stuart Willis | Chairman |  |
| Robert Richardson | Vice Chairman | Horam MFC |
| Chris Searle | Secretary |  |
| Taj Manning | Education co-ordinator | Mid-Sussex Flyers |
| Alex Cameron | Free flight competition Secretary | Crawley & Dist. MAC |
| Rob Stanley | Member | Slope Soaring Sussex |
| James Gordon | A.C.E | Caterham & District MFC |
| Martin Jones | Member | Epsom RFC |
| Paul Holmes | Member | Gravesend MFC |
| Tony Crawford | Member |  |
| Terry Knight | Member |  |
| John Newbury | Member | Gravesend MFC |

**Apologies from;**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Area Role | Delegate for Club |
| Jim Tucker | Treasurer |  |
| Bob Hart | A.S. co-ordinator |  |
| Norman Carter | Member |  |
| Mike Sun | A.C.E |  |

**Minutes of the previous GM;**

Agreed to be a true record unanimously by those that were at that meeting.

**Voting strength;**

It was confirmed that a voting quorum existed.

**Matters arising from the previous meeting;**

Ashdown Forest issues are covered by an Agenda item.

Bob is organising the requested “C” test.

Stuart hasn’t heard from the private school in Guildford.

**Officers reports;**

Chairman and Council Delegate;

I attended the Areas and BMFA Board meetings in September.

Areas meeting summary.

BMFA Scotland (area 15) has now been formed and the Area’s committee has be set up.

Much discussion on the subject of how to get BMFA members more involved with the Areas as some Areas struggle to get quorate meetings. Andy has had some success with inviting all of an Areas members to attend a Zoom meeting to meet the Area Committee. This is something I have given some thought to but as we Email all members on a monthly basis I’m not sure how fruitful it would be. Work on STEM activities information has almost be complete and will appear on the new BMFA Flight School Website which will launch hopefully in November. I will be keeping an eye out for it as it may assist us with the school club Rob and I run. Along with the STEM activities there will also be information on running Family Fun Flying Days to encourage clubs to promote model flying in their area. Areas have been asked again to appoint and Outreach Coordinator for their Area. I will attempt again over the winter for a South East Area Coordinator.

The September Board Meeting will be my last as a Non-Executive Director as my appointment to the Board was only a one year appointment. I was a fairly extensive meeting

so I will précis the meeting, highlighting the relevant points.

The meeting started with the Financial Directors report. Please note this information dose not in clued National Center Accounts as this is covered separately.

Review and approval of the statutory accounts and supplementary information for the financial year ended 31st March 2023. The society made an operational loss of £31,663 in the year the loss of members being a large factor. It is envisaged that there is likely to be an even bigger operational loss in the current year to the tune of £60k also due to the steady reduction of membership. The membership was steady at about 35,000 from 2010-2017 the peak being 37,000. Since then there as been a steady decline, Numbers as at November 2023 are 28,421 over 400 of this number are juniors and 2,500 are BDF members. This loss is unsustainable and the Budges for 2024/2025 were presented base on substantial cost savings, these to include.

• Sale of Chacksfield House

• AGM to be conducted totally online / AGM dinner to be self-funding.

• Training & Excellence removed.

• BMFA News to be produced totally online.

• Move to the National Centre and reduced staff costs.

This will make a saving to the tune of over £100K. The budget also contains cost savings and an increase in membership fees. It is proposed that the membership fee is increased by £3 (less than a sheet of Balsa) to £45 it was seen that a £2 increase would not be sufficient if the membership numbers fell more than was expected. Juniors and students £20. One other saving that is particularly relevant to the Areas is the reduction from £25k to £15k for Areas funding in the propose budget. This is likely to reduce the amount the area receives next year. We won’t know this until the beginning of next year when Areas funding is sorted.

The subject of rolling membership was talked about as this is seen as a way of securing annual membership, work would be done to overcome resistance from clubs so it could be introduced in 2025.

I will be attending the society AGM where the budget will be voted on by clubs can I ask clubs to support the proposed budget.

The CEO was approached by the LMA to meet with them for a formal discussion on the practicalities of them coming on-board with the BMFA as a Specialist Body/Associate Body as they are keen to join the BMFA. To take advantage to the BMFA insurance Membership system etc. There is some work to do to combined their article 16 with the BMFA’s. Insurance is business as usual and there is no planned increase next year. The sale of Chacksfield Houseis progressing but at the time of the meeting nothing has been signed. The work at the national centre on the refurbishment/new facilities is progressing well this is required to accommodate the move from Chacksfield House. The new facilities include a Cafe which was budged for out of the development fund and will bring in income for operational costs.

CAA flyer ids should be issued with the renewals process next year

I asked the CEO about the state of conspicuity for model flyers. There has been no progress on this as there is a long way to go as there are still full size aircraft that do not have transponders.

The BMFA attending shows is to be reviewed as to their feasibility in the light of the financial situation.

The bid to host the world scale championships in the UK 2026 was discussed and it was decided that a separate one off board meeting would to be held. This is on the 9th November to formally discus and vote on the proposal to bid.

The Area update Emails are being well received

Jim Tucker and I had a lengthy meeting with the Ashdown Forest Conservators this will be reported on later in the meeting

Vice Chairman;

Robert stated that he believed that aircraft > 25kg must have a simm card that can be interrogated by the CAA in the event of an accident. Stuart thought that this will only be relevant to aircraft of that size even if the LMA merge with the BMFA.

Treasurer;

Received from Jim;

“As of 1/10/2023 the Area has a credit balance of £4281.

The budget for 2023/24 is on track.

The Area requires a reserve of £2000 to ensure that flying sites and the indoor flying event in January can be funded.”

Secretary;

Nothing to report.

Achievement Scheme Co-Ordinator;

It has been a very quiet year with few requests for any test. The mostly poor flying weather has not encouraged much activity on the testing front and flying generally. I would like to express my, and the area’s thanks, to our Chief Examiners who have done any tests this Year.

We have been asked to carry out a “C” Aerobatics test which, as far as I am aware, will be the first time we have been asked to do a “C” of any type in our area. I have arranged a C/E and another examiner to conduct it. We have the necessary paperwork and are studying the required schedule but it’s unlikely to take place until next year. This applicant is also to be proposed as an Area C/E here in this meeting (8th Nov. 2023).

We were unable to arrange a workshop this year mostly due to the poor weather previously mentioned. We had a club site who would host it but we couldn’t fix a date. We intend to try again in the New Year.

I would like to propose that we appoint James Graham as a Chief Examiner Fixed Wing for the area. I enclose the appropriate paperwork for your consideration. He lives in the area which Dave Knott has been covering but Dave is very active in the national and international scale competition world and not always available. Dave will still be on the books for Helicopter tests.

James’ CV was reviewed and the above proposal was seconded by Taj and a unanimous vote in favour was taken. The proposal form can now be sent in.

Education officer;

The Outreach Director had requested that more Clubs and Universities get involved in the Payload challenge. Taj already has some students from Brighton University but unfortunately missed meeting the first year students this year.

Free flight competition Secretary;

The 2024 competition calendar should be available in December and this needs to be made available to Ashdown Forest. Alex will also supply a list of eligible flyers.

Webmaster;

All pages of the Area website have been updated.

A new education section has been constructed.

Relevant events from the BMFA site have been transferred to the Area website.

Photographs of the Scale days have been uploaded.

Input from the Area members are required on the topics of education and upcoming events.

**SE Area Events in 2023;**

Review Events

The weather had adversely affected many events, postponing some and reducing attendance at others.

Area members had gone to other events outside the area such as Old Warden.

There was a good turnout at the ERFC scale day.

A presence was considered at the Southern Model show, the Popham show is attended by the Southern Area,

**SE Area Events in 2024;**

The ERFC electric fly-in was not well supported and in 2024 may be run as a general fly-in.

Hastings club will confirm the date of the Area Scale Day.

Concorde club will be running some test and training days.

The Helicopter fraternity are keen to run another scale day next year.

Events at Bickley will be advertised in our area and James is now on the Bickley club committee as Events secretary which should facilitate co-ordinating our Area events with theirs.

There is a need to encourage more people into our sport/hobby and this means going out to non-flying events.

The BMFA may have a stand at the Wings and Wheels show.

It had been previously suggested that the area have a stand at the Biggin Hill air show but this hasn’t run for some time.

The Capel Military show maybe considered for an Area stand.

Indoor meeting January 2024

Rob had done most of the organisational work for this event.

It was not listed in the BMFA news as expected possibly due to a change of Editor.

Despite the above there has been a lot of interest.

There will be sufficient people from the Area to run the event.

Payment will be made when invoiced in December

**Ashdown Forest Licence;**

Stuart and Jim had a long meeting with representatives from Ashdown Forest to discuss parking, funding and the scope of the licence. They will refer the idea of including the cost of parking with the licence funding back to the board however this may be objected to by company that manages parking. It was explained that there is less competition flying and more leisure flying but due to the restrictive types of models allowed it is difficult to attract more flyers. The conservators would review the licence. Stuart suggested a club is set up to collect money to pay for the licence although competition flyers would still need to pay the competition fees.

Stuart would email all subscribers and set up a zoom meeting to discuss creation of a club and try and select a secretary and treasurer. The area would still negotiate and make the payment for the licence but the funds would be generated by the club. There is no easy way to police the use of the site although the licence can be changed to specify both BMFA and club membership required to fly. The new club will run from April to April with a membership fee of between £15 to £25 and should have no cost to run. A web site can be hosted through the BMFA and the Area zoom account is available for meetings. Parking costs £5 per visit but an annual fee of £80 may be a more economical choice and there may be a possibility of a deal if a bulk purchase was made.

**A.O.B;**

Stuart had mentioned the possibility of indoor scale meetings in the October update and requested replies from interested people. There was a poor response. It could opened up to indoor free flight modellers.

**D.O.N.M;**

Wednesday 10th January @ 19:30 using zoom.

**The meeting closed at 21:30**