



# BMFA South West Area

## 3rd Ordinary Meeting, 12 December 2022 at 7:30pm Via Zoom

### MINUTES

(Provisional – Online Copy)

**Clubs Present:** St Austell, Okehampton, Riviera, Torbay, Davidstow, CVA, CSSA, Newton Abbott, Truro, Exeter, East Devon, Dartmoor, Plasterdown

**Officers Present:** Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Area Delegate, Achievement Scheme Coordinator,

### AGENDA

1. Chairman's opening statement.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Confirmation of Club Delegates present.
4. Minutes from previous meeting.
5. Actions from previous meeting.
6. Reports from Area Officers.
7. Financial Statement.
8. Appointment of ACE and Events Co-ordinator candidates.
9. Progress on Site issues.
10. BMFA budget discussion.
11. Matters arising from Club Delegates.
12. AOB.
13. Date and venue for next meeting.

### PROCEEDINGS

#### 1. Chairman's Opening Statement.

1.1 The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. He said the main purpose was to consider the appointment of two new ACEs (Area Chief Examiners) along with an Events and Competition Coordinator. Little had changed since the recent AGM so there was little further to add at this stage.

## 2. Apologies for Absence.

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from various Members, names redacted for privacy.

## 3. Confirmation of Club Delegates present.

3.1 The Secretary confirmed there were 11 Clubs present represented by their nominated Delegates ( Secretary note - two further Clubs turned up post the initial count, so the final total was in fact 13). These are all identified in the attendance list above.

## 4. Minutes from previous meeting.

4.1 A paragraph had been added to the draft minutes as requested by the Davidstow Delegate reflecting his comments on the possible need for drones and model aircraft to carry a means of airborne identification. Otherwise, no comments had been received apart from minor typographical corrections. The Secretary proposed that they be accepted. This was seconded by the Newton Abbot Heli Delegate and were unanimously approved on a show of hands.

4.2 Some discussion continued on the point raised by Davidstow but concluded, as at the previous meeting, that while this was a requirement in the USA it was not yet so in the UK. There was nothing to be done at present until the CAA declared its intentions in this respect.

## 5. Actions arising from previous meetings.

**Action 5** from meeting 1. PRO (PS) to post Event information on the website pending improvement in the operation of its Forms as well as access to it. The Secretary said that while the Forms process now seemed to be working, he understood that discussion with the BMFA Club Support Officer was still required to improve its function - in PRO (PS)'s absence the action should be left open. This was agreed.

**Action 2-1.** Secretary to destroy recording on completion of minutes. **Complete.**

**Action 2-2.** Treasurer to ascertain status of last year's Area funding with the BMFA. Despite the Treasurer's contacts with the BMFA this was still not clear and didn't look like being sorted out in the near future. The Treasurer would continue to seek guidance from the BMFA and report back when possible. It was agreed this action should be closed and that the Treasurer would report on progress on the topic in his regular meeting reports. **Closed.**

**Action 2-3.** Treasurer to proceed with 22/23 bids as agreed and complete any necessary funding proforma for return to the BMFA by end August. **Complete**

**Action 2-4.** Treasurer to write to the BMFA requesting they clarify their schedule for submitting 23/24 bids. **Complete,** as for Action 2-2.

**Action 2-5.** ASC (Achievement Scheme Coordinator) to determine if-----wished to continue as ACE Helicopters. **Complete,** the answer was *yes*.

## 6. Reports from Area Officers.

6.1 The Secretary confirmed as a consequence of the recent AGM, when extensive reports from Officers had been presented, he had not invited reports for this meeting. However, members had been invited to review and comment on the basis of the draft AGM minutes which had been circulated. No comments had been received and none were forthcoming from the meeting. As no Officer had anything further to report the item was closed.

## 7. Financial Statement.

7.1 As for 6.1, the Treasurer referred the meeting to the statement made at the recent AGM – there being no change.

7.2 CVA Delegate asked when the grants and payments itemised at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting were going to be paid. The Treasurer replied they could not be paid from Area funds until the new bank account with Lloyds was operational. He had already paid one item from his own pocket for which he would need re-payment. Lloyds had still not authorised the account, their laborious administration procedures causing many stumbling blocks. He hoped it would be operational in the near future but could not be specific. He would make the payments as soon as possible.

7.3 As there were no further comments the item was closed.

## 8. Appointment of ACE and Events & Competition Co-ordinator Candidates.

8.1 As existing ACEs, the ASC and Phil ----- were re-appointed for the coming year. There were no dissentions.

8.2 The Secretary said that he had circulated the Area's intention to appoint----- (Davidstow and Truro) and ----- (Eddystone) as fixed wing ACEs, also Rob ----- (Okehampton) to the Events & Competition Co-ordinator role, to all BMFA Members and Clubs in the Area. Their CVs had been posted on the Website and a link circulated individually to all Area BMFA Members. Their CVs had been circulated to all Clubs. There had been no dissentions.

8.3 The CVA Delegate proposed that the candidates identified at 8.2 be appointed as described. This was seconded by the St Austell Delegate. The proposal was unanimously approved on a show of hands.

**Action 3-1** The ASC to return appropriate ACE ratification and paperwork for new appointments to the BMFA Achievement Scheme Controller. (Secretary note: complete at time of writing).

8.4 The meeting thanked the new Appointees for offering to take up these important tasks.

(Secretary note: post meeting-----advised in retrospect he would not be able to fulfil his appointment. Consequently, this role will need to be re-appointed)

## 9. Progress on Site issues.

**9.1 St Agnes.** Secretary said he had been advised there was no immediate progress to report. The negotiating team had held discussions with BMFA HQ but understood there had been no progress with Natural England and consequently none with the National Trust. The issue of drone and model aircraft flying in SSSIs had been swept into the broader discussion of recreational activities in general. This was to be considered by Natural England and the National Trust in a meeting with Landowner Stakeholders in December. The outcome, or indeed whether or not this meeting had actually taken place, was not known. It is unlikely that we will regain permission to fly at St Agnes without a study of the impact of flying drones and model aircraft on wild life, in particular on birds. The National Trust has indicated this study may not take place at St Agnes but may be more general in nature. While the BMFA remains ready to support such a study its requirements have not been specified by either Natural England or the National Trust. Unfortunately, we are still in a holding pattern on this topic.

**9.2 Flying-on-Dartmoor.** The Secretary said that prior to the recent AGM the Plasterdown Delegate had drawn attention to new byelaws proposed by the DNPA (Dartmoor National Park Authority). These could affect the flying of model aircraft and drones on the Moor. Immediately post AGM a discussion on the way forward was held which resulted in the Secretary preparing a discussion paper. This was circulated within the Committee for comment. The conclusion of this process was that the new proposals lacked clarity and attempted to extend DNPA's influence over airspace for which the CAA is the legal authority. The Secretary said that as a consequence of further discussion he had prepared a briefing paper. This had again been circulated to the Committee which had agreed revisions to the byelaws proposed by the DNPA. In accordance with its conclusion, this paper was sent on behalf of the South West Area to CEO BMFA on December 6 for action. Despite attempts by the Area Council Delegate to contact CEO no response has been received. An outcome is awaited.

## 10. BMFA budget discussion.

**10.1** The Secretary recalled that during the AGM the St Austell Delegate and others had raised queries regarding the BMFA Budget. It was agreed these queries would be discussed at a future Ordinary meeting. To help the discussion the Secretary had attempted to recast the BMFA's top level budget, presented at its recent AGM, into a more assimilable form. This resulted in the pie charts shown overleaf.

**10.2** The first chart directly takes numbers from the BMFA accounts but aggregates totals where they seem more relevant. Carry-through costs are excluded. "Model Flying Activity" aggregates costs that seem relevant to its eponymous subject, namely those of:

*Training and Excellence*

*Payload Challenge*

*Achievement Scheme*

*International Teams (includes money for team clothing)*

*Education*

*Area support*

*Technical Committees*

*Site Protection*

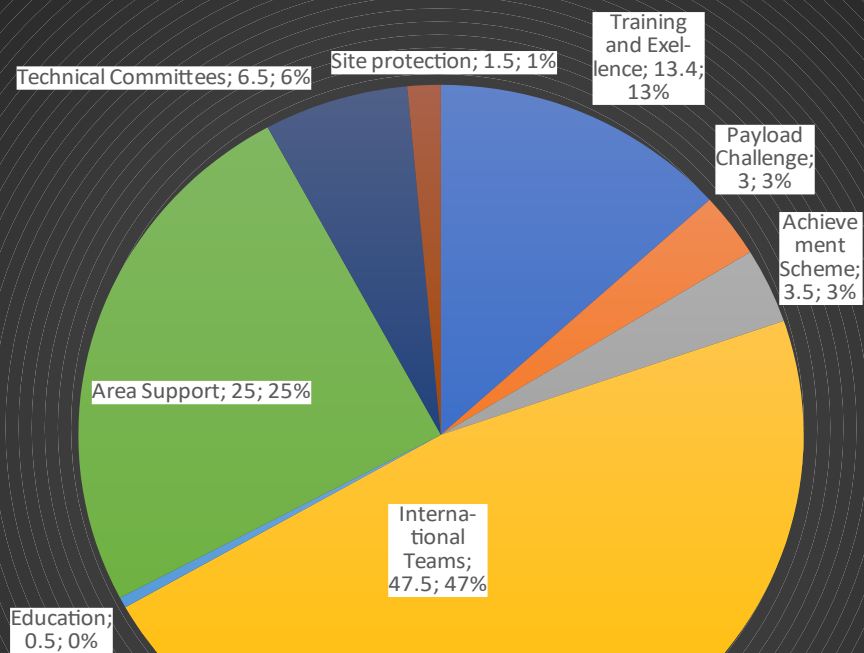
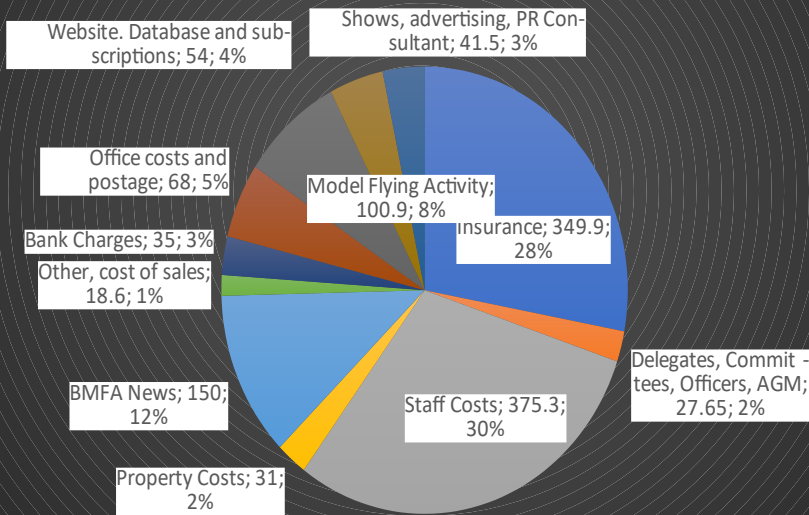
However, this breakdown is not listed separately in the accounts.

10.3 The following discussion points were raised in no particular order:

- Cost of insurance is one of the two dominant items but provides a positive reason for joining the BMFA. On the other hand, anyone joining BMFA solely for insurance cover incurs paying a 2.6 overhead factor. It is assumed that value for money was sought in appointing an insurance provider.
- Staff costs seem very high but are probably unavoidable with legacy pension costs and so forth as well as the need to maintain a professional core team.
- Given the high level of staff costs it would be good to see the BMFA Office become more responsive to Member phone calls, emails and similar.
- Some staff costs will be directly attributable to the model flying activity, it would be informative to estimate how much goes directly to that and how much to administrative overhead.
- With the last point in mind it should be possible for the BMFA to re-cast the budget showing how much of its resources directly impinge on the day-to-day model flyer. There was a general feeling that the everyday member, certainly in the South West, is rather disillusioned with the BMFA, it being widely seen as “Buckminster- centric”. There is a need to “sell” the BMFA to the everyday member and a re-cast of the budget in this way for general consumption might help.
- Funding for Chacksfield house as well as for Buckminster was challenged. Is Chacksfield empty, when is it to be sold?

## BMFA Budget - 23/24

Total = £1,252k



Model Flying Activity - Total = £100.5k

- The cost of the BMFA News seems disproportionately large. It would be much more efficient to move to a modern internet publication which would save probably 80% of costs. An argument against this was that the BMFA News would be more likely to be read by most modellers than an internet publication, therefore a better way of disseminating important news. However, as the modern publishing world is rapidly moving to the internet this didn't seem a particularly strong argument.
- An Internet based News publication could open the hobby/sport to all-comers and would be more likely to attract a younger generation. This would certainly fit with the work of the Area.
- Funding for "Education" seemed remarkably low, particularly in the face of declining BMFA membership. This funding item should be significantly increased.
- Similarly, "Site Protection" seems poorly funded at a time when many flying sites are under significant threat.
- "International Competition" appears to take up a disproportionately large part of the model flying budget. While its importance was not challenged there was a general feeling that the Area Support fund available to Clubs should be increased as this would be an effective way of helping the everyday modeller. This would need to be achieved by pruning other areas of the Total budget.
- There seems to be no attempt to show how funding supports the "greening" of BMFA activities e.g. by making more use of electronic processing, again with particular regard to the BMFA News.

10.2 In summary it was felt that while the BMFA represented good value for money relative to many similar organisations and has done excellent work in negotiations with the CAA, there is still a need to demonstrate its relevance to the everyday BMFA Member. There is certainly scope within the BMFA top level budget for re-allocations that would help with this goal. Additionally, it would help if the budget were re-cast for everyday consumption in a more user-friendly way that would show what the everyday Member gets for his/her £42.

## 11. Matters arising from Club Delegates.

11.1 Website. The Torbay Delegate requested the website be made more easily accessible from the internet. Plasterdown Delegate noted the links to areas don't always work. The Okehampton Delegate said that access to the internet was controlled by the search engine providers and would be difficult to influence.

**Action 3.2** PRO to investigate problems with access to the website.

11.2 Falling membership. Several Clubs noted the falling membership and the need to get young people on board. Some Clubs had managed to get new young members who had gained interest through drones but rapidly changed to aircraft when they were introduced to them. However, they tended to leave as school and other more interesting factors started to dominate their lives. A growing segment is the group of older people who had gained interest as youngsters but had given up due to pressures of family and work but now were returning to the hobby. This is an important group that needs to be encouraged and fostered.

## 12. AOB

12.1 The Okehampton Delegate observed that in his Club's experience model flying was being "chased out" of the public zone. Flying fields were being moved further away from public areas, partly as a consequence of the CAA requirements but also by a number of other localised factors. This needed to be countered by getting the hobby/sport back into public view by flying demonstrations and say by taking space for static display in markets and at local events.

12.2 The Exeter & District Delegate said that his Club held regular static displays in Newton Abbot and this year's was extremely well attend, including by the town's Lady Mayor. This was followed up by a very good write up in the local paper. The Chairman challenged all Clubs to see what further they could do in this respect. (Secretary Note – I've include some photos from Exeter & District club for inspiration at the end of the minutes.)

12.3 The Chairman said that he and a fellow East Devon club member had recently been invited to take part in an interview on Radio Devon. This had been well received. He encouraged other Clubs to explore similar activity as it would reach a large public audience.

12.4 The Chairman reminded the meeting that he operated the Area's zoom facility which was open to use by Clubs if they so wished. They should contact him to make appropriate arrangements. He had noted the booking from Davidstow for their AGM next year.

## 13. Date of next meeting

13.1 The next meeting will be held on 16 February at 7:30 pm by zoom.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:35pm.

*All names and contact details have been removed from this copy for online safety. Any BMFA Member wishing to see a full version can do so by a request via the link below along with their name and BMFA number:*

<https://southwest.bmfa.uk/contact-us>

**Secretary, BMFA South West Area  
30/12/2022**





**Exeter and District RCC Static Display in Newton Abbott**