



BMFA South West Area

5th Ordinary Meeting, 18 May 2023 at 7:30pm via zoom

Provisional Minutes

Attendance

Clubs Present:

Okehampton, Riviera, Davidstow, CVA, CSSA, NAHC, Truro, East Devon, Plasterdown

Officials Present:

Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Council Delegate, PRO, AASC, ACE

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Confirmation of Club Delegates present.
3. Minutes from previous meeting.
4. Actions from previous meeting.
5. Reports from Area Officers.
6. Financial Statement.
7. Co-option of Events Coordinator.
8. Progress on SWA Events. (Competitions, Torbay Airshow, Achievement Day).
9. Events Facilities (Toilets, Marquee purchase).
10. Progress on Site issues (Dartmoor, St Agnes).
11. Matters arising from Club Delegates.
12. AOB.
13. Date and venue for next meeting.

PROCEEDINGS

1. Apologies for Absence.

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Delegate, Dartmoor SSC
Delegate, Exeter and District RC Club
ACE

2. Confirmation of Club Delegates present.

2.1 The Secretary confirmed there were nine Clubs present, represented by their nominated Delegates. These are all identified in the attendance list above.

3. Minutes from previous meeting.

3.1 No comments on the minutes of the 4th meeting had been received. The Newton Abbot Heli Club Delegate proposed they be accepted. This was seconded by the CVA Delegate. The minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Actions arising from previous meetings.

Action 1-5. This had remained outstanding as per the previous meeting: *“PRO to post Event information on the Website pending improvement in the operation of its Forms as well as access to it”*. It was agreed this process was now working (see 5.3 below). **Complete.**

Action 3-2. *PRO to investigate problems with access to the website.* Website access now appears to be working satisfactorily. **Complete.**

Action 4-1 *Treasurer to return 23/24 bids to BMFA Treasurer and Member’s Director by 28 February.* **Complete.**

Action 4-2 *The Secretary to advise BMFA Achievement Scheme Controller of possible alternative dates for the SWA Achievement Day.* **Complete.**

Action 4.3 *AASC to set out a unified scheme for implementation of the BMFA’s achievement scheme policies within the Area.* The AASC reported that he was in the process of writing to all examiners and instructors advising them of the Area’s policy. This is to follow the BMFA “Flying Start” programme leading into gaining qualifications through the Achievement Scheme. **Complete** (Sec: complete at time of writing).

Action 4-4 *On all Delegates to explore interest in an Area Helicopter fun fly day and to contact the Okehampton Delegate with results.* Delegates present reported that they had all attempted to stir interest in this proposed event but only a single response had been received. This was considered insufficient to warrant further action. **Complete.**

5. Reports from Area Officers.

5.1 The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary had nothing to report.

5.2 The Area Council Delegate reported he had attended the recent BMFA Board meeting as well as various of its subsidiary meetings. He had encountered no business relevant to the Area. Otherwise, he had nothing to report.

5.3 PRO confirmed he had worked on the Area events form which was now functional. He would collect the BMFA simulator and gazebo from BMFA HQ for the Tredinnick Steam & Vintage Rally event at St Issey on 27/28 May. (The Area Council Delegate offered to collect these items from St Issey and take up to Torbay for the Riviera Airshow event.)

5.4 The AASC reported that issues arising at the Newton Abbot Heli Club

6. Financial Statement.

6.1 The Treasurer reported that following total grants of £3000 from the BMFA for FY 23/24 the bank balance presently stands at £6127.67. The list of grants authorised by the BMFA is given in the table below. The new bank account is operational and proving satisfactory, including the mechanism for approving payments. The Treasurer commented that it would be useful to know what the Area cannot spend money on, as well as what it can, and would make enquiries of the BMFA to this end.

Clubs	Project	Event	Cost £			
Torbay and District MFC	Torbay Air Show	BMFA publicity	600.00			
Torbay and District MFC		2 Swapmeets	140.00			
Torbay & District	2 gliding events	Provision of toilets	120.00			
Exeter & District RCC	2 x displays	2 static scout displays	100.00			
Truro MFC	2 x Swapmeets	Room hire	120.00			
St Austell MFC	Tredinnick Steam Fair	BMFA publicity	120.00			
St Austell MFC	Chris Foss Fly in	Inter club fly in	75.00			
CVA	Indoor Flying	Support for junior initiative	150.00			
SMAE SW	6-8 Glider RES & Open Thermal Days	Provision of toilets	560.00			
Okehampton MFC	6 Open Aerotow and 2 gliding events	Provision of toilets	420.00			
Total			2,405			

6.2 The meeting thanked the Treasurer for his hard work over the last year in bringing both the financial bidding process and change of bank accounts to satisfactory conclusions.

7. Co-option of Events Co-ordinator

7.1 The Chairman said that while the Agenda carried this item there was actually no need to go through the formal co-option process with a vote. The candidate: the Okehampton Club Delegate, had already been appointed at the 3rd Ordinary meeting but had been unable for personal reasons to take up the position. The Chairman said that the Okehampton Club Delegate was now able to do this and all that was necessary was for the meeting to welcome him to the role. The meeting agreed and offered a unanimous welcome.

8. Progress on Events

8.1 Thermal Soaring: planned events had been held at Torbay and Catstow. Both had been well attended, particularly the former. The general feeling was that they were extremely successful. It would be beneficial to report them on the website. The PRO agreed to do this. The East Devon RCC Delegate agreed to act as the new website contact for thermal soaring activities, replacing

8.2 Free Flight: a party from CVA would be representing the SWA at this year's Free Flight Nationals over the coming Bank Holiday weekend.

8.3 Aerobatics: the Events Co-ordinator reported an interest from a number of parties in establishing an Aerobatics Workshop. He would initiate a working group to determine the practicality of running one or more workshops and determine what broader interest there might be across the Area for such events.

8.4 Torbay Riviera Airshow: in the Torbay Delegate's absence an action was placed on the Events Co-ordinator to ensure that preparations for the Airshow were fully in hand.

Action 5-1

8.5 Achievement Scheme Weekend: The Events Coordinator confirmed that planning was progressing well. His main concern was that following the wet start to the year the site should dry out in time. This was not thought to be an overly significant issue at the present time. The Chairman would shortly be advertising the event via an Area wide broadcast. All Delegates were requested to promote the Event within their respective Clubs.

9. Events Facilities

9.1 Toilets: Some concern had been expressed by Delegates that, even though BMFA had granted money to pay for toilet facilities, expenses taken year on year looked high and questioned if there might be a less costly alternative than hiring them. The delegate for Plasterdown presented a brief paper looking at the costs for two options:

Option 1: SWA provides its own managed service.

Option 2: Each Club builds its own facility using funding help from SWA.

These Options are fully described in the PDF circulated with the Agenda. In addition, the Events Co-ordinator considered it might be appropriate for each Club to make its own provision based on using a camping style "porta-potty" along with screened urinal facilities for males. The Area Delegate noted that no break even point in the costings had been determined, so there is presently no basis for a cost base decision - as the BMFA had already made provision for hire, the Area should continue with that approach. The Treasurer noted

that before any decision could be taken on Clubs providing their own facilities they should be asked if they would be prepared to support such a course of action.

The meeting recognised the importance of providing toilet facilities so that events could be more “inclusive”, respecting the likely expectations of modern society. In general discussion the meeting concluded that management by the SWA of its own facilities was fraught with too many problems relating to logistics and waste disposal for it to be practical. Similar problems applied to ownership by Clubs, with the additional consideration that a “porta - potty” would not be a practical facility for general use by large(ish) groups of people. Following a show of hands, the meeting agreed not to take the matter further at the present time. It was acknowledged that useful ground work had been done should BMFA withdraw funding in future years. The Treasurer agreed to find out what other Areas do in this regard.

9.3 Marquee purchase: The PRO said that the St Austell Club no longer had access to the Marquee required to support their activity at the upcoming annual Tredinnick Steam & Vintage Rally. The Club would have to withdraw from the event if an alternative could not be found. He proposed that the Area purchases a Marquee that could be used as an alternative, and elsewhere as necessary. His research showed that he could purchase a 5x10m equivalent with guy ropes, anchors and packaging for £677.19 total. As a day’s hire would cost over £300 a straight purchase would seem the cost effective course of action. After some discussion the CVA delegate proposed the Area should go ahead with the purchase, this was seconded by the CSSA delegate. This motion was carried unanimously. The PRO was authorised to buy the marquee on behalf of the SWA.

9.4 Bungees for Thermal Soaring events: the Plasterdown Delegate noted that the bungee launched tasks had prove difficult at recent events because of the different variety (of bungees) brought along by competitors. To achieve consistency there was need for several identical items. He recommended the Area purchase four bungees at a total cost of £184.60. A formal motion to purchase these items was proposed by the Plasterdown Delegate and seconded by the East Devon RCC Delegate. This was approved on a show of hands and the Plasterdown Delegate authorised to make the purchase on behalf of the Area.

10. Progress on site issues.

10.1 Dartmoor: The Secretary said that despite all of the urgency over this topic earlier in the year the proposed byelaws update remained on hold pending the DNPA’s appeal against the High Court ruling on wild camping. Consequently, current byelaws remain applicable and there is no change to our activities for the time being. The Secretary will provide an update should the situation change.

10.2 St Agnes: The Secretary reported he had attended a meeting on behalf of the BMFA with the local NT Head Ranger and their senior conservation consultant on 18 April, onsite (chilly) at St Agnes. The CSSA Delegate led the meeting on behalf of the Cornwall Slope Soaring Association while a CSSA representative gave a detailed description of our activities (This individual has completed a huge amount of research on the St Agnes issue). In a nutshell, and rather to our surprise, the NT representatives said they had already gained agreement from Natural England for a licence to fly unpowered model aircraft at St Agnes outside the bird breeding season (i.e., 1 September to 31 January). It remains to establish an agreement between ourselves and the NT. The Head Ranger said he would be in contact with the Secretary to this end. The CSSA Rep’s detailed note on the meeting is attached at the

Annex. While the Secretary had received an email from the NT Head Ranger confirming this outcome no further action has been forthcoming at the present time. The Secretary said he was presently consulting CEO on the form of agreement and who should sign it on behalf of BMFA.

10. Matters Arising From Club Delegates:

10.1 The Truro Delegate (and Treasurer) said that his Club would like to purchase a noise meter. As a significant use of the meter would be to check that visiting models, during SWA events for example, complied with the Club constraints on noise he proposed that the SWA should part fund the purchase at a cost of up to £70. The Okehampton Club Delegate offered the use of his Club's meter but noted it was rarely used because absolute noise was not a good indicator of perceived irritation. Several Delegates noted the use of noise meter Apps on mobile phones, thus there should be no need for a separate purchase. The purchase was seconded by the ASSC. On a show of hands, four voted against, three voted for, two abstained. The motion was not carried.

10.2 The Treasurer said that of the St Austell Club had audited accounts for the last financial year. This was a continuation of his work carried out for the Cornwall sub-area. We would now need to co-opt two new auditors for the present year. He had spoken with and with of the Truro Club, both of whom were willing to undertake the work. The Plasterdown Delegate formally proposed and be co-opted as auditors. This was seconded by the CSSA Delegate. In a show of hands six Delegates voted for and none against. The motion was carried.

11. AOB: There was no AOB.

12. Next Meeting

12.1 The date of the next meeting will need to be timed to approve the budget submission for the coming financial year. As a deadline date for the budget has not yet been formally set by the BMFA, the next meeting date cannot be set. However, it is likely to be in either the last week of August or the first week in September. The Secretary will monitor the BMFA schedule and advise a suitable date as soon as possible.

Secretary, BMFA South West Area
25 May, 2023

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

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

Annex - CSSA Update on St Agnes meeting with National Trust Representatives

You may have received a broadcast message from the BMFA South West Area confirming that we have been granted a licence to fly unpowered model aircraft from three locations at St Agnes outside the bird breeding season. This update is simply to add further detail as follows:

- In a recent meeting with the National Trust Head Ranger and the National Trust Conservationist the Model Flying Group have been granted a conditional licence to fly unpowered model aircraft on three sites at St Agnes - “The Hump”, “Coastguards” & “Tubbies” which are all located on the Godrevy to St Agnes SSSI. This area is notified as a SSSI due to the presence of Schedule 1 birds. The licence will restrict model flying to the period September 1st to January 31st which is outside the bird breeding season and will be granted in the name of BMFA replacing the all season licence granted back in 1997. Note that flying will only be permitted in these very specific locations and will continue to be banned on the rest of this 650 hectare stretch of the SSSI from Godrevy to St Agnes.
- Two other recreational groups were also reviewed namely the Para & Hang Gliding Group and the Mountaineering Group. The Para Gliders were granted an all season licence to fly from the “Hump” but were excluded from the Wheal Coates area due to nesting Schedule 1 birds (Choughs). The Rock Climbers have never had a licence and failed to gain one under the Byelaws giving NT the time to complete a bird nest survey.
- At the meeting were representatives from CSSA & BMFA South West Area. We asked why we hadn’t received the grant of an all season licence & why we had been treated differently to the Para Gliding group - KHPA. National Trust took time to explain the reason for this. KHPA members totally respected the imposed flying ban with no breaches of the Byelaws and no evidence of disturbing birds either during the Ban or before the ban was imposed. This was the main reason they were granted an all season conditional licence to fly which will, of course, be closely monitored by National Trust who are the Landowner and custodian of this SSSI.
On the other hand, model aircraft flyers were observed on several occasions breaching the Byelaws with a complete disregard for the SSSI protection order. On one occasion (during the flying ban last year) the National Trust Head Ranger observed an airborne model being mobbed by Gulls during breeding season which is a sign of distress & subject to a fine under the 1981 Wildlife Act. On this occasion the offending flyer was challenged and reported to the Police & Natural England who issued a cautionary notice.
With this background of the blatant breaching of the SSSI Byelaws (which are an

extension to the Wildlife & Countryside Act) National Trust could not justify recommending an all season licence for Model Flying. This is why we were not able to present a persuasive argument to the National Trust for an all season licence.

- The only reason that National Trust recommended (to Natural England) the granting of a licence to fly outside the nesting season is because they have been impressed by the past support given to the local Rangers in the communication of flying guidelines by the CSSA Group to protect the assemblage of Peregrine Falcons in this area.
- With this background we sadly have no “political or legal case” to raise in support of an all season flying licence. If model flyers during the licenced flying period can demonstrate that they understand the restrictions imposed by the Natural England SSSI Byelaws then we may have a case to pursue an all season flying licence next year. National Trust will closely monitor our activities on site once our licensed flying time begins and will hold regular review meetings with us.
- We discussed the issue of visitors breaching the Byelaws out of ignorance and we have agreed to work with National Trust to help generate signage at the three locations to help us educate visiting flyers. It is also clear that to keep and expand on this licence we will have to upgrade our awareness of bird distress signals & we have asked the Head Ranger to guide us in this. Any screaming from Gulls or Raptors in flight is an indication of distress. Any mobbing of aircraft by any birds - ditto. Any approach from a Raptor -ditto. This is more relevant to flying in the breeding season, but we should be aware of these concerns if we are to regain our all season flying licence.

We recognise that this is not the ideal outcome to our discussions over the past 14 months but, considering the impact that a small number of selfish flyers have had on our case I guess this is the best we could realistically expect. As things progress we will continue to send regular updates on our position as will the BMFA South West Area. It would be most helpful if recipients of this update would help our situation by spreading the word that model flying in SSSI notified areas need to be approached with due care for this protected environment.

With regards(CSSA) & on behalf of (CSSA Chairman).

April 23rd, 2023