



# BMFA South West Area

# Annual General Meeting

**Held 21 November 2024 at 7:30pm Via Zoom**

1. The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:34pm with a welcome to all. He noted that attendance was poor.

2. **Apologies:** Teign Valley MFC  
RC Cornwall Flyers  
Okehampton MFC  
Truro & District MFC / Treasurer

3. **Confirmation of Club Delegates present:**

Plymouth Model Flying Club  
Exeter and District RC Club  
Bude and District Model Flying Club (also ASC)  
Eddystone Model Flying Club  
St Austell MFC  
Newton Abbott Heli Club (also ACE)  
Riviera Thermal Soaring Club  
RNAS Culdrose (SW Area Delegate)

**Officers and Others:**

ACE  
Chairman  
Secretary  
PRO/Webmaster

4. **Minutes from AGM held 23 November 2023:**

The minutes having been circulated were taken as read. Proposed as a true record; RNAS Culdrose seconded Bude and District MFC delegates.

Vote: 4 for 0 against 4 abstentions (not present at that AGM)

5. **Matters arising:** BMFA expenditure. As this was a more general subject the Chairman asked that it be discussed under Any other business. This was accepted.

6. **Reports from Area Officers:**

## **BMFA SW Area Chairman's 2024 AGM Report (Felix Marten)**

**St Agnes:** Recently, I attempted to dispel rumours, misinformation and confusion about slope soaring at St Agnes. I believe I've achieved this by publishing to the SWA members a statement, a map showing the three sites and a guide to help us keep the permissions that we currently enjoy.

Put very simply, flying is permitted at the recognised sites at St. Agnes Head for the five winter months between the 1<sup>st</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> January. This effectively allows the bird populations in question in those areas to be undisturbed for the full duration of their breeding seasons.

To arrive at this outcome a number of people have been involved since outset of this issue and their outstanding efforts on achieving this is benefiting everyone who wishes to enjoy flying at this prestigious site.

### **St Agnes Thank You's**

So, everyone's thanks go to Chris Imrie and Nigel Argall who have both been heavily involved since the St. Agnes issue arose and an extra thank you to Nigel Argall who is now appointed as the BMFA SW Area Negotiator with Natural England, thus creating an official link in all matters relating to Natural England permissions for flying from the National Trust land at St. Agnes. His role will be renewed on an annual basis according to necessity.

Also, thanks to Chris Morton our previous SW Area Secretary because he too has been feverishly working in the background achieving milestones for the Area which have also been key to the continuance of flying at St. Agnes. Thank you Chris.

Please be assured that the work is continuing and will build on the successes so far.

### **Other people to Thank**

I would like to thank Peter Smedley for his work as both Public Relations Officer and Webmaster. Having held these posts for the duration of the two and a half years of the reformed SWA, Pete is now standing down from the committee. Pete has been and still is an administrator for the SWA Facebook account and will continue to be so. Were sorry to see you leave the committee Pete, as you have been a very good and helpful committee member. Thank you for all your help and at the AS Events.

As we ask for someone to come forward to fill these important and necessary posts, I would like to say that experience for either post is not altogether necessary as help and guidance for these posts will be available but some aptitude for computers might be of benefit for the Webmaster post.

Last year Pete Disney our Area Delegate of at least 14 years said that he would stand down, but to my relief, he then decided to give us one more year and so a year on, this evening he is definitely standing down.

What can I say. Pete has been an absolute stalwart and I for one will be especially sad to see him leave the Area Committee, as it was because of Pete that I became chairman, a complex story that started 14 years ago and tonight ... is not the time for that story.

I'm not exactly sure how long Pete had been Area Delegate prior to getting to know him 14 years ago but he remained active through the dark ages for the Cornwall Sub Area and probably unknown to us all, quietly looked after the Devon Sub Area as well. Therefore, for all the good work he has maintained throughout ... and length of service I think he deserves a round of applause please, Pete Disney.

This leaves us asking for someone to step forward to take the post of Area Delegate for 2025. Fortunately for the next person this will not be as involved as it was for Pete due to recent changes in the depth of commitment required from the remit of this post. It is now a very similar duty to that of a

Club Delegate, to simply act as a conduit between the Area and central council and I'm fairly sure that existing Club Delegates, if they wish to, can also take on the post of Area Delegate.

So tonight, we are looking to fill these 3 posts from the membership;  
**PRO, Webmaster and Area Delegate** and we'll deal with that shortly.

BMFA and Money. The future finances of the BMFA in general and therefore, all the Areas as well, will suffer from a noticeable drop in available finances. The overall membership is reducing rapidly each year and now stands in the region of 27,000.

The BMFA has sold Chacksfield House and as I understand it the BMFA under the umbrella of the SMAE will now be based almost entirely at Buckminster, with some staff now working from rented offices in Leicester.

**Dartmoor Parks Authority (DPA)** is currently engaged in a court case against Darwall regarding the right to wild camp on Dartmoor. Following a High Court judgement in favour of Darwall restricting wild camping, the case was heard at the Appeal Court in October. The DPA have suspended their new bye-laws until the outcome of this appeal. The judgement date has not been published but is imminent. At that point the DPA will then look to publish their amended bye-laws in 2025, so we need to be prepared to react to them. It appeared that the DPA was prepared to go back to their previous position of allowing unpowered flight on Dartmoor.

#### **The Achievement scheme Weekend event.**

Well, despite being down on candidates the event this year was still a very successful one and very much enjoyed by all. Some quite harsh lessons have been learnt from the previous two years and taking them into account has paid dividends to make the whole weekend better in many ways.

The intention in 2025 is that there will be another two day AS weekend Event and also a number of one day events hopefully spread around the SW area.

To help these AS events along we will need the assistance from Area Chief Examiners (ACEs) this will be difficult as there only 2 in the SW Area we really need to extract the hidden talent that exists within the ranks of the area's examiners. A further point to note is that there are also very few Examiners. That concludes my report.

**SW Area Secretary:** My focus has been directed towards the AS Weekend and St. Agnes.

#### **Achievement Scheme Co-ordinator:**

The ASC has surveyed 24 examiners in the SW Area and identified 4 that might consider becoming an ACE. A meeting with the Area examiners will be held early in the New Year. The object of the meeting is to find ways of supporting them and encourage likely candidates to become ACE's. The Southern Region ASC has offered his continued support to the Area.

**ACE Geoff Bell** reported he had had a very quiet year possibly due to the AS Weekends and a greater number of examiners in the clubs. He reported that ACE Phil George (Helicopters) had recently undergone serious surgery and as a consequence felt he would no longer be able to continue as an ACE for the Area

**PRO/ Webmaster** reported that special pages for St. Agnes and SW Gliding Competition have been added to the website.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

I will not be able to attend the AGM on Thursday a higher, conflicting priority, I'm afraid. With that in mind, I offer the following finance report, in addition to the audited accounts you have circulated.

1. The accounts are self-explanatory.
2. Regrettably, I have nothing to report for our annual bids for the 2025/26 season. I sent our bids (July ish), as agreed by our committee, to the newly appointed BMFA Treasurer (Mike Woodhouse) - to which I received no specific response. I was assured by him that bids would be sought from Areas after the BMFA AGM later in the year, when the bidding cycle was expected to be discussed. Having received no further information I sent off another submission to the BMFA Treasurer last month. All I received in reply was a short email from the treasurer stating that he had resigned his post copied to a name I didn't recognise - nothing more. I have emailed BMFA re the new treasurer, no reply as yet!
3. In case you need the information, our two auditors have agreed to continue our accounts. Their names are RK Martin and M Glass.

Sorry for the short notice. I hope the meeting goes well.

### **SW Area BMFA Delegate:**

During the last twelve months I have attended the 2 Area Council Meetings and given feed back to the Area in my usual way via email shortly after the zoom meetings close. Also, in my second and final year serving on the Board as a Non-Executive Director (NED) following the new governance structure introduced at the AGM in 2022, I have continued to work alongside my fellow Directors trying to move the BMFA forward. We have made maximum use of electronic communications and moved away from weekend meetings, which I feel has been very successful: it was a very long return trip to Leicester from Cornwall for face-to-face meetings and although my IT has caused a couple of gremlins, I have been able to take a full and active role in Board discussions. I have taken an active role in the three planned Board Meetings (used to be known as Full Council) plus the AGM and attended to numerous other items of business including several meetings concerning the accounts and budget for this year, the Annual Awards, Buckminster business, defining the BMFA Strategic Risk, GDPR issues, and wider Safeguarding policy issues. There are several major challenges facing model flying in the future which will require a fast and agile response and clearly the Executive and Board are up for this: what is needed is the engagement of the wider membership which in my opinion is proving harder to motivate than anticipated. My time as a NED concludes at the end of 2024 to be replaced by the next Area in the roster (Southern) and I feel that after 18 years this is also suitable time to also relinquish my role as SW Area delegate however I am willing to continue in the short term until a volunteer steps forward.

### **7. Consideration and Adoption of the Accounts:**

The accounts having been previously circulated were proposed for adoption by Bude and District MFC and seconded by RNAS Culdrose delegates.

Vote: 6 for Abstentions: 2

8. **Nominations and Election of Officers:** Both the Chairman and Treasurer were prepared to stand again and there being no other nominations were duly re-elected.  
**PRO/Webmaster:** There were no nominations.  
**SW Area BMFA delegate:** There were no nominations.  
**Vice-Chairman:** There were no nominations.  
**St. Agnes Negotiator:** RC Cornwall Flyers delegate appointment ratified unanimously.  
**Achievement Scheme Co-ordinator:** The Bude & District MFC delegate confirmed he was willing to continue in the role. Proposed St. Austell MFC Seconded Newton Abbot Heli Club

**ACE's:** Peter Coates (FW) and Philip George (Helicopter) have indicated that they are both stepping down. Thanks was expressed to both for their services to the Area.

David Durnford (Southern Area ASC) indicated that he was more than happy to continue to support the SW Area as an ACE. Geoff Bell indicated he also prepared to continue as an ACE for the Area.

Vote: 8/0

9. **Any other business:** A question was raised about the £240 000 BMFA shortfall. The Area Delegate referred to the annual accounts where this was explained. In summary there was an increased Tax bill for the trading at Buckminster and the investments made at Buckminster. The cafe at Buckminster was expensive to install but has already covered its expenses through sales.  
35% of subscriptions are spent on the Insurance for members.  
There was discussion on the BMFA self promoting itself to counter other insurance providers who are offering lower insurance premiums. The LMA is investigating becoming an affiliate member of the BMFA.

**10. Date and venue for the next meeting:**

The next AGM will be held via Zoom on 20 November 2025.

11. **Closure:** The meeting closed at 9:08pm with thanks to all.