

# ESSEX GLIDING CLUB

## Minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting

Held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at Ashen Village Hall Commencing 5 p.m.

### Those present

**Committee Members:** John Whitwell (Chairman), Tony Brook (Treasurer), Dave Hertzberg (CFI), Steve Jessup (Secretary), Vince Earl (Technical Officer), Callum Hitchings (Junior Representative)

**Members:** Nick Baker, Amelia Brook, Rob Brown, Cathy Dellar, Mitch Firman, Mike Harris (Tugmaster), Kevin King (Deputy CFI), Josh Linsell, Dennis Marcinkowski, Wayne Naylor, Bernard Parry, Nigel Potter, Anne Regeli. Paul Regeli, Gary Shepherd, Jake Smith, Harry van de Noort, Kieron van de Noort,

**Apologies for Absence (sent to Secretary):** Ralph Hawtree, Terry Holloway, Steve Rhenius

### Minutes taken by Steve Jessup

#### 1. Minutes of Previous AGM held 12th November 2022

These were formerly approved by the Meeting

#### 2. Chairman's Statement

- (i) Unfortunately due to the weather we had a very short season this year, with the latest start anyone could remember.
- (ii) John thanked all members for the work put in to ensure that we had made the most of what flying days we did have.
- (iii) John noted, with sadness, the passing of Dave Jones who had done so much for the club over many years.
- (iv) He also recognised the sterling work done by Allen Cherry. Allen had not only been a very effective Treasurer for a long period but had also undertaken a myriad of other roles for the club. He had now moved on to another club but remained an associate member of ours.
- (v) John thanked those who had stepped up to the plate to take on the various roles previously carried out by Allen and felt that this had resulted in a fairly seamless transition.

#### 3. Presentation of Chairman's Cup

John presented the cup to Dave Hertzberg (to much applause). He recounted the hard work, and dedication of our ever present CFI and the extent to which the club relies on him.

#### 4. Treasurer's Statement

- (i) Tony's overview was that the club was in good financial shape.
- (ii) The balance was £132,646
- (iii) Commitments within this figure included £75K held back as a self insurance contingency, £12K in outstanding gift vouchers, £4K members flying credit, 11.5K Glider Insurance, 5K boiler replacement for Orchard Farm, 3K BGA Fees, 10K Glider maintenance and Arcs.
- (iv) Some concern was raised that our forecast expenditure for the current year exceeded income but it was pointed out that we had added an additional two seater to our fleet this year and replaced the single seat glider with a better one. Also significant tug maintenance had been done this year.
- (v) In response to a question it was confirmed that the tenant of Orchard farm had been keeping up with the rent over the last two years. As an aside to this it was noted that the perimeter road gate was left open during the day by the straw lorry drivers but closed at night.
- (vi) Tony undertook to provide a budget forecast for the coming year at the end of this one.

- (vii) The question of income from CASC was raised. John said that work needed to be done on this and we could claim up to 4 years in arrears. The intention was that instructors winch drivers and IFPs could claim and donate their travelling expenses if they wished to do so and had not flown in their own right on the day concerned.

#### 5. **Tariffs for the coming year**

Tony announced the following as agreed by the committee:

- (i) Junior membership to be increased to £100
- (ii) Junior winch launch fee to be £6.50
- (iii) Junior discount on time in air flying fees to be removed.
- (iv) New members (and existing junior members under 21) are only entitled to junior membership if they have not reached their 21st Birthday on Membership renewal date. Existing junior members over 21 can continue until 25th birthday.
- (v) No change to other membership and Flying tariffs

#### 6. **Appointment of Committee**

John stressed that if anyone wishes to join the committee or replace someone in a certain role then they should make themselves known. Anyone who wants to get involved is welcome and anybody joining the Committee, in whatever role, can be assured of full training and an appropriate hand – over period.

The existing committee were all willing to stand again in their current capacities. No other nominations were received. The committee members were thus re-elected:

John Whitwell (Chairman) Tony Brook (Treasurer) Dave Hertzberg (CFI) Steve Jessup (Secretary) Vince Earl (Technical Officer) Will Burry (Winchmaster) Callum Hitchings (Junior Representative)

#### 7. **Any resolutions Proposed by the Committee or Members**

There were none.

#### 8. **CFI Statement**

Dave Hertzberg alluded to a number of individual successes this season:

- (i) Mitch Firman Solo
- (ii) Nigel Potter Silver Distance and Cross Country endorsement
- (iii) Callum Hitchings Basic Instructor
- (iv) Gary Shepherd Introductory Flight Pilot
- (v) Nick Baker Silver Height

Dave also extended his thanks to his fellow instructors, Kevin, Vince, Hugh and Harry for all their work. He also recognised the efforts of all the winch drivers and mentioned how well Rob's management of the winch rota was working.

He continued by remarking that, despite the loss of the Astir in a road accident, our fleet had developed well this year through the acquisition of the red K13 from Rattlesden and in particular with the acquisition of a PW5 from Burn as the club single seater. The former had helped considerably with voucher flights and the latter had proved very popular and was a good fit for transition of solo pilots from the PW6s. He encouraged all who are qualified to fly the PW5 to do so and for those yet to qualify to aspire to do that.

Dave mentioned that Wattisham was working well as a winter base and this had enabled us to house the Pawnee and K13 (EOE) in hangers for the winter which was clearly better than leaving them at Ridgewell. He

mentioned also that there had been a combined Essex and Anglia team in the inter club league with Callum and Nigel taking part. This is our first foray into that competition for many years.

Dave went on to thank Tony, Callum, Cathy, Gary and Steve for sterling work in getting through the many voucher flights this year.

#### 9. **Award of CFI Trophy**

Dave awarded the trophy to Nick Baker who he felt had achieved a remarkable improvement in flying skills and confidence over the last year. The meeting's reaction showed that this was a very popular decision.

#### 10. **Interval**

At this point the meeting stopped for refreshments. Following the reconvening of the meeting John expressed thanks to Mrs. Hitchings for preparing the buffet which we had all enjoyed.

#### 11. **Fleet Maintenance**

Vince thanked all those who had helped with maintenance during the year. He encouraged all if possible to try to attend a pilot owner maintenance course so that the pool of those who could assist could be extended. These are one day courses arranged by the BGA. There is one on 19<sup>th</sup> January

He then summarised the current state of the Fleet

- (i) **PW6 KRU** is at Wattisham. ARC and Annual Inspection all done, so ready for next season
- (ii) **PW6 KRX** in the workshop container awaiting repairs to brakes that in turn were awaiting parts. The ARC and annual inspection would be done in conjunction with the work
- (iii) **PW6 Trailer** Needs work on the suspension and internal fixings.
- (iv) **K13 EOE** At Wattisham and ARCD until June of next year.
- (v) **Astir** Parts had been salvaged for stock and the remains had been sold.
- (vi) **K13 HVW** is with Rebecca for ARC & Annual. Also repairs to tail. Radio to be fitted
- (vii) **PW5 HZB** also with Rebecca for ARC & Annual. Also repairs to tail and canopy frame. Harness and Flarm both salvaged from Astir to be fitted
- (viii) **PW5 Trailer** With Rebecca. New gas struts to be fitted
- (ix) **Skylark** Sold

Vince also raised a number of issues that he felt were important to keep the fleet maintained and that members should be aware of;

- a. He felt that the nose wheels of the PW5 and PW6 were a weak point in their design and damage in these areas had led to a lot of down time. It is important that when retrieving and manoeuvring on the ground that the nose wheel is lifted off the ground when changing direction.
- b. Manoeuvring of gliders in confined spaces should always be by hand and both wingtips should be watched.
- c. Any work done on club gliders must be documented in the DI book and the Aircraft logbook. Other than very minor work there also needs to be a rectification sheet prepared. Vince said he is happy to do the paperwork but needs to be told what work is done and when.
- d. Any issue with a glider arising from the DI or during use is to be notified to the Duty Instructor who will then pass it on to Vince if necessary.
- e. Do not leave Lithium ion batteries on charge unattended
- f. AMP 4-8 is a BGA document relating to deterioration of harness straps with age. We tend to monitor straps 'on condition' but any straps over 12 years old are best replaced.
- g. We need to replace the impact absorbing cushions on all the club gliders. Generally agreed.
- h. Suggested (and generally agreed by the meeting) that all club gliders should be fitted with Flarm and radio ideally by next spring. This would include flarm updates (which need to be done yearly to ensure continued operation)

## 12. Open Forum

John said that the topics under this item on the agenda were ones which one or more members had raised with him

### (i) Voucher Flights

There had been some concern about voucher flights impinging on member flights. There was much discussion on this but it was then generally agreed that the times that this had occurred had been few but stuck in the memory. In particular one where the tug broke down at a time when some guests had already arrived and others were on their way. This was compounded by a diagnosis that the tug could be quickly fixed which turned out to be over optimistic. Generally the voucher flights ran quite separately from member's flights although launching and retrieval naturally overlapped.

It was recognised that the income generated by the flights was important and that, without it, we could not afford to run the tug and therefore retain aerotows as an option for members. Tony said that trial flights cost us about £65 in tug costs but were typically for silver vouchers which brought in £145 each so there is substantial profit.

The flights also brought the possibility of gaining the odd new member. A number of members present had joined after a voucher flight. Voucher flights also served to project the sport of gliding to a greater audience both directly and indirectly.

Tony said that most of the backlog caused by Covid and the absence of the tug in the 2022 season had been cleared and only about 5 voucher flights being carried over.

Dave Hertzberg confirmed that member flights would always have priority. He also mentioned that flying voucher flights was a good way for potential instructors to get started on that path. Furthermore he thanked Tony for the considerable work he does in organising that side of the club's operations.

### (ii) Simulator

John revealed that there is interest from another club for the purchase of our simulator and the currently unfitted K13 fuselage. The committee felt that we could consider this (if the price was right) as there are other simulator options available that, for various reasons, might suit us better. After some discussion **the meeting agreed** that John could pursue the matter with the other club to see if a sale would be to our club's advantage.

### (iii) Tug

Mike Harris announced that he was stepping down from the tugmaster role and Matt Clements was taking that role over. Mike would continue as a tug pilot.

Mike had previously made the committee aware that it was likely that, in the 2 to 3 years, it would be necessary to carry out a major overhaul of the Pawnee's engine as it was now some 45 years old. This would 'zero time' it. It would however cost some £45K Including VAT. That was a current quote so it could increase by the time the work was needed. There was some discussion about how long a new engine would last as the Pawnee had spent a lot of time in storage before we acquired it about 20 years ago. Mike thought that the work would give us at least another 20 years, probably more if the engine could be run regularly including over winter (It was noted that the tug was hangered at Wattisham and in use this winter). Considerable work had been done on the aircraft over the last few years including recovering it (and dealing with a lot of issues that were revealed in the recovering process) and so the engine work should leave us with an aircraft that is in overall good shape.

The committee at their last meeting had felt that, at this point, they were duty bound to consider all options for our long term towing arrangements. There had been, at the committee, a lot of discussion on this covering ending the offering of aerotows (Which the committee generally thought would be a bad idea) continuing with the Pawnee, refurbishing when necessary and the purchase of a replacement for the Pawnee. We had approached Eurofox who were willing to bring their new 141hp demonstrator aircraft for a demonstration at Ridgewell. Eurofox offer a while-you-wait maintenance scheme and the

possibility of a one year delivery. Cost of a Eurofox would be about £160K but we would save on running costs. It has folding wings which would give better hangar options. Mike made very clear that he was concerned that the long time durability of the Eurofox was unproven (unlike the Pawnee) and was aware that some clubs were already experiencing problems with them. He did think however that the fact that the Eurofox had two seats would help in training tug pilots. That could be important as he said that tug pilots were getting increasingly hard to find. It seemed to boil down to spending £45K on the Pawnee or £160K on a new Eurofox. He did think that the new 141hp Eurofox would be up to the job of towing from Ridgewell. There was much discussion but the **meeting agreed** that there would be no harm in taking Eurofox up on their offer of a demonstration. It was **also agreed** that Tony should carry out an exercise to determine exactly what the fixed and running costs of the Pawnee are so that proper comparison can be made.

(iv) Winch Driving

It was noted that the winch rota system was working well under Rob's coordination. There are 11 drivers on the rota at the moment. Rob felt that we could do with one more to make it a once a month commitment but ideally approximately sixteen. We usually have twelve flying days a month and sixteen drivers would allow a certain degree of additional 'cover' for sickness, holidays and other commitments and still only require each driver to complete one shift a month. Experience showed that asking for a greater commitment than this caused discontent. The season had demonstrated that there was normally another winch driver on hand to relieve the rostered driver so that he or she could have an opportunity to fly. Due to the club now having a very limited number of active adult full members in practice all such persons should now seriously consider volunteering.

There was however a difference between being on the rota and being trained so as to be able to drive the winch occasionally such as to relieve the rostered driver or take over if they needed to leave early. John said that the committee had discussed this and had decided that all adult members of the club should be made aware that there is an expectation for them to become competent in all aspects of ground duties including winch driving and that this should be made clear on membership and renewal forms.

Nick said that he was willing to train new winch drivers, Will had authorised him and certain other winch drivers to do this but that members need to ask. There had been occasions when people had asked but it was not possible on that day due to the limited number of members on the field. That did not mean that the offer was unwelcome and there was a need to persevere.

(v) New Member Starter Pack *Note this item promoted to have its own heading so subsequent heading numbers are modified accordingly*

The discussion about the winch rota led onto a discussion on a more structured approach to training in ground duties. It was suggested that new members be given a starter pack and that this would include some kind of log sheet to record the reaching of competency in the various ground disciplines, including attaching hooks to gliders 'wing running', launch point management, glider retrieval right up to winch driving. **This was agreed** and will now be implemented for future new members. Callum, Wayne and Tony agreed to lead on the creation of this package but said that they would welcome suggestions from the wider membership as to what should be in this and generally what new members needed to know.

(vi) Membership Secretary

John said that this function was one of many previously done by Allen Cherry but which now had been divided off and needed to be covered. Wayne had volunteered to do this. There was a small working party (comprising Wayne, Callum and Tony) to determine the parameters of the task. It was noted that this would include keeping an up to date list of club members and their contact details etc, and the development of the starter pack for new members.

(vii) Property, Equipment and Vehicle Maintenance

A 'site team' had been established to take the lead in maintaining our non flying assets. This comprised Will, Jake, Callum, Nigel for the property and equipment and Wayne, Nick and Rob for the vehicles. A plan was being put together to get everything up to scratch over the next couple of years and to develop a preventative maintenance programme going forward. One of the first tasks was to restore the mower. Nick had already put together a list of critical vehicle maintenance. This included the need to replace all batteries. There had been some discussion of this by the committee and there had been a provisional allowance of £3K for work on the vehicles this winter.

(viii) Proposed Field Improvements

Ralph had put together a proposal to establish a raised runway adjacent to the tug strip with the intention to extend the gliding season at Ridgewell. There was a lot of discussion on this but it was felt that the benefits were outweighed by the drawbacks i.e. cost, disruption, introduction of a potential hazard, effective narrowing of the airstrip.

(ix) Communication

The need for better communication was discussed at length. In the end it was agreed that it might be a good idea to have a newsletter say monthly during the season. This need not be anything more than what might fit on an A4 sheet distributed via WhatsApp Bulletin, e-mail and website. Any member who had useful information to impart could send it to a central source (i.e. a Newsletter Editor) who would assemble and publish such items periodically. This was agreed.

**The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.**