

MINUTES OF THE LAA AGM 21 OCTOBER 2018

the Chairman of the Board, Brian Davies opened the AGM at 14:00 hours.

Apologies

Apologies had been received from Roger Hopkinson and Stewart Jackson.

The minutes of the 2017 AGM

The Chairman invited comments or objections to the minutes of the 2017 AGM. There were none. The approval of the minutes was moved by Paul Mansfield, seconded by David Mole, and passed unanimously.

The Chairman's Report

The Chairman drew attention to his formal report in the documentation but he said he would not repeat it now. He had said earlier that from a personal perspective he had decided not to stand as Chairman again.

Looking back over his 6 years he believed he had had built on the progress achieved by Roger Hopkinson who had put the LAA on a sound footing, with a proper structure and financial controls. But there remained several challenges facing him when he took over. There needed to be a satisfactory working environment for a professional full-time CEO. That meant the creation of a strategic Board, monitoring performance and governance but leaving the day-to-day decisions to the CEO. This required a change in the skill set of the Board and a new CEO. The LAA had achieved a strong financial position, with significant reserves, to provide a fund for a range of services for the members. The ability of members to use their aircraft has been improved: examples are the possibility of night and IFR flying and the potential for people to hire their aircraft out. He felt flying schools would take an interest in this and the possibility of using permit aircraft for *ab initio* training was being explored. This was important because it might attract younger members to the LAA. It had become easier to use aircraft through much of Europe. Member benefits now include suppliers' discounts and innovative insurance packages. The cost of the permit service is being kept under strict control. It would be very easy to let go of the reins but the temptation must be resisted and a tight control kept on costs. The organisation was keen to expand its educational offering through high quality and relevant courses.

The last survey of members, 3 years ago, had said that they were "largely satisfied" with the service they obtained from the LAA. Its profile was as high as it had ever been. But we could not be complacent. There were many challenges in a rapidly changing world. The needs of the membership, as customers, were changing. They expected fast service, good communications, simple and easy procedures and they expected them now. In a commercial world we could not delay. It was planned to upgrade the website and the IT systems, recognise the importance of social media, and become more customer focused. There were tough external challenges such as loss of airspace and airfields. It was vital to deal with them but the volunteers we had hitherto relied upon were coming under increasing strain. We had to recognise that people needed to be paid to carry out this important work.

The Chairman ended by thanking the board, all the staff, volunteers and members. He considered it an honour to have served them

The Treasurer's Report

At 1414 Will Garton-Jones presented the Treasurers Report

During 2017 the LAA had shown a stable and satisfactory financial performance. The decision to close down the LAA Educational Trust skewed the numbers by the transfer of £81,025 to the LAA. That sum had been passed on to the Armstrong Isaacs trust. Turnover had increased by 3.26%, costs by 7.4%, with a consequent reduction in the surplus to £223,854. This reduction was expected and will continue. The reserve was sufficient to protect members and was kept constantly under review. There had been a number of supporting factors: donations, strong membership, and lower than predicted costs as a result of delayed recruitment. The LAA rally had given great value; a good take-up of stands had generated a £10,000 surplus. Full details are in the accounts. The Treasurer foresaw a 2.7% deficit to restrain the reserves, which should not get bigger.

A question was asked about the situation with regard to debtors. It was explained that payment for electricity to the headquarters had originally been shown as costing £40,000 but there had been discussions with the landlord over the proper apportionment of liabilities, which led to the return of £18,000 to the LAA. A question was asked about the LAA's approach to investments. The Treasurer replied that we had to be careful as we could not put at risk our "not-for-profit" trading status so it was necessary to take a very conservative approach.

It was emphasised by both the Chairman and Treasurer that it was important that no risk should be taken with members' money but its value had to be protected. The view had been taken, in the light of the reserves, that a portion of the surplus could be exposed to rather more risk. It had been agreed that £150,000 would be invested using investment advisers Brewin Dolphin. A small element, £50,000, had been invested in peer-to-peer lending.

The CEO explained that the funds had been spread so that they were all covered by various banks' protection schemes.

The election of Phipps Henson McAllister as Auditors of the Company

The Treasurer explained that the finance committee and the Board recommended a change in auditors. It was widely regarded as good practice to change auditors every few years. The CEO advised that Phipps Henson McAllister was a local firm which had been well recommended and had impressed in discussion.

Roger Singleton asked about the length of the auditor's contract. It was answered that there would be a one-year contract, renewable annually.

The election of Phipps Henson McAllister as auditors of the company was proposed by Keith Picton seconded by Harry Hopkins and carried unanimously.

The Election and Re-election of the Directors of the Company

David Millin was introduced to the meeting. He is a long serving chairman of the Devon and Somerset Strut, who had been co-opted to the Board. There were 452 votes for him, 20 against, and he was duly elected.

Eryl Smith had been a former Association secretary who had been prepared to return to the Board to serve the Association. There were 464 votes in his favour, 10 against, and he was duly elected.

Marcus de Ferranti is an existing member of the Board now standing for re-election. There were 470 votes in his favour, 6 against and he was re-elected.

Motions

The Chairman then explained the postal voting system and said that he was handing over the chairmanship of the meeting to Tim Hardy, the Vice Chairman, for the next items, the consideration of motions.

Tim Hardy took the chair. He noted that there were 2 motions to consider. The 1st was a motion put forward by Stewart Jackson, supported by a statement from Tracey Curtis-Taylor. The 2nd was a motion advanced by David Mole. There was also a personal statement from Brian Davies.

Tim said he would expect a brief introductory statement from those who wished to make one. He hoped they would keep it to approximately 2 minutes and deal simply with the salient points. He expected a balanced and courteous debate. Questions should be addressed through him.

Brian Davies then made a brief personal statement. He pointed out that a fuller statement from him had been published in the LAA magazine, as had all the supporting statements. He supported the intent of both motions in some ways. It was regrettable that there had been a huge amount said in the press and the media. It was plain that Tracey and he were not exactly friends but he did not accept her criticisms either of himself or the LAA. He looked upon the LAA as a decent bunch prepared to forgive mistakes and for that reason he would be voting for David Mole's motion.

Tracey Curtis Taylor said that what had happened was a miscarriage of justice; she had been subjected to an abusive campaign by a person who was not a member at the time. She gave her view of what had happened, including matters that she asserted had arisen in the course of Board discussions. The process had been railroaded, she said.

Tim Wheeler supported Stewart Jackson's motion. He said he saw considerable value in what Tracey had done. Her award was justified and the abuse to which she had been subjected was very distasteful. She had contributed greatly to bringing before the public the achievements of great female flyers. It was important to concentrate on that point and maintain respect for each other.

David Mole spoke in favour of his motion. He did not wish to repeat his full written statement. He could not, however, forbear to express his dismay at hearing Tracey make allegations to the meeting that were not true and were asserted to be based on internal and confidential board discussions, disclosed contrary to the rules of the LAA.

Tim Alibone also spoke in favour of Stewart Jackson's motion. He did not find Tracey's statement strident. The removal of her award was a discreditable manoeuvre that, with the preponderance of proxy voters, was not in the spirit of the constitution. The LAA should own up about it and acknowledge that things were not handled as well as they could have been.

Colin Hales spoke against Stewart Jackson's motion. Colin remarked that he had twice won the Woodhams Trophy. He would probably have remained silent had it not been for what Tracey said in her article in The Times. He took exception to several things that were said in it. He compared her flight unfavourably to the flights of early female pioneers.

Harry Hopkins said he was the chairman of the working group. The Board had not been involved in the decision. There had been no other nominations, no one had been denied the trophy. No one had solicited the award. He reminded the meeting of the terms of the award and the reasons why it was given and he stood by them.

Barry Tempest then spoke, reminding the meeting that he had proposed the original motion for rescission. He said that he hadn't changed his mind at all. He felt sure that the intention of those who invited him to do so were all to the good but the AGM had made a decision. To ask them to change it would be ridiculous and a defeat of democracy.

On counting the votes, including proxy votes, the results were declared as follows:

Stewart Jackson's motion was lost by 82 votes for to 389 against;

David Mole's motion was lost by 202 votes for to 277 against.

John Brady then proposed the thanks of the meeting to Brian Davies for his chairmanship. At the outset of his chairmanship Brian had laid down his aims. The organisation should be modern and member based. The chairman and board should provide leadership, policy and strategy and focus on outcomes. They should manage decisions while letting the CEO get on with the job. There should be clarity of purpose about the roles and responsibilities of board and staff in the LAA. Measured against those aims Brian's chairmanship had been a great success and he deserved the warmest thanks of the LAA. The proposal was approved by acclamation.

Tim Hardy closed the AGM at 15: 14 hours and the meeting proceeded to the members' forum.

David Mole
Secretary
24.11.2018