

2019 Annual General Meeting of the Light Aircraft Association Ltd Hanger 2, Conference Centre, Sywell Aerodrome

Sunday 20th of October.

MINUTES

Tim Hardy, LAA Chairman, opened the AGM at 14.00.

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Larder, Paul Coppin, Roy Targonski, Michael Bagshaw, Mike Mold, Patricia and Jonathan Porter and Roger Hopkinson.

A count of the members in the hall confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Tim Hardy started by speaking of the enormous effort that had been put into a successful year by both the LAA staff and volunteers, culminating in an excellent Sywell rally. This could not have been done without the work of volunteers and he invited the meeting to show its gratitude for their efforts with a round of applause.

Tim said that it had been a year of change. The potential 600 kg opt-out for aircraft was, he hoped, a race in its final furlong. Similarly he felt that it would not be long before the CAA grants us the ability to conduct some ab-initio training. We look forward to the opportunities that would present. As signalled at the rally, we have now taken responsibility for the fleet of Yaks, a considerable achievement. That is a measure of the confidence the CAA places in our engineering team and its excellent track record. He warmly welcomed the new arrivals to our engineering team. The final issue was, of course, the potential merger with the BMAA which was to be the subject of a motion and discussion in a few minutes. The Association is in good financial shape and benefits from an excellent staff, well led by Steve. The team will have lots to do in the coming year and Tim invited the meeting to show its appreciation of their efforts.

Will Garton-Jones then presented the AGM 2019 Treasurer's report. *(As set out on the back of the notice of the meeting.)* He proposed the adoption of the 2018 Statutory Accounts.

This proposal was **carried by 313 votes in favour to 1 against.**

Approval of the re-election of Phipps Henson McAllister as auditors.

This was **approved by 312 votes to 1 against.**

The **re-election of David Mole as Director** was carried by **318 votes in favour to 8 against.**

The **re-election of Tim Hardy as Director** was carried by **322 votes in favour to 6 against.**

CEO's overview

Tim Hardy then invited the CEO to deliver his overview. Steve Slater began by considering the significant size of the LAA fleet and its beneficial effect on the thinking of the CAA, its delegation and consultation. The good news is, he said, that there has been modest growth in membership. We now have 7800 members. The engineering and inspection team is responding well to a bigger and more diverse fleet. Owners too are more diverse. The LAA fleet was originally largely home built, now 70% of our members have bought their aircraft, so our training and coaching functions are particularly important and we intend to enhance them. This was a central point of the LAA video that was shown just before the AGM.

Advocacy is also very important. Airspace and airfields pose particular challenges upon which we have strong views and a case to make.

Steve then turned to the financial position of the LAA. He explained the planned deficit and the reasons for it which largely turned on making a greater investment in engineering staff, better service and planning for the future. He introduced the new members of the engineering staff.

Steve reminded the meeting that the struts were central to the LAA's life and said how pleased he was to see so many people present from struts across the country. He touched on the build-a-plane projects, the young peoples' art, aviation events, adventure days and other ways that young people could be involved in our activities.

He then touched upon the merger, making the point that the combination of the LAA and the BMAA would give us together the single most powerful voice to lobby on matters that concern us.

Motion to Change Article 25(b)

Tim Hardy then turned back to the remaining motions. He briefly explained his motion to change Article 25 (b) reducing the quorum for a board meeting from 6 members to 5 members and also changing the requirement that a quorum must be present throughout the meeting. This would align Board meeting procedure with the procedure that applies in the annual general meeting.

The motion was **carried by 308 votes in favour to 14 votes against**. (No abstentions)

Motion, that the LAA and BMAA do merge,

This motion was read out together with its explanation.

The question was raised why there was to be no debate in advance of the vote. Steve Slater said there would shortly be a debate in the members' forum where members could express their views freely. This was simply a vote in principle to take the matter further. There was no question of closing anything off until members had been consulted again. We wished to have feedback from members before the detailed and potentially expensive work of merger was begun. It was not intended that this should be a once and for all vote.

It might, Tim Hardy confirmed, be seen as a consultative vote. He emphasised that no final decision would be taken until members had been consulted again. No one wanted to cut out debate. The Board wanted the guidance of the members' views before getting into expensive and detailed examination of the implications. We will do the work and then come back to the members with much more detailed information.

The motion was carried by 292 votes in favour, 43 against and 6 abstentions.

Closure

Tim Hardy remarked that he would now close the formal part of the AGM and the meeting would move to the members' forum.

The Members' Forum

Alan Kilbride asked what the position on mods was now. A number of people had been waiting for several months he said and there seem to be no reason why several applications could not be covered by one mod or repeat mods. Steve Slater replied this was a particular problem and there were a couple of issues that have been brought up by the engineering department which he explained. However they had tasked the engineering team with identifying circumstances where repeat mods could be permitted. Restructuring could allow more flexibility in the engineering department.

Gareth Jones said that only one side of the story had been presented on the vote regarding the BMAA merger and no comments had been heard from anybody against it. When can we have a proper debate, not just what the Board think?

Tim repeated that the reason it was done this way is simply to get a steer from the members that would justify doing the detailed work.

Steve pointed out that he had done his best to analyse both sides of the argument in some of the documents setting out responses he had produced. This vote will give us the opportunity to invest some money in carrying out due diligence and taking professional advice. Both the LAA and the BMAA have a contingency budget for that purpose. This tests the wish to do it. Flexwings will not be the biggest but will be a significant focus group, they are aircraft.

Manuel Queiroz very much in favour. Concerned that some of the challenges will be overwhelming though he is much encouraged by the increases in the engineering staff. There is a very wide range of aircraft; there should be a better defined engineering framework.

Steve replied that it was a good point. He foresaw that the merger would lead to greater engineering range and strength. There would be a breadth and volume of expertise.

MQ said he wished to be reassured by a clearer framework demonstrating how the service would be maintained and improved.

TH agreed with Steve. M made a good point and we are working towards it. It would be a centre point of the discussion when we come back.

Peter Andrews asked how many fly non-permit aircraft?

SS. 40% of members are thought to be flying C of A aircraft outside the permit system, so it is a significant population.

?? Pointed out that the Sywell rally regularly clashes with the French micro-event at Blois. Could there be liaison to sort out the dates?

SS. He had spoken about this to the French organisers but the answer had been 'Non'. There are a number of strong reasons why Sywell was when it was. Going one week earlier or one week later could cause problems.

BH. We have looked at it before. There are difficulties in moving the date – for example it becomes harder to get marquees early in the summer. The 2 dates don't always clash. It could be explored again if we merge with the BMAA.

Barry Tempest remembered that the rally used to be in the 1st week of July.

SS. said that often used to cause a huge event clash.

Peter Knight declared himself to be strongly in favour of the merger but asked whether or not there would be another vote and an opportunity for those who do not support the merger to put their case? He would like to hear what their reasons were for not supporting it.

TH said that it is absolutely our intention to have another vote and give everyone that opportunity. But we do have to see the BMAA moving the same direction. We've gone through the process of getting an indication from our members because we don't want to waste the association's resources.

TH completely understood and sympathised with the need to hear the voices of those who oppose. The best thing may be to look at some form of electronic voting system. Only something like 5% of members have cast their votes today. TH would like to see a much higher figure. If you if anyone wants to put the case against, please do so now.

Stuart Luck said he supported the merger. He felt it was way overdue.

John Brady said that in his view we needed to put much more into the airspace discussion it was something that the LAA should take on much more vigorously.

Gareth Jones said that he was much against the merger. He thought that the spirit of the organisations are quite different, they are chalk and cheese and he did not have a good feel about them mixing together. He instanced the approval of the Minimax and contrasted the responses of the LAA / PFA, which he felt were cautious or even negative, with those of the BMAA, which were much more positive and accepting.