

ESSEX AND SUFFOLK GLIDING CLUB LTD

Minutes of Five Year Plan Meeting held on Saturday 7th November 2015

At The Eight Bells, Bures commencing at 10.00 hrs.

PRESENT

Robert Godden (RG)	Chairman
Dave Wallis (DW)	Secretary
Kenn Ward (KW)	Treasurer
Steve Jones (SJ)	Membership Secretary
Mike Haynes (MH)	Technical Officer
Martin Lawson (ML)	Winch Master
Jonathan Abbess (JA)	Chief Flying Instructor
Paul Robinson (PR)	Publicity Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Eddie Leach (EL)	Safety Officer
Alan Bilby (AB)	Site officer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN MEETING HELD ON 26th September 2014

The minutes as previously circulated were noted and taken as read.

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman briefly reviewed actions taken and outstanding from the previous year's meeting, commenting that in the light of the favourable financial position we should recognise, when deciding on priorities, that this years results include some windfall benefits

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Membership Statistics

Membership data for the last two years is as follows:

	Mar 2014	Mar 2015	Current	This year's new members
Full	99	95	99	16
Junior	15	13	21	10
Social	5	8	6	0
FPTS	No data	11	2	1
Single Seat	No data	2	5	1
Total	119	129	133	28

There is clearly an increasing trend in the total membership which is encouraging and this year we will see an increase of 5 to 10% over last year. The increase in the number of Juniors is also encouraging. The reduction in numbers on the FPTS scheme this year leads directly into the increase in the Single Seat scheme and the increase in the usage of the single seat gliders.

Not so encouraging is the 24 of last year's members who did not renew. I have done an audit of these and at the time I contacted most of them to find their reasons. Mostly the reasons were "moving away", "not enough time" and the like. At least one was due to cost. Nobody complained about the way the club was run or made any suggestions for improvement. Nobody said "if you had done this I would have stayed" and I am not aware of any who left to join another club.

Action points from last year's meeting were to aim for an increase in membership of 20%. Targets towards this included improving the "club experience", arranging club events such as film nights and post-solo training. We discussed appointing an "outreach officer" and learning from the slick operations on Group Flying days on our normal flying days.

The membership growth shows that we are doing well but we should not be complaisant. Whenever possible I get feedback from members (mainly from new members) on our operations. Amongst ab-initios I mainly get comments that they sometimes have to wait a long time for their turn on the flying list to come around and occasionally do not get to fly at all. We have lost a few temporary members on this basis, but generally the feedback is good.

Post solo pilots seem to be fairly happy but there is a concern developing that the usage rules for the single seaters will result in the club fleet not meeting the demand. Most of the usage this year has been between 4 members, next year we can expect high demand from double this number and I anticipate that there will be pressure from some members to take these gliders cross country. We may have to consider reducing the time these gliders can be used (presently 2 hours even if there is another member waiting).

We were all encouraged by the number of new members who have signed up this year. However we discussed why not so many of the temporary members converted to full membership after their 3 months was up. It was thought that one reason was that they were kept hanging around for flights and as they were not generally known to the established members and they were not actively engaged in the days proceedings.

It is necessary for all established members to talk with the temporary members at the launch point and encourage them to put themselves forward, find out where they are on the flying list and get involved with the running of the airfield. We hope to have a new ground handling training program shortly which will help, more about that later in the minutes.

Secretary

We have had a letter from Bradley, kindly offering to help in any way he can to boost the junior scheme now his deployments are complete, and he can spend more time at the club.

This could be very timely with the influx of new junior members and George could probably do with the help.

We have had two members put themselves forward for the Safety Officer post. This was discussed at some length and the idea was put forward that we should perhaps make this a joint post, not only to report accidents and the like, but to increase the roll to encompass a complete revamp of the ground handling manual from a safety perspective.

Ground handling is seen as one of our biggest risks and with the large influx of new members particularly juniors a new training program will be invaluable.

If this is run jointly it will lesson the burden on any one person and help with coverage on both weekdays and weekends.

I will contact both individuals to see if a joint post is attractive to them.

TECHNICAL OFFICER

Glider Fleet & 5 Year Plan 2015

Single Seater Gliders

Usage of the club single seat aircraft is much improved over 2014, but still failing to break even against the basic running costs.

The following table summarises utilisation of the single seater's over the period 1//1/15 → 31/10/15. The Income figure is based upon 30p/min* total duration and takes no account of discounted Junior or members on the Single Seat Scheme who account for a large proportion of the long flights

Glider	2014		2015			Comments
	Launche s	Hours	Launches	Hours	Annual Income (30p/ min)	
KEE	40	26	217	121	£2178	
HKM	36	15	192	100	£1800	

Glider	2014		2015		
	HSX (SF27)	103	59	197	97

The annual running cost for the single seater's is comprised of:-

Insurance (about 7% of £8k hull value for HKM, KEE)

BGA fee

Parts/Labour – ARC inspection + other maintenance/repairs

Glider	Insurance	ARC	Parts/Labor	Total
KEE	£550	£117	£2000	£2,667
HKM	£550	£117	£2000	£2,667
HSX (SF27)	£0 (third party only)	£117	£1000	£1,117

The Parts/Labour column is a bit of a guess as some years there is little more than the ARC labour but in other years like 2015 where there are more significant maintenance/refinishing task the expenditure is much greater.

In 2015 £1500 of the spend on HKM and KEE is repairs to cracks around airbrake boxes and misc scuffs and gouges across much of the airframe. Its difficult to attribute the minor damage to specific events and much of this has occurred prior to 2015, we just pay the price in 2015.

For the SF27 £600 is the damage to the GRP nose cone from landing on the nose.

At the usage levels seen in 2015 the SF27 returns a small operating profit and the Astir's a small loss but as noted above this is due to the more significant maintenance activity. If we take out the £1500 long term maintenance then the Astirs would also have returned an operating profit.

From this I would conclude we should not change the 30p/min rental charge

The numbers above do not take account of the discount schemes and a large number of hours have been amassed by the small number of pilots on the Single Seat scheme, 194 Hours by 5 pilots.

The flying element of the single seat scheme is currently set at £300 which equates to 16.66 hours of flying. I would propose this should be raised to at least 22hours i.e. £400 or maybe 25 but that might be an unpalatable jump to £450

Discussions on buying a higher performance single seater continue around the club but in my opinion it is still not clear that this is a good/necessary direction for the club to invest.

It was decided by the committee to only increase the single seater scheme by 10 % to £330 per year.

Also that in order to simplify membership the single seater scheme would not be offered to Junior members at a further reduced rate. Noting that Junior members under 21 years old have access to the

monthly scheme at £32 per month for all flying which is a better deal. Also that Junior members 21 to 25 years old have access to the single seat scheme as it is and this offers exceptional value at £330 per year.

Two Seater Gliders

Glue failure in the K13s is now not just a suspicion but a fact of life covered by ADs from Schleicher, and the BGA running a detailed reporting scheme to track the number and severity of glue failures.

At the beginning of 2015 the existing 3 year spar inspection for glue defects was supplemented with a new inspection on the fin, and in the last week a further AD has been added to inspect all of the control surfaces and aileron spars.

Apart from the labour cost associated with repairs to wooden structures, the availability of aircraft certified pine is also a problem to be faced when maintaining the K13s into the future. (The unavailability of certified pine lead to the delay in repairing the fin of DVB, in the end suitable timber had to be machined from a section of K2 spar since no new stock could be sourced.)

To mitigate the possible end of life scenario where both K13's are grounded and worthless I propose we should consider replacing one of these in a 2-3 year time frame.

The difficulty is the choice of suitable replacements is extremely limited and second hand options are almost unobtainable. Having failed in the Sport England grant for the club house and MT shed extension we now understand that after December 2015 these grants will be unavailable for some time (maybe forever) while the process/effectiveness of the scheme is reviewed .

When constrained by a grant spend window the prospect of a suitable second hand glider becoming available could be very low, making a second-hand purchase by grant almost impossible. As a consequence if the club were to consider the purchase of a GRP replacement for one of the k13s then a plan needs to be put in place which would ensure the funds are available in a 2-3 year time frame.

Possible candidates if a second hand aircraft were to become available

Another K21

DG500, -- 22m version seen on gliderpilot.net Nov 2015 for £50k

18m 55000E about £38k seen on <http://www.segelflug.de/>

20/22m 68000E about £48k

DG505

The 2014/2015 insurance places the percentage hull values for the two seater's as:-

k13 – 6%

K21/Grob - 4% which would place the insurance on a DG500 at about the £2k point (as are the K21 and the Grob) in short not an unacceptable premium

We could look at new glider

This comes with advantages that maintenance in the first few years should be very low but insurance costs will almost certainly outweigh the saving. As noted above the insurance percentages for the hulls have decreased in 2014/15 and we are now looking at about 4% for GRP two seat gliders.

A couple of possible types:-

DG1001

Depending on the options and the number of different wing tips purchased about £90k

Applying the 4% hull premium onto a £90k glider would deliver a premium of about £3.6k not prohibitive but a significant sum in the running costs.

PerKoz SZD-54-2

SZDs replacement for the Puchacz might be a possibility but as this is a brand new type it is an unknown quantity. I do not have even a ball park price for this at present.

The sales team was touring the UK back in September/October and steps were in hand to get this to Wormingford for evaluation. Unfortunately the tour was cut short in October, with the staff returning home, once the tour re-commences it is hoped we can close on this action.

The K13's were again discussed at considerable length. We know that they are going to have to be replaced in the foreseeable future but finding replacements that will fulfil all the training requirements at an affordable price is almost impossible.

All other clubs have got a similar dilemma and if we wait until our K13's are no longer cost effective to run because of maintenance costs there will certainly be no available used aircraft on the market.

We shall ring fence £40k pending identification and purchase of a suitable two seater and then offset the cost by approximately £8k through the sale of a K13. It was proposed that this should be as soon as a suitable aircraft became available but certainly within one -two years.

Instrumentation

The essence of the Instrumentation upgrade not changed since the 2014 5 year planing meeting.

Most of the club fleet has ageing instrumentation and we are facing a mandatory change to all of the radios in 2018. The radio change alone is likely to cost around £1000 per glider and we also have 3 ground stations in the two winches and the launch point so this alone could easily be up in £10,000 region.

An upgrade plan for the glass gliders to replace the mechanical vario's, the electric vario and add a PDA option for all four would cost around £2500 per aircraft. The instrumentation in the K13's and SF27 is simpler but would also benefit from the injection of some new instruments.

During 2015 the nature of the grants available from Sport England was better understood. As a consequence of this the radio/instrumentation upgrade had to be removed from the "capital grant" as this type of equipment is covered by a "small grant". Work on the small grant application is in progress.

SITE OFFICER

Although not able to attend AB had provided a cost indication for the Winch Shed extension on a self build basis of £12k. It was agreed that this project might lend itself to a phased approach according to the income position by splitting the planning permission/concrete pad/fabrication/finishing & services through the year rather than in one hit. Also, it is agreed we shall look at the possibility of financing this project possibly by an application to the Phillip Wills Trust if appropriate. The East end of the 09/27 concrete track needs attention and AB has this under possible consideration by the landlord as an adjunct to the gas plant project.

WINCHMASTER

In addition to the MT shed extension which must go ahead ML said he would like to see another tractor on the fleet.

This would allow us to rationalise the vehicle fleet and use them for the correct operation, ie tractor with grass cutter permanently fixed(in the new MT shed extension), tractor to move the winches, Kia suv to tow cables in the summer and the landrover to move the control cabin and tow cables in the winter.

Also the extra tractor would give us flexibility when the inevitable breakdown happens!

CHIEF FLYING INSTRUCTOR

At last year's 5 year planning meeting we agreed a training budget for subsidising Flight Instructor trainees fees. No Wormingford instructors have been through the new course yet, but the majority of this training will take place locally and a 50% subsidy up to around a £1500 contribution was agreed appropriate. It must be remembered that this training is also likely to disrupt other flying occasionally

JA expressed a concern that moving away from having two K13's as the primary training aircraft would result in students not having continuity if one becomes unserviceable and in poorer utilisation of resources if everyone is queuing for one type. With this in mind, two similar gliders will always be the better option.

SAFETY OFFICER

In the absence of the Safety Officer there were no specific items to put forward.

TREASURER

KW reported that the significant increase in revenue from our regular activities plus non-recurring benefits from two sources are likely to boost the club's reserves and enable projects to be undertaken. However, he advocated caution when allocating project funding so as to ensure that the club always retained an adequate reserve.

PUBLICITY OFFICER

Open day / weekend

We discussed holding either a one or two day event. It was generally considered that a two day event would give us greater flexibility should the weather be unkind to us as it was this year. PR suggested we should hold it over the Father's Day weekend again as it may well help to swell the numbers.

PR reported that the club has a presence on the local newspaper websites free of charge.

He suggested that we use some of Ian Agutters bequest for the advancement of the junior members. Possibly grants for juniors going forward in competitions with an annual Ian Agutter Award.

SJ suggested that juniors should bid for the grant and demonstrate their worthiness during the year this was seconded by JA

There being no other business to discuss the meeting closed at 13.00 hrs.