

Avon HGPG Club Annual General Meeting 2013

This was held on Thursday 10th October at The Compass Inn, Tormarton. There was a good attendance of c.30 members.

The secretary went through the most important issues from the previous club year. A copy of the foils is posted in the Club Committee area of the yahoo group.

Chairman's report (Ken Wilkinson)

Over the last year I have continued to try to promote the sport and the club. We have a good esprit within the club with many meetings being well attended. I feel I have dealt with various problems, with crucial committee having to give up their roles, and have covered for them and recruited replacements. We are starting to see some new members coming through and I feel the club is in a good position, with the many talents of the committee, and the enthusiasm of new members ensuring a healthy future.

Treasurer's report (Graham Richards)

Graham Richards outlined in detail the current state of the club. The main headline was the substantial loss on the Mere Bash held in September (which in other respects was, for the limited numbers who attended, very enjoyable).

The Treasurer, Graham Richards, during his report to the AGM, proposed that the signatures on the 2 club accounts (Current with the HSBC and Savings with the Scottish Widows) should be changed to include the new Chairman and Secretary. This was seconded by Tim Pentreath and a vote was passed unanimously.

A copy of the foils is posted in the Club Committee area of the yahoo group.

Election of the club Committee for 2014

The following club members were elected to the Committee for 2014:

Chairman	Ken Wilkinson
Treasurer	Graham Richards
Secretary	Robert Kingston
Social Secretary	Jamie Llewelyn
Sites (Overall)	Nick Somerville
Sites (North):	Wayne Buckland
PG Safety	Richard Hellen
PG Competitions	Mike Humphries
PG Low Airtime	Sean Simmons
HG Safety	Tony Moore
Nova Editor	Jonathan Tew
Webmaster	Rich Harding

Librarian	Ben Friedland
Chief Coach HG	Chris Jones
Chief Coach PG	Tomasz Janikowski

The only changes in the committee were Mike Humphries replacing Al Davies (PG Competitions) and Jonathan Tew replacing Declan Fleming (Nova Editor). The members thanked Al and Declan for their efforts, and welcomed the new members.

Chief Coach Paragliding (Tomasz Janikowski)

A successful series of Pilot examinations had taken place during 2013.

HG Safety (Tony Moore)

Thankfully I have little if nothing to report. It's been a very quiet year on the HG safety front, even I haven't bent any aluminium.

PG comps (Al Davies)

Wow, what a year. The XC league says it all really, Jim Mallinson having broken the 1000km mark, Tom on 756 and Tim in 3rd with 663. Amazing, with many pilots getting 100+km flights this season.

Comps wise the Avon club did well at the Brits with Alex Coltman winning the Sports Class and Tim Pentreath in 3rd place after 2 excellent comps in Portugal and St Andre.

The BCC started off well with a scattering of flights around the 100km mark, a pretty good start to the season for what is supposed to be an introduction to competitive XC flying. It all slowed down a bit after that heady start and the final was sadly blown out so the winners were decided on BCC league position, which this year deservedly went again to the Joint Services team.

Unfortunately I'll have to give up the PG Comps post so I hope you will show whoever takes over the same enthusiasm that has been shown in the past.

Safety Report – Paragliding (Richard Hellen)

Club Repack

A successful repack was held at Pates Grammar School (thanks Declan) in January when about 30 emergency parachutes were packed by those attending under the ever watchful eye and helpful (essential) guidance of Mike "Mr Parachute" Townsend. We raised a tidy sum of about £300 which we donated to the Great Western Air Ambulance. Several interesting "discoveries" were made regarding the state of some reserve parachutes – a few

of which might not have actually worked in the event of being used. Mike Townsend took careful notes which were fed back to the BHPA parachute packing team, of which Mike is a member. The next repack, probably in January 2014, will most likely be held in another school, this time in Bristol – we seem to have a few teachers in our club with the necessary contacts.

Incidents & accidents

Sadly, there continue to be a few accidents and incidents (such as near misses). As a club, I think we do well in reporting to the BHPA on accidents that result in injury, but we could probably do better on reporting and learning from near misses – some of which do not get shared with the rest of the club I suspect. It is the continuous collective learning from these events that will minimise the risks in this great, if slightly dangerous sport of ours.

Unqualified Paraglider pilots

Recently there have been a few occasions where pilots who have had no formal approved training have flown on our northern sites. Consequently they have no third party BHPA insurance and, more importantly, are not always clued up on basic rules of the air. All members are therefore asked to remain vigilant regarding unfamiliar pilots; don't be shy about asking about their background experience and training – it could save your life to know you could be flying in the presence of a dare devil on an ebay special, and you might persuade the person concerned to save up for formal training. It could save their life as well. Sadly one of these guys had an accident at Leckhampton and was helicoptered to A&E – this accident was reported by the Malvern Club who manage the site.

Sites Officer Report (Nick Somerville)

Mere - Rifle Range

We have installed safety warnings on entry gates to remind launching paraglider pilots to be **mindful of hang gliders that may also be launching from the field behind**. The club now has to pay, in addition to the tenant farmer's annual fee, an annual licence fee to the Duchy who own the land.

Mere - Spencer's Bowl

A new site record was set this year with a 100km+ flight by James Lynch. We have had no problems with the modellers this year and indeed club relations are currently good. As negotiated with the NT, we have a reduced license cost for 2014/15 but had to donate £200 (on behalf of the NT) towards the cost of repairs to the access road. Not sure when this will be done.

Westbury White Horse

There have been a good number of incidents this year that have been posted on the forums. In particular it is of **paramount importance** that pilots fly with respect to the equestrian centre at the southern end of the White Horse ridge. Low flying over livestock and in particular horses in open fields should be considered as forbidden. For the time being the side landing arrangement has been suspended. New site record back in April by Jim Mallinson (about 130km I think).

Westbury Bratton

I am currently liaising with English Heritage and Natural England with regard to the removal of bushes, small trees and scrub from the scarp face. Those who fly regularly there will know that this is a big job and if permission is granted will need a big effort from volunteers to achieve. More on this following a site meeting with English Heritage in the next fortnight. Our agreement with the MOD has continued without problem, although not used that much.

Frocester

Scrub clearing was carried out by Wayne Buckland and a team of volunteers. Great improvement I believe. Thanks to all those that helped.

Ubley

Not currently an Avon site but much in our minds this year with some spectacular flights. The situation currently is that the temporary agreement that was made with Guy Anderson has been terminated as it was found, not unsurprisingly, to be unworkable. Guy has had a further meeting and contact with the land manager and he continues to press for the charity to allow flying at the site to be managed by a BHPA Club (preferably Avon). I think it would be fair to say that the warden and land manager accept that the realistic way forward for the benefit of all would be to follow the route that we have established with the NT at Spencer's. However persuading those in real charge who have a negative view of the Avon club will take time and patience. I believe the only hope is to continue to press with examples of good practise and with a good manner. Not everyone's view I know.

In the meantime, I would ask that any Avon pilots who fly Ubley, to show a polite and positive attitude to any dealings with the warden. Also please firmly dissuade any unsuitable pilots from flying there as a publicised accident would certainly lose us all hope.

Web Master (Rich Harding)

Over the last year I have continued to assist the other members of the committee with activities requiring online coordination, particularly the Treasurer, Sites Officer and Social Secretary, maintained the Club's online presences, upgraded various of the behind the scenes functionality of the Members Area of the website and implemented a slightly more modern look and feel for the website.

Rob Kingston

Avon HG and PG Club, Secretary