

Biggin Hill Battle of Britain Supporters' Club

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held at HQ No 2727(Biggin Hill) Squadron ATC at 3pm on Sunday 3rd April 2011

Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the club's fifth AGM and reminded those present that the meeting was being held at RAF Biggin Hill.

Present

There was a quorum of 21 members of the Club present.

Apologies

Eleven members had sent their apologies and a number of members had nominated the Chairman as their proxy. The secretary would record their names in the register after the meeting.

Minutes of the 2010 AGM

These had been published in The Bump following the meeting and were available on the website. The Secretary reminded the meeting of the decisions taken at that meeting in a brief verbal report.

Report from the Chairman

Mr Osborne provided an update on the planning for the development of the Heritage Centre. In summary Bromley Council had asked the consultant who had first worked on the proposal to complete a new feasibility study which frustratingly was delivered after some considerable time and by that time had become an options appraisal looking at the proposed site at Leavesden and an alternative on East Camp where the WW2 emplacements were sited. This alternative option had been looked at very carefully but failed for several reasons including; there are no utilities at that part of the airfield and to supply them would be a great additional cost, the security of the airfield could be compromised and security fencing would be required, again at great cost, the woodland which was not a visible feature during the Battle of Britain was found to have been cleared by the RAF and now having become re-established was classified as ancient woodland with all the complications that would entail, it was not close to any transport route and finally the businesses located nearby had raised objections on the grounds of their own security.

Having been through this exercise the Leavesden site was now the only option going forward and would be considered by the Borough's Executive Committee on the 6th April. This it was hoped would be the final hurdle and with a positive outcome the Council would release funds from they are holding for the Centre and with the addition of funds from the Club this would provide around £60,000 to engage a professional fundraiser and designer for the interior. The Chairman had secured agreement from the Council that the Club's contribution would ensure they would release all the 106 funds they were holding which amounts to around £800,000 from the Leavesden and Holwood House developments.

The Biggin Hill Trust (now a charity) which would be running the project would then have a year to demonstrate that the funds could be fully realized. It was believed that the Heritage Lottery Fund would be likely to view this project favourably.

The Chairman followed by summarising the Club's activities during the past year. It had been very successful including the enclosure at the Air Show, the garden party, dinner and concert. It was a great pity that there would be no further air shows as this had been a great fund raiser. There was a full programme of events planned for 2011 and these would be listed in The Bump.

The Chairman then thanked members of the Committee for their individual contributions throughout the year with especial thanks to Gordon Wright for the continuing generous support of Kelsey Publishing; for example there was now a full page advertisement in Aeroplane a major monthly magazine which it had recently acquired. There had been one change to the Committee as Peter Saunders had stood down and been replaced by Tony Popham (Pop) as webmaster.

The Chairman then opened the floor to questions:

A member asked if the fundraiser was being appointed because there was a need to generate ideas for fundraising and gave the example of how the Globe Theatre had asked people to sponsor slabs for paths in return for being named. The Chairman replied that there would certainly be means such as these for smaller donors to be involved as these were very successful but the advice was that to be successful we needed to attract a few very substantial sponsors and this would be the main role of the fundraiser.

A member asked if the airport would be supportive of the Leavesden site now that the East Camp site had been ruled out. The Chairman saw no reason why the Airport management would not be supportive of the new site, especially as the development of the business airport was all part of the story.

Adoption of the Accounts

The Club's Treasurer, Mike Thatcher, summarized the financial statements. These had been published on the website and circulated at the meeting. The Club had had a good year and had generated a surplus of £10,000. This amount would seem small compared to the amount that would need to be raised but it was important, as it could be made available to buy artefacts such as the sector clock bought the year before. (The Chairman noted that this was a good example as it had now doubled in value.) There was less income from donations than in 2010 but members were informed that over £600 had been received in memory of our noted loyal founder member, Maurice Terrell, this figure would be reflected in the accounts for the next financial year.

There was a figure of £2,000 for creditors; this represented the subscriptions paid in advance of the year-end in August. Mr Thatcher also wished it to be noted that our situation was so healthy because of the generosity of Kelsey Publishing.

Mr Terrell proposed the adoption of the accounts which was seconded by Mrs Barbara Wilcox and **APPROVED** by a show of hands.

Directors of the Company

The Secretary reminded the meeting that Rule 7 of the Club's Memorandum and Articles required one third of the Directors to stand down but that they may be re-elected. Mr Osborne, Mr Wright, Mr Wilcox and Mr Scrase were due to stand down but were willing to be re-elected.

Their re-election was proposed by Mr CS Oxlade and seconded by Mr C Vernon and approved by the meeting nem con.

Webmaster's report

The Chairman asked Mr Popham to give a brief report on the refreshing of the website.

Pop was able to show those present how it currently looked and outlined how it would be developed. He asked that we note that it was operated by G-forces, at no cost to us, as they were also great supports of our cause. He was open to suggestions and members were encouraged to use the 'contact us' page to send in their ideas.

Resolution to adopt new Articles of Association

The Secretary reminded the meeting that we had made a previous application for charitable status and been unsuccessful because there was some confusion over the primacy of our governing document and the differing objects between the original articles and the constitution approved in August 2009.

The Club had taken professional advice and our advisors had been in communication with the Charity Commission so that we could be successful next time. To this end we were asking the membership to approve new Articles of Association to be filed with Companies House. These had been posted on the website for inspection as stated on the notice for this AGM and made available to read before the meeting opened. The members should not notice any difference to how things were run for them but the Committee would become Directors and then Charitable Trustees if the application was successful. The Articles were considered by our advisors to be 'future proof' as there were a number of powers which the Directors could elect to adopt if they became necessary for the proper running of the Charity.

There were no questions from the floor and the matter was put to the vote and **APPROVED** unopposed.

Closing remarks

Mr Osborne closed the meeting at just before 15.45 after reminding the membership that as well as being in a position to buy artefacts as they became available; and they do still regularly come up at auction, the RAF museum and Imperial War Museum have many in storage which they have said they are prepared to loan as soon as we become a registered and accredited museum.