

February 2023



WAYPOINT

Newsletter of Priory Farm Aviators
www.flypfa.co.uk



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Committee Members

David Brown (chair), Bob Sage (airfield owner), John Fielding (Deputy Chair & Facilities), Mik Horne (Treasurer), Alan McNeal (WX station, R/T ops, Waypoint editor), Richard Flagg (webmaster), Sean Simington (social events booking), Julian Campbell, Nigel Hall., Maurice Edwards.

Airfield Matters

Hi folks! Apart from soft, wet runway & manoeuvring areas, the airfield is serviceable. The weather system had a few outages a few days ago but seems to be solidly back online now.

Our friends at Tibenham are changing their air/ground radio frequency from 21st March so make a note so you can listen out on their new frequency.

Editorial

Let's get straight to it - the big event to report this month is the recent Annual General Meeting, so I'm afraid this issue of Waypoint is a bit heavy on text and administration. It's the sign of a well-run club!

The AGM



For those of you you did not attend, it was at Tibenham Airfield's clubhouse. The bar area has had a makeover since I saw it last and looks very good. We were looked after & fed in 'The Cabin' cafe by 'Katherine's Kitchen' who now do the catering there. I had Chilli con Carne followed by Crumble with custard - and very good it was too. Well done ladies!

After some general milling around, supported by a beer or two from the bar, the existing committee absented themselves into the large training room to hold the final committee meeting of the year. A key item on the agenda for this meeting was the resignation of Chairperson John Fielding and the election of our new chairperson, David Brown. Here are the minutes....

Committee meeting

Meeting held at the Norfolk Gliding Club, 10th January 2024.

Present: Alan McNeal, David Brown, John Fielding, Maurice Edwards, Mik Horn, Richard Flagg, Sean Simington.

Apologies: Bob Sage, Julian Campbell, Nigel Hall, Paul Jackson

Minutes for the meeting chaired by John Fielding.

1. Paul Jackson. John informed the committee of Paul's instruction to step down from the committee. Everyone on the committee expressed their appreciation and thanks for the many years of service that Paul had given the club and were pleased to hear that Paul, a life-member was planning to continue attending occasional club events.

2. Christmas dinner party. Sean explained that he had rebooked the Gamekeeper in Old Buckenham for 2024 following the successful 2023 Christmas dinner. He had received widespread positive feedback from the membership.

3. List of aircraft w/owners. Alan felt it would be useful for the committee to have access to a private list of the aircraft and their owners at Priory Farm. John agreed, explaining that it was useful for members of the committee to be able to approach members with whom they weren't familiar with the purpose of making them feel welcome and 'seen'.

4. Committee. John asked if everyone was happy to remain on the committee and received an affirmative response. The absent committee members had expressed this via email.

5. Vote for Chairperson. John was standing down and a vote was held for the new PFA Chairperson. Alan McNeal proposed David Brown and this was seconded by Richard Flagg.

6. AGM procedure. The correct procedure was discussed.

7. Any other business. Alan suggested that the committee might consider moving the AGM to a later month when there was a lesser risk of adverse weather negatively affecting attendance levels.

John remarked that it would be a shame to hold an AGM on a sunny summer barbecue evening when members might prefer being outdoors. It was felt that this was something that could be returned to by the committee.

8. Balloon event at Priory Farm. Sean asked the committee how they would feel about him organising a balloon event at the airfield. Everyone expressed their pleasure at the idea. Sean explained that it would have a low impact on other flying activities at the airfield because it would take place very early in the morning. Alan suggested that it would be wise to have someone manning the radio in case there were visiting aircraft unaware of the event. David brought up the question of the club's liability insurance and wondered if it would need looking at for such an event.

9. Outgoing Chairperson. The committee expressed their thanks to John for his seven years of chairmanship.

When all the business of this meeting was done the rest of the attending members were called in to join them for the AGM. The big room was almost full so many thanks to all to come along for a good turnout on a cold January evening.

I will let the Minutes of the meetings tell the story. John Fielding's report:-

1. Questions or observations from the floor? None.

2. Election of the Committee. First of all, I'd like to point out that Paul Jackson is no longer standing for the committee. His knowledge and experience will be sorely missed ... however he has an honorary life membership and we look forward to him dropping into the club in the future. All other members of committee wish to stand for election in 2024:-

John Fielding, Bob Sage, Alan McNeal, Mik Horn, Richard Flagg, Maurice Edwards, Julian Campbell, Nigel Hall, Sean Simington, and not least, David Brown.

Are there any other candidates who may wish to stand, or propose someone else to stand? ... negative.

Rather than voting for members individually, can we have a vote to re-elect all those who have indicated a willingness to serve in 2024?

Proposed by Linda Smith. Seconded by ... Tom Mitchell

The floor voted unanimously to re-elect those committee members who wished to serve again in 2024.

SPEECH - John Fielding

I'll start off with a few 'thank-yous' ...

Richard for keeping the website up to date and organising the club trip in April

Helen and Mik for looking after the finances

Alan for providing us with the Waypoint every month ... not just providing club news but giving fascinating interviews with members and information on flying safety and good airmanship.

Sean for organising the winter meeting venues and taking menu orders (sounds small but isn't!)

All the committee for turning up every month for the meetings and quietly keeping the club going behind the scenes.

And finally to David for all the maintenance jobs on the club hut, representing us with the pylons and a ton of other stuff

AND volunteering to be Chairman! Something I'll come to in a moment.

Membership.

Last year, we hovered around 70 and this year we'll be over 80.

This is a credit to Bob and the fabulous airfield he maintains and the friendly atmosphere that you all contribute to.

Membership fees have been maintained at £40 for umpteenth year. Thank you to the 22 members who have already paid their membership fees by bacs. I remind you that the PFA is not a business. The club's facilities and events are kept going by volunteers ... so please don't make one of those volunteers give their time chasing you up for payment for what must surely be one of the cheapest flying clubs in the country.

Treasurer:

Mik Horne stood up and reported on the club's finances. (Following our standard practice, the Treasurer's report will only be made available to any fully paid-up member of the PFA).

Club activity this year.

April:

The first event was a trip to Thorpe Abbots, home of the USAF 100th Bomb Group organised by Richard. 20 members attended, making it a very popular and worthwhile trip. Don't forget to watch the new 'Masters of the Air' series which follows the 100th Bomb Group and will be released in 2 weeks time on Apple TV. Also in April, we had a Fly-out. Member: Mike Westman invited us all to his home airfield of Boughton South for coffee and cake, followed by lunch at Fenland Airfield. A beautiful sunny, warm day ... one of those spring days where it's great to be alive. Everyone at Boughton made us all very welcome.

M a y :

Share a Seat Day. Thanks to those pilots who kindly took up other PFA members. One of the highlights was provided by Sean Simington and David Stagg who brought their massive, commercial hot air balloon to Priory Farm for its maiden flight and generously gave free flights to some of our members.

J u n e :

Our "Father's Day" fly-in ably managed by David and Bob. By far the most successful in many years and (coincidentally?) one I wasn't involved in! Nearly 60 aircraft visited, mostly arriving just before lunch. How Alan, our air ground controller coped with the influx, I don't know. One aircraft had flown an impressive 139 miles from Gloucester to attend. The oldest aircraft was a 1944 Harvard.

We sadly lost Roger Burrows in June. A long standing and highly valued member who was always happy to help members around the airfield. The club donated £2000 to the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

Skyward flight school arrived at Priory Farm in June. It started out as Bob giving a favour to the flight school's owner so that they could park an aircraft here and it grew into something much larger. They didn't depart until the end of September. It led to some uncomfortable and heated situations which were thankfully resolved with good humour.

July:

Fly-out to RAF Marham organised by David who continues to be a 'contact point' for Lower Airspace Activity around Marham.

August:

Fly-out to Weybourne for iced lattes and cakes followed by lunch at Cromer. Another perfect sunny day. Particularly memorable to me as I nearly broke my ankle falling into a hole as I excitedly rushing to get a better view of Dot and Linda landing!

A visit to the 96th Bombardment Group museum at Eccles School - organised by Sean.

October:

A fly out to Yarmouth Heliport instigated by Richard ... all organised - 15 permitted slots were filled and people without aircraft, matched up with spare seats. Cancelled at the last minute due to the huge amount of rain which has practically continued ever since! 7th April is pencilled in for a second attempt.

December:

We had a terrific party at the Gamekeeper in Old Buck at which Alan was presented with the John McLeod trophy. My favourite moment was the fabulously noisy, giant balloon inflating competition which was nearly a dead heat between Bob and David ... with David winning by a couple of lung- fulls.

And there endeth the year's events. Before I finish, I have a few final few words ...

"IMPOSTER SYNDROME" !

I experienced more than a touch of it when I stepped into Paul Jackson's shoes seven years ago but eventually settled into enjoying the role. ... It's now time to pass the baton on to our new chairperson, who doubtlessly will be better than me in some ways and much much better than me in others! DAVID ... I can't imagine anyone more qualified in temperament and experience to take on the role. Good luck ... and have fun!

Presentation to John Fielding

The committee members had decided in secret that John Fielding's much-valued seven years keeping us all in order should not end without a gesture in the form of - a decorative glass block engraved with an image of his old Sky Ranger (thanks to Richard Flagg for pic) and a set of two engraved champagne flutes...



The Entertainment

We were royally entertained by Simon Stoodley and Matt Hyde, who gave a lively and often funny presentation with slides on their adventure to North Cape and back through Europe. You will remember their trip diary featured in a past Waypoint, but the presentation was a much fuller version of the story with many anecdotes on their often flexible routing, the iffy weather they often encountered, and the many fascinating places and people they met on the way, This was much enjoyed by all present. Thanks Simon & Matt!

...and finally

As many of you will know we had a two day visit to Norwich Airport last weekend. The weather was kind to us apart from a stiff wind. Our hosts, Norwich Aviation Centre looked after our parties very well and the visit to Norwich Tower, radar & ATC was fascinating and rewarding. There will be a full report with lots of pictures in the March issue of Waypoint.



Next Club meeting...

Look out for an email from Sean Simington who has arranged our next meeting at the White Horse pub in South Lopham for 7th February. Sounds good. See you there! Ed.