

BKFA COMMITTEE MEETING 19th March 2009
Conducted on Skype

Committee Members present online.

Jon Caton	MKF/ Chairman BKFA
Jerry Swift	MKF/ Treasurer BKFA
Ernest Barton	NEKF/ Secretary BKFA
Keith Griffiths	STACK
Derek Kuhn	Kite Workshops/ MKF/ Independent
Arthur Dibble	WHKF
Michael Lowe	Solent Kite Fliers

1. Welcome by the Chairman.

He noted that the Skype meeting was being recorded .

1. Comments on minutes of previous meeting

None.

2. Insurance

The Chairman asked if there had been any progress with this.

Jerry Swift replied that sadly this was still under consideration by the underwriters.

3. CAP 393 issued by the Civil Aviation Authority

This was dealt with by Jerry.

He said he recently had a conversation with the CAA and they agreed that current legislation on Kites had been written when a kite weighing more than twenty kilos was unheard of. This is not the case now with giant inflatables which weigh a lot more than that.

They were also tightening up their definitions on weight and mass. Luckily this works in our favour because they were not going to take into account the mass of air inside a kite, only the actual weight of the kite, otherwise we could be accused of flying several tonnes since in fact the mass of the air inside an inflatable is a significant amount greatly affecting its momentum and striking force during a crash.

The CAA was due to debate this matter at their next meeting. Jerry thought this was a good sign and he was glad that the CAA had responded to our comments and taken the issue on board as being significant in terms of safety.

The chairman asked if they were debating it how long it might be before we got an answer. Jerry said in his experience in light of his previous enquiry about Teddy Bear dropping it might take some time.

Jerry recapped for everyone by saying that he had hoped that the submission of a Risk Assessment on Teddy Dropping would be enough to get a blanket exemption because under Cap 393 since certain operations, including the dropping of objects from aircraft (in this case Teddies from Kites) required the writing of an Operations Manual. Jerry said he had heard nothing as yet from the CAA but he still hoped that a thorough Risk Assessment would be enough.

Arthur asked why they would issue an exemption for Brighton and Kent but not for other people – Jerry understood that Ray Oakhill at Brighton did submit an operations manual some years ago but that he still has to renew his exemption every year. Arthur would contact Ray about this.

Michael Lowe asked for clarification as to whether dropping bears was legal or illegal – Jerry thought that technically it might be a Breach of the Order, but it was unlikely to be prosecuted. As long as we keep abreast of the situation and do risk assessments ourselves we are unlikely to run foul of the CAA.

The secretary asked if the weight of the bear and how high they drop it from mattered – Jerry thought this was no problem for normal size bears.

The Chairman recapped by asking if we were in breach of the Order. Jerry said that he thought as long as we were encouraging fliers to put safety first and continuing to ask the CAA for clarification on this matter there was little else necessary at this stage.

4. Affiliations Update

Jerry confirmed that the RAeC and CCPR memberships had been renewed and NEKF had now paid the BKFA their outstanding Membership Fee.

5. The Wirral Competitions.

The Chairman asked for contact details for Dave Holt.

The Edwardian Style Kite Competition due to be flown at the Wirral this year was then discussed at length – a discussion hampered by the fact that no one had yet produced a definitive set of rules though George Webster's original Article was on the BKFA website and had been published in the Kiteflier Magazine by the KSGB.

The Secretary said that he had worked with George on the Rules at the time the article was written but had not yet arrived at a definitive Rule document. He explained that most of the marks were given for angle of flight and he had found a special protractor design from a 1911 French Magazine that used a plumb bob and scale to read off the line angle direct. One protractor was needed for each kite so that the readings could be taken simultaneously at 15 minutes and 45 minutes during the hour the kites flew.

The Chairman wondered if this could be managed given the well known wind variation at the Wirral. The secretary said that this was precisely why the angle needed to be measured twice – to allow for variation in wind speed and its effects on different kites.

There was some discussion about the problem of everyone flying on different lines or whether the BKFA should provide line? This was left to a further brainstorm between Jerry and George for the weekend but it was suggested that the competitors would have to use their own line since the choice of the right line for the wind on the day was part of the test and different kites might require substantially different strength lines.

The availability of air and ground space was discussed but seemed to be no problem at Wirral. A figure of 10 metres between competitors was talked about as reasonable ground separation.

A further conversation with George Webster was thought necessary before a final set of rules could be written. It was briefly considered that these might be ready for inclusion in the Kiteflier magazine but Michael Lowe pointed out that they would have to be submitted by the following day for inclusion in the next issue and that was clearly not possible.

There was a short further discussion of the other Rules that could be used.

6. Website update

Jerry said he would be in touch with Peter Bindon to check that the most up-to-date list of clubs was on the site, noting that several clubs had to date failed to agree to their details being included.

Arthur Dibble noted that Basingstoke Kite Festival organisers had accessed the site wanting CAA Height Clearance forms from us and had downloaded them easily.

6.1 Any other issues on the website?

Derek Kuhn asked if in the interests of clarity and uniformity we could have all dates written out in full in “human form” as Day Month Year and not as aa/bb/cc and this was agreed by the Chairman.

He also asked about getting photographs on the website. Arthur mentioned that this subject had been raised at the AGM but nothing had yet appeared.

The Chairman reiterated that Clubs should be asked to submit photographs for a gallery. We could also have photographs of the Wirral competition when it took place. This was agreed.

We will now invite affiliated clubs to submit photos and any committee members with interesting photographs could send them in. The photographs will be credited but **non copyright**, as any other method of offering them for general public and press use would be too complicated to administer.

The site would have the usual invitation - 'The photographs on this site are available for free use but please credit the source.'

It was also thought that relevant diagrams might be useful on the website and Keith Griffiths was asked for suitable diagrams such as one of the Wind Window for Stunt Fliers and he agreed to provide some material that STACK already has available.

There was an enquiry about the CAA Balloonists Accident Report Form which had been selected to be modified for use after kiteflying accidents. There was a view that the form is still too long too detailed and in places not relevant to our needs.

Derek Kuhn wondered if, when it was ready, this accident Report Form ought best be prominently available on the opening page of the website? The Chairman said that this might be the best place to display it since we were trying to encourage the kite community to manage their own safety and to act responsibly.

There was an enquiry from several members present as to what kite fliers should do with these forms after filling them in. Jerry thought that the best thing was to send them all on to the BKFA – this will give us a picture of the type and frequency of accidents over the next year. This would be published for kite fliers to read and hopefully learn from. We could submit the results to the CAA as useful information for them to see what is actually going on across the country and how we are trying to deal with it, but this step should be considered in the light of the reports received and our developing relationship with the CAA.

7. AOB

The Chairman had received a radio programme approach from an independent producer who had latched on to Afghanistan Kite appeal. He wondered if there some mileage to be had from a half hour feature for radio.

For the benefit of new members, the Chairman summarised the background to the Afghan Kite Appeal. We had had an enquiry from a serving soldier who thought we might donate kites to Afghanistan because their kites kept

“breaking or falling down”. It appeared he had not understood the nature of fighter kites. However what he had wanted was an area of common ground between the Army and the local. This laudable aim produced a storm of protest from certain non members of the BKFA about the risks of destroying an ‘indigenous tradition’. BKFA did not want to destroy Afghan culture either but noted that it is undergoing change anyway. None of us is thrilled by cheap Chinese imports but they exist and are increasing. To prevent the Afghans from getting such imports and new ideas if they want them might be viewed as rather arrogant.

The Chairman said as far as he was concerned the Afghan Kite Appeal was not moving forward and that all the negative comments had made very difficult to take the project anywhere. He said that he would have a cautious talk with the radio producer just not expect too much from it.

Concerning radio exposure Keith said that STACK had just been on a 20 minute slot on Radio Wales.

7.1 Emails off website - feedback.

It appears that the three officers get feedback forms from the website, the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, so some duplication of effort seemed likely. As Ernest is now a retired person it was thought he was more likely to pick these emails up first. So Ernest picks up first then sends an email to say he has done it to the other two unless it is a matter he feels he cannot deal with in which case he will pass it on.

7.2 Website problems

There was some discussion of the website being Spammed and we might have to use a CAPCHA login system.

Michael Lowe asked about Mailfoundry and was reassured that we bin them all. Jerry said he needed to talk to Peter Bindon about a number of matters.

7.3 Membership forms

Jerry noted the need to complete work on the membership forms.

It was noted that individuals are encouraged to join without being members of a club if they support BKFA’s objectives but also noting there are no benefits to membership as had been agreed two AGM’s ago. The process was supposed to be that they asked for a form to fill in. We then send them a pack with code of conduct and all the other info and if they accept this they may apply to join.

Jerry said he had sent the Chairman a Disclaimer off the CCPR front page – the Chairman said he did try putting it on website but it still doesn’t show up.

In view of the coverage of Steve Sutton at the AGM Michael Lowe wanted to know if he should get in touch with Steve Sutton as he wanted to start kite building workshops in schools in the south.

He was recommended to speak to Malcolm Goodman about kite building and Steve about Local Authority backing. He also agreed to have a discussion with Derek Kuhn and Arthur Dibble outside of the meeting.

He then asked about BKFA backing – and was told that would be fine to endorse him provided he was not doing it as a business. If he was doing it as a business we still needed to evolve a Trade Policy which had yet to be developed.

Mention was made that Flexifoil are no longer involved with Kites in Schools or Unilever.

Michael Lowe said that at the AGM there was talk of advertising the BKFA at Kite Festivals – he offered to do a stand at Southampton but it would be an unmanned stall. Arthur said it was exactly the same for White Horse.

The Chairman said that there was still a problem with unmanned stalls but it would be possible to send a banner, with or without the roach pole.

Derek Kuhn said as he would be doing a workshop in Germany did anyone have any objections to him taking the banner to a Baltic coast resort? There was some doubt how much value the banner was abroad. Leaflets were deemed of more value.

7.4 Highnotes

Keith Griffith said that Noel Park School in Bristol were doing a kite making workshop with Nick James and learning to fly sports kites with his group.

A quick mention was made that Roy Reid has done an online map of flying sites - safe locations to fly in the Yorkshire Area. We should ask to link to this on the web.

The Kite Club of Tasmania are now using our code of conduct.

Next year we could rotate the Edwardian Style competition around North to South – we might encourage Gill and John to put it on at Portsmouth or Weymouth Festival next year using George Webster's good offices.

Keith Griffiths said that STACK had been talking to others and they will now collate all the results of rok fights across the country for a proper Rokaku championship. This was an unexpected return to old times.

Meeting closed.