



White Sheet Radio Flying Club **2024 AGM**

Minutes





White Sheet Radio Flying Club **2024 AGM**

9th November 2:30pm
The Dolphin, Gillingham, Dorset

The Committee

Jess Nicholls	Chairman
Ian Duff	Treasurer
Jim Emptage	Scale Secretary
Den Larking	Membership Secretary
Pete Cushion	Open Slopes Secretary
Mike Bleathman	Vice Chairman

In attendance:

Andrew Beaven	Club Secretary
---------------	----------------

Apologies

Jonathan Smith	Examiner/Safety Officer
Will Fourie	Competition Secretary

Barry Apostolou	Ray Eggleston	Mike Tetley	Graham Hill
Dave Camp	Louis Hawkins	Tim Brocklehurst	Robin Saunders
Robin Carroll	Richard Docketty	Alan Brocklehurst	Chris Saunders
Trevor Hewson	Geoff Willis	John Mess	John Treble
Dave Scott	Harry Curzon	Roger Matthews	Jamie Bradfield

Members Present

Richard Edmunds	David Bradfield	Will Hosie	Member (20)
Jerry Stone	Nick Whittaker	Russell Whittam	Member (21)
Steve Vincent	Bill Ebdon	Graeme Mahoney	
Neville Brownlee	Simon Minson	Jeff Smith	



Chairmans Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 2024 AGM.

Chairman Jess Nicholls warmly welcomed all attendees to the 2024 AGM and expressed sincere gratitude to everyone for taking the time to participate.

Members were invited to help themselves to refreshments before the meeting commenced.

The meeting then began.



Quorate

At the 2023 AGM, the WSRFC recorded a membership of 152 individuals.

In 2024, 15 new members joined the club, all of whom were accepted, bringing the possible total membership to 167.

During the meeting, 21 members were present, with 22 apologies were received. From these apologies, 22 proxies were submitted as follows:

- JN: 8
- AB: 5
- Steve Vincent 1
- MB: 6
- David Bradfield: 2

This resulted in a total of 43 participants, surpassing the 15% quorum requirement (25.05 members). Total participation equated to 25.14% of the membership.

As a result, the AGM proceeded as scheduled.

Note: In total, 25.14% of members responded to the AGM call.



Minutes of 2023 AGM

A copy of the 2023 AGM minutes was available for members perusal at the 2024 AGM.

The 2023 AGM minutes were also available throughout 2024, being accessible for viewing on the WSRFC website.

The 2023 AGM minutes can also be accessed via the following link:

[WSRFC 2023 AGM Minutes](#)

The Secretary asked if members were satisfied with the minutes of the 2023 AGM and whether they were willing to approve them.

(Item 1): Verification of the Accuracy of the 2023 AGM Minutes

- **Proposed by:** Andrew Beaven
- **Seconded by:** Jess Nicholls

Following the motion, the Chairman called for a show of support to approve the minutes.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

Amendments

Club Secretary No Minutes amendments required



Handbook Amendments

The Secretary outlined the amendments carried out through 2024.

(Item 2): Approve Completed Handbook Amendments 2024

- **Proposed by: Andrew Beaven**
- **Seconded by: Jess Nicholls**

After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of support for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

(Item 3): Approve continued consent for the committee to conduct Handbook Amendments as the need arises in 2025

- **Proposed by: Andrew Beaven**
- **Seconded by: Jess Nicholls**

The Secretary requested a show of support for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.



Chairmans Report

The Chairman expressed his pleasure that, at long last, significant improvements had been made to the access lane leading to White Sheet. He extended heartfelt thanks to Richard Edmunds for his invaluable efforts in liaising with Wiltshire Council on behalf of the club to make this happen.

Reflecting on the past year, the Chairman acknowledged that, while reserve dates had to be utilised for many scheduled events due to the usual inclement weather, the majority of events were successfully conducted. He commended the resilience and adaptability of members in ensuring the year's activities could proceed as planned.

The Chairman also highlighted the continued contributions of Russell Whittam, whose exceptional graphic design skills were once again evident in the creation of the WSRFC 2025 calendar and membership cards. On behalf of himself and the entire club, the Chairman expressed sincere gratitude to Russell for his dedication and creativity.

Jess Nicholls
Chairman





Treasurers Report

The Treasurer presented the club accounts, highlighting a year-end balance of £2,670.96, which closely aligned with the previous AGM estimate of £2,700. Emphasis was placed on maintaining a prudent contingency fund of around £2,500 while avoiding excessive reserves. Free membership in the past year reduced the balance, and reinstating membership fees was recommended to balance outgoings without accruing unnecessary surplus.

Key Financial Highlights:

- **Postage Costs:** Current expenditure is £235.39, and physical mail remains preferred for membership packs despite the rising costs. Digital options might be reconsidered in the future.
- **National Trust Licence:** No significant cost increases are anticipated in the upcoming negotiations.

Membership and Banking:

- Membership stands between 120–150 members, reflecting a healthy position.
- The road fund is being closed due to inefficiency, with Lloyds Bank introducing new fees (£4.25 monthly). Members were asked if the club should continue with Lloyds or explore alternatives offering free banking.

Banking and Data Management:

- Transition to electronic banking is underway, with members encouraged to use online transfers over cheques.
- Members must log into the BMFA-hosted website to consent to the use of their details for data protection purposes.

Charity Donations:

- A recommendation to continue £250 annual donations split equally between Wiltshire and Somerset/Dorset Air Ambulances due to their direct benefit to members was made.

Competitions and Fees:

- Entry fees for the English Open F3F Competition will remain unchanged as they represent good value for exclusive slope use.

Future Plans and Final Year as Treasurer:

The Treasurer announced this as their final year, committing to establish better electronic management and ensure a smooth handover to their successor. Members expressed appreciation, culminating in three cheers for the Treasurer.

Suggestions and Member Comments:

- Jerry Stone proposed using the BMFA JustGo platform for fee collection, though it was deemed costlier than current charges.
- The club secretary addressed website access issues, advising members to use the direct URL for reliable navigation.

Closing Note: The Treasurer thanked members for their cooperation and shared laughter over light-hearted moments during the meeting.

(Please refer to Appendix (a) for the detailed report)

Statement of Account Follows

WHITESHEET RADIO FLYING CLUB

Statement of Account Year Ending December 2024 – General Account

Opening Balances	2023	2022	2021	2024
Deposit				
Current	£5145.07	£5437.37	£4886.67	£3,960.14
Cash				
Total	£5145.07	£5437.37	£4,866.67	£3,960.14

Closing Balances	2023	2022	2021	2024
Deposit				
Current	£3969.14	£5,115.07	£5,437.37	£2670.96
Cash		£ 30.00	£ 00.00	£ 00.00
	£3960.14	£5,145.07	£5,437.37	£2670.96

Income 2024	2023	Expenditure	2024	2023
Membership Fees	£180.00	NT licence	£300.00	
£150.00	£300.00			
		Committee Expenses	£361.65	
	£154.05	EGM expenses	£000.00	
	£193.50	Charity Donation	£250.00	
	£250.00			
BMFA Subscriptions	£000.00	Sundries (postage)	£ 235.39	£
£000.00	30.00			
Transfer from Road Fund	£000.00	Room Hire/Food	£238.90	
£000.00	£262.70			

			00.00	Stickers/Posters (2021)	£ 00.00	£
			00.00	AGM raffle prize	£000.00	£
			£100.00	Gratuities	£ 123.31	
English Open 2021			00.00	Hoodies/ beanies	£000.00	£
£190.00			£229.74	£305.06 Stickers (2024)		£112.45
				BMFA Subscriptions	£000.00	
F3f contributions	£		£000.00	F3F E.O. trophies	£ 64.94	
52.46			£000.00			
				Wordpress Domain	£000.00	
				BMFA 'A' certs - expenses	£ 00.00	
Additional Contributions	£	£ 0.00		WSRFC Web Hosting 2022	£000.00	£
5.00		150.00				
Total Income		£485.06		Total Expenditure	£ 1686.64	
£397.46		£1669.99				

Membership Analysis	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Senior members (paid)	18	17	111	103	100	93	91	86
Senior members (committee)	9	8	8	8	8	8	8	7
Junior member (free)	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1
Senior members (free)	122	112	1	1				2
Total	152	140	123	115	110	102	100	96

2024 15 new members applied to join the club and were accepted.

WHITESHEET RADIO FLYING CLUB

Statement of Account Year Ending December 2024 – Additional (Road Fund) Account

Opening Balances	2023	2022	2024
Deposit			

Current	£000.87	£000.87	£000.87
Cash			
Interest			
Total	£000.87	£000.87	£000.87

Transfer of £392.00 to general account in 2019 for payment to National Trust for road/track repair – access to Whitesheet Down.

Closing Balances	2023	2022	2024
Deposit			
Current	£000.87	£000.87	£000.87
Cash			
Interest			
	£000.87	£000.87	£000.87

This annual accounts statement – General Account and Additional (Road Fund) Account - has been prepared by Ian Duff (Hon.Treasurer WSRFC) as a report to the Annual General Meeting of the Whitesheet Radio Flying Club, scheduled to take place on 9th November 2024, and presented to the committee at its meeting on 7th November 2024 for scrutiny.

Signed : Ian Duff.....

Date :6th November 2024

WSRFC Membership Fees for 2025

(Item 4): Approve Fees Seniors £10.00 Juniors £0.00

- **Proposed by: Jess Nicholls**
- **Seconded by: Simon Minson**

After the motion was presented, The Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

Charitable Donation for 2024

(Item 5): Approve charitable donation sum for 2024 of £250.00 (based on current club finances)

- **Proposed by: Jess Nicholls**
- **Seconded by: Simon Minson**

After the motion was presented, the Secretary requested a show of support for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

(Item 6): Approve charitable donation in equal parts (£125.00 each) to Wiltshire Air Ambulance and Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance Trusts.

- **Proposed by: Jess Nicholls**
- **Seconded by: Simon Minson**

After the motion was presented, the Secretary requested a show of support for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

Scale Report

The Scale Secretary began by highlighting that, despite less favourable weather this year at White Sheet, Scale flying is thriving, with plenty of new scale models, particularly from Chris. The Vice Chairman jokingly asked how many models Chris has been producing, to which the Scale Secretary responded with “not less than one a month,” noting Chris periodically clears space for new models.

Though the weather wasn’t ideal, a Scale day was held every month except September, when all events were cancelled due to rain.

Catapult launching, a technique primarily explored by Will Hosie, has proven successful for large, heavy gliders, offering reliability, consistency, and safety, though it requires a secure pegging system and strong glider tails!

The Scale Secretary clarified some confusion regarding height limits for flying, stating that the BMFA Site Permit allows flying up to 1500 feet AGL, but due to the slope’s elevation, the practical limit is 1200 feet. Exceeding this could affect insurance validity, though this is unconfirmed. The Treasurer added advice to stay below 1200 feet for safety.

The conversation then shifted to enforcement, with members agreeing that local authorities would not intervene, leaving the issue largely dependent on full-sized aircraft reports, which could favour the full-sized pilots’ word over model pilots’.

The Scale Secretary also announced his retirement from the committee, citing other commitments, and thanked those who supported him throughout his tenure and Scale flying as a class.

The Chairman thanked the Scale Secretary

(Please refer to Appendix (b) for detailed Scale Report)

Competition Report

In the absence of Nigel Witchalls, Vice Chairman Mike Bleathman reported that no winter competitions were held last year. He highlighted the White Sheet English Open as the only event, which took place over two lovely days with 18 pilots competing. For the first time in the club's history, the event was won by a White Sheet member, Graeme Mahoney, who humorously noted he had previously come second five times. Due to weather conditions, it was the only competition held.

Mike also thanked Nigel Witchalls and Graeme Mahoney for running competitions over the past five years and announced that he and Will Fourie would now share the role of Competition Secretary. The members applauded Graeme, Nigel, and Mike for his report.

(Please refer to Appendix (c) for detailed Competition Report)

The Chairman expressed his gratitude to the Vice Chairman and went on to highlight that one area of particular success in 2024 had been Open Slopes. He then invited Pete Cushion to present the Open Slopes report.

Open Slopes Report

Peter Cushion, co-opted to the committee in April 2024 as Open Slopes Secretary, delivered his report. His remit included making weather calls for Open Slopes events, communicating decisions to members, attending events, and acting as or appointing a safety officer.

During his tenure, all six scheduled events between May and October 2024 proceeded as planned. These included three events at Morgan's and three at Spencer's, with four held on Sundays and two on Saturdays. A total of 75 members attended, averaging 12.5 participants per event.

Flying conditions varied significantly, ranging from flat calm to gusts exceeding 40 mph, along with periods of large thermals. Highlights included Jess flying his Saker to over 2,000 feet in July, four maiden flights and a destroyed spot landing marker in August, and September's Multi/Foss day, where a LIDL glider caused a surprise encounter mid-air. Thanks were extended to Graham Hill for providing a buddy box system for new participants.

Minimal damage to models was reported, and Peter thanked members for their safe flying practices.

The Chairman expressed gratitude to Peter Cushion for his report before moving to the next agenda item regarding Open Slopes safety rules for new models. Further details were invited from Peter Cushion.

(Please refer to Appendix (d) for detailed Open Slopes Report)

Discussions

Petes Slopes Safety Suggestion

Pete presented a suggestion regarding safety on the slopes, based on his observations while overseeing the site. He noted that safety could be compromised when models were not as airworthy as they should be, particularly with new, recently finished, or second-hand models. Pete proposed that pilots arriving with these models should ask a fellow club member to inspect the aircraft before its first flight. This could involve a quick check of the control surfaces, linkages, and general airworthiness to ensure everything is functioning correctly. He explained that, in his experience, it is easy for pilots to overlook issues such as misaligned control surfaces or intermittent connections, especially when eager to fly.

Pete suggested that this become a common practice within the club, encouraging pilots to seek a second opinion without feeling embarrassed. He mentioned that this was something he personally did, often asking Graeme to double-check his models. Several members, including the Scale Secretary, supported the idea, sharing similar experiences where a quick inspection could have prevented mishaps.

Simon Minson agreed with Pete, adding that it was an important practice to encourage, though he emphasised that it should remain voluntary, rather than being formalised as a rule. He raised concerns about the practicality of enforcing such a rule, such as who would be responsible for conducting the inspections and the potential legal implications if an incident occurred after a model was deemed safe. Despite this, Simon acknowledged that no matter how experienced a pilot might be, it was always worth asking for a second opinion.

David Bradfield and other members shared anecdotes about their own mistakes during pre-flight checks, underscoring the importance of having someone else review a model before flight. The Treasurer highlighted that the suggestion was not about questioning pilots' competence but about offering assistance, especially to those with new models who might be reluctant to ask if they had made any errors during setup.

The Chairman concluded that while the suggestion was voluntary, it aligned with the club's goal of ensuring safety and fostering a supportive environment for all members. The committee agreed to continue promoting this practice and to include reminders in communications to members.

The Chairman introduced the next item on the agenda, which focused on ideas for the club's 50th anniversary. He explained that Tim Brocklehurst had proposed some suggestions, but unfortunately, Tim was unable to attend the meeting. Although Alan had been appointed as Tim's proxy to present these ideas, Alan was also unable to be present. In their absence the Secretary presented Tims suggestion to members.

(Please refer to Appendix (e) for more detail)

Discussions (Continued)

Tim Brocklehurst — WSRFC 50th Anniversary discussion.

The Club Secretary informed members that Tim Brocklehurst had suggested celebrating the club's 50th anniversary by inviting other local clubs, including the Bath, Wilts & North Dorset Gliding Club, to a special event. The committee proposed using one of the Open Slopes days for this, as it is inclusive of all model glider classes. While additional attractions for the event were still under consideration, the Secretary encouraged members to not only suggest ideas but also offer to help implement them.

The Vice Chairman volunteered to prepare bacon rolls, and the Treasurer recalled the F3F group serving cake at a past event. The Secretary also mentioned that the committee had been working with Russell Whittam on the 2025 calendar and membership cards for the anniversary.

The discussion turned to ways of showcasing the club's history. David Bradfield suggested highlighting the oldest model owned by members, and Richard Edmunds humorously referred to "the wife." Members also discussed the possibility of writing an article for the club website and *RCM&E*. The Treasurer offered to contact Keith Thomas for input on the club's early days.

The Chairman acknowledged the contributions of long-standing members, including Mike Cooper, and encouraged further ideas for the anniversary celebrations. The conversation continued light-heartedly, with members joking about the "old" members and reflecting on the club's long history.

In closing, the Chairman reminded everyone to continue sharing ideas for the 50th anniversary celebration.

(Please refer to Appendix (f) for more detail)

The Chairman, jokingly, remarked, "Before we move on to the next item, we'd better make sure the door is locked..." before introducing the next agenda item: the election of the committee. Members laughed.

Elections of the management committee

Chairman

The Chairman continued, "We have a number of vacancies to fill, starting with the position of Chairman." He then called for nominations.

A long silence followed, accompanied only by the occasional sound of tumbleweed!

The Vice Chairman, sensing the hesitation, suggested, "I think Jess should do another year."

David Bradfield quickly agreed, saying, "Yes, please, Jess."

The Chairman, looking around, asked, "Is there anyone else even remotely interested?"

Members visibly sank lower into their chairs!

With a resigned sigh, the Chairman concluded, "It seems not!"

(Item 7): Approve Jess Nicholls as Chairman for 24-2025

- **Proposed by: Mike Bleathman**
- **Seconded by: David Bradfield**

After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

Vice Chairman

The Chairman requested a volunteer for the position of Vice Chairman.

David Bradfield promptly said, "Go on, Mike."

The Vice Chairman responded, "I'm already doing the Competition Secretary role, along with Will Fourie."

At this point, Jerry Stone shyly raised his hand.

David Bradfield, with enthusiasm, shouted, "I vote Jerry!"

(Item 8): Approve Jerry Stone as Vice Chairman for 24-2025

- **Proposed by: Mike Bleathman**
- **Seconded by: Will Hosie**

After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

Mike Bleathman questioned, "Is he going to be in charge of us?"

Members responded with a unanimous "Yes."

Mike Bleathman then said, "Oh God!"

This prompted laughter from the members.

The Treasurer chimed in, "Mike, that does mean you have to do what Jerry tells you."

Mike Bleathman, with a smile, replied, "I'm used to that!"

More laughter followed from the members.

Honorary Treasurer

The Chairman began, "Our current Treasurer has indicated that he intends to retire next year, but for this year, we may still have our chancellor."

Members laughed.

The Treasurer then assured the members, "I'm serious, this is my last year. If anyone is considering taking on the role, I'd be more than happy to dedicate some time to show them what needs to be done. Hopefully, that might help persuade them to take on the position next year."

(Item 9): Approve Ian Duff as Honorary Treasurer for 24-2025

- **Proposed by: David Bradfield**
- **Seconded by: Graeme Mahoney**

After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

The Chairman thanked Ian for continuing as Treasurer.

Honorary Secretary

The Chairman informed the meeting that the current Club Secretary would not be standing for re-election in 2025. The Secretary confirmed this and expressed concern that no members had shown interest in taking on the role. He emphasised the importance of having a Secretary to ensure the club's continued operation.

Despite repeated requests for volunteers, the room remained silent, and the Secretary humorously noted the lack of interest. Mike Bleathman suggested that he could take on both the Competition Secretary and Club Secretary roles, but ultimately confirmed he would not do so. The Treasurer reiterated that the club required a Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary, as per the constitution, and warned that without these key roles, the club could not function.

The Secretary explained that if no volunteer came forward, he would reluctantly continue in the role, but hoped that discussions before the next AGM would encourage someone to step up. Members applauded the Secretary's willingness to stay on.

The Treasurer highlighted the importance of a rotating committee, and the Secretary asked for a proposal to continue in the role. After some light-hearted exchanges and laughter, Mike Bleathman proposed the Secretary's re-election, and the meeting moved forward.

(Please refer to Appendix (g) for more detail)

The Secretary continued, Mike proposed.

(Item 10): Approve Andrew Beaven as Honorary Secretary for 24-2025

- **Proposed by: Mike Bleathman**
- **Seconded by: David Bradfield**

After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

The Chairman thanked Andrew for continuing as Club Secretary and reminded members to consider stepping into the roles of Club Secretary and Treasurer for 2026. He encouraged more members to attend future AGMs, joking that it would be a great problem if the room became too small. The Club Secretary thanked those present, acknowledging that COVID had affected attendance and that some members were still hesitant to return to social events.

Membership Secretary

During the AGM, the Chairman addressed the position of Membership Secretary and noted that there was one volunteer, David Bradfield, though he asked if anyone else was interested. After a brief silence, the Treasurer joked about not hearing over the stampede. The Chairman acknowledged the long service of the current Membership Secretary, Den, who had served for over 20 years, with members congratulating Den on this achievement. David Bradfield was officially nominated as the new Membership Secretary.

(Item 11): Approve David Bradfield as Membership Secretary for 24-2025

- **Proposed by: Mike Bleathman**
- **Seconded by: Russell Whittam**

After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

The Chairman said to David Bradfield, "It looks like you're in."

The Secretary added, "Den deserves some cheers, David."

David Bradfield responded, "Yes, hip, hip..."

Members gave Den three cheers.

The Secretary thanked Den, and members applauded.

(Please refer to Appendix (h) for more detail)

Scale Secretary

The Chairman informed members that the next position on the list was for Scale Secretary.

The Club Secretary shared that Jim would not be standing for re-election in 2025, thanking him for everything he had done in his role as Scale Secretary. Fortunately, there was a nomination: Nick Whittaker. "That's correct, isn't it, Nick?" he asked.

Nick Whittaker confirmed, "Yes, that's correct."

The Chairman then asked for a proposer for Nick as Scale Secretary.

Once again, several eager hands were raised.

The Secretary asked, "Who was first?"

Jim Emptage, the outgoing Scale Secretary, jokingly replied, "I think I was."

This comment prompted laughter from the members.

(Item 12): Approve Nick Whittaker for Scale Secretary for 24-2025

- **Proposed by: Jim Emptage**
- **Seconded by: Will Hosie**

After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

David Bradfield remarked, "I'd just like to say that Nick is a great choice for Scale Secretary, as he spends a lot of time at the bottom of the hill bringing them back up."

This comment was met with laughter from the members.

The Club Secretary added, "You know who your friends are, don't you, Nick?"

Members, in a manner reminiscent of those in the House of Commons, chimed in with a chorus of "Yeah," accompanied by much laughter.

Education Officer/Club Examiner (Club Safety Officer)

The Chairman announced, "Next on our list is the position of Education Officer, Jonathan."

The Secretary confirmed, "Yes, Jonathan Smith is willing to stand again as Education Officer. He's currently away, working hard flying RC Jets in America."

The Chairman joked, "So, have we just put his name down for Education Officer because he isn't here and can't say no?"

Members laughed.

The Club Secretary replied, "No, I did ask, and he is prepared to carry on."

(Item 13): Approve Jonathan Smith as Education Officer for 24-2025

- **Proposed by: Jim Emptage**
- **Seconded by: Ian Duff**

After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

Competition Secretary

The Chairman stated, "Moving on, we now come to the position of Competition Secretary."

The Club Secretary began by expressing gratitude to Nigel Witchalls, who had recently moved away from the area and would not be flying in the near future. "I would like to thank Nigel for his dedication and the various roles he held on the Committee over the years, as well as for his invaluable help and advice," the Secretary said.

Mike Bleathman added, "I'd also like to thank Graeme Mahoney, who has done and continues to do a great deal for the competitions."

The Club Secretary agreed, saying, "Yes, thank you to both Nigel and Graeme."

Members applauded in appreciation.

The Club Secretary then informed the members that Mr. Mike Bleathman, along with Mr. Will Fourie, had volunteered to take on the role of Competition Secretary.

The Honourable Treasurer chimed in, "Otherwise known as Cap'n..."

The Honourable Secretary clarified, "Captain Fourie."

Mike Bleathman mumbled something inaudible, prompting laughter from the members.

(Item 14): Approve Mike Bleathman and Will Fourie as Competition Secretary for 24-2025

- **Proposed by: David Bradfield**
- **Seconded by: Simon Minson**

After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

A member asked, "Is that everything?"

David Bradfield replied, "We still need to do Pete."

The Chairman responded, "You can't escape just yet, it's a good job we did lock the door"

This comment prompted laughter from the members.

Open Slopes Secretary

The Chairman announced that the final position to be discussed was that of Open Slopes Secretary.

The Club Secretary informed members that the committee had co-opted Pete as Open Slopes Secretary earlier this year.

David Bradfield cheekily remarked, "Bend over."

This comment elicited laughter from the members.

The Club Secretary quipped, "The inner workings of the Bradfield mind."

The laughter from the members grew even louder.

The Honourable Treasurer quickly added, "Don't go there."

The laughter intensified further.

The Chairman then praised Pete for the sterling job he had done in the role of Open Slopes Secretary this year.

Pete Cushion thanked the Chairman.

The Honourable Treasurer and Club Secretary both, in unison, expressed their gratitude to Pete as well.

(Item 15): Approve Pete Cushion as Open Slopes Secretary for 24-2025

- **Proposed by: Richard Edmunds**
- **Seconded by: Graeme Mahoney**

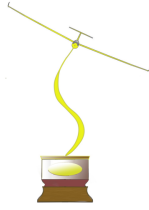
After the motion was presented, the Chairman requested a show of hands for approval.

Result: The motion was carried unanimously.

Any Other Business

The Chairman asked if there was any other business to discuss.

The Honourable Secretary responded that input for this had been requested in the notice and reminder, but no comments or additional business had been received. As a result, the meeting could move directly to "Mike's Mike."



And finally...
Mike Bleathman presents...

**‘Mikes Mike’
&
‘Prize Draw’**

The Honourable Secretary introduced Mike Bleathman, who opened with humour, reflecting on the past year and recognising members and families facing health challenges. He thanked Nigel and Graeme for their service as Competition Secretaries and acknowledged contributions from members like David Bradfield for donating coveted mugs for club awards.

Mike presented several awards, including the **Save of the Year** to Nick Whittaker, **Long-Service mugs** to Den Larking and Jim Emptage, and the humorous **Land-Out Award** to Ian Duff, which he delivered with a story highlighting Ian's memorable flight mishap. Other awards included the **Worst Launch Award**, accepted on behalf of William Fourie, and the **‘It’ll Be Fine’ Award**, presented to Will Hosie, who received it with good humour.

The Secretary then introduced a prize draw, as a gesture of appreciation for attendees. Using Apple’s Siri to generate random numbers, three winners would be selected to receive prizes equivalent to BMFA membership fees for 2025, valued at £50 each. The Secretary ensured fairness in the draw, which sparked laughter when David Bradfield expressed scepticism about Siri’s impartiality!

(Please refer to Appendix (i) for more detail)

Closing Remarks from the Chairman

As we draw this AGM to a close, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all committee members and club members for their contributions throughout the year. A special thank you to those who have taken on new roles, such as Peter Cushion, whose diligent efforts as Open Slopes Secretary have ensured the success of all our events this season.

This year has seen excellent participation, safe flying practices, and memorable achievements across all our activities. It is this shared commitment and enthusiasm that make our club so successful.

Looking ahead, I am confident that we will continue to grow and thrive as a slope soaring club. Thank you all for your ongoing support and dedication.

I wish you a safe and enjoyable year of flying ahead.

The meeting is now adjourned.

END



Appendices

Appendix A: Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer distributed copies of the club accounts to members and provided a detailed explanation of the figures presented.

The **closing balance** for the year stood at **£2,670.96**, a result the Treasurer was pleased with, as it aligned closely with the estimate of approximately £2,700 from the previous AGM.

Over the years, the Treasurer had often expressed concerns about keeping excessive funds in the bank, as it provided no real value to the club. To address this, free membership was implemented to reduce the balance. However, the Treasurer believed it was prudent to maintain a **contingency fund** of around £2,500. While the recommendation during the meeting was to reinstate membership fees, this was not because the club urgently needed the money.

Looking ahead, the Treasurer anticipated that income from membership fees would adequately cover the club's outgoings for the coming year. Essentially, the goal was to balance income with expenditure, without unnecessarily accumulating funds.

Postage Costs

The Treasurer drew attention to the **"Expenditure and Sundries"** category, which primarily covered postage. This year, postage costs totalled **£235.39**, and they were likely to increase. Despite this, the Treasurer believed it was worthwhile, as many members appreciated receiving a hard copy of the membership pack, calendar, and other materials through the post, rather than being asked to print them at home.

While other organisations, such as the BMFA, had transitioned to digital formats, the Treasurer wondered how many members truly engaged with these as much as with physical copies. For the time being, the recommendation was to continue mailing out membership packs, though this decision could be revisited in the future. A hard copy remained a user-friendly option, especially considering the challenges occasionally faced with email delivery.

Future Outlook

There were no major financial concerns on the horizon. Negotiations with the National Trust were upcoming, but based on their track record, the Treasurer did not foresee significant increases in licence fees. It was stated that, should this prediction prove wrong, an apology would be made at next year's AGM. The National Trust's primary focus was on how the club managed White Sheet, rather than extracting large sums of money.

Membership and Banking

The Treasurer took a pragmatic approach to estimating membership numbers, given the lack of a comprehensive list of paid members in recent years. It was projected that the club had between **120 and 150 members**, which indicated a healthy position.

On the matter of banking, the Treasurer planned to close the **road fund account**. It cost Lloyds Bank more to send monthly updates about negligible balances than it was worth. Additionally, Lloyds had recently informed the club that free banking would be ending.

The proposed charges included a monthly fee of **£4.25**, along with transaction fees for cheques, bank transfers, and any manual interventions. While there was some convenience in banking locally in Gillingham, the Treasurer was not convinced this justified the additional cost.

Input was sought on whether:

A) The club should continue with Lloyds and accept the new fees.

B) Alternatives should be explored, such as banks or building societies offering free banking.

A member shared that Wessex Soaring Association had faced a similar situation and had successfully switched to NatWest. Another member suggested considering modern options like Starling Bank, though the challenge lay in ensuring double signatories for transactions, which some online banks struggled to accommodate.

The general consensus appeared to be that the Treasurer should explore alternatives, and there was a willingness to do so. While the cost was not prohibitive, the Treasurer begrudged paying fees unnecessarily.

Treasurer Transition

This was the Treasurer's final year in the role. (Cue the booing!) A joke was made about an earlier "escape tunnel" collapsing, but in all seriousness, the Treasurer intended to implement a more efficient **electronic system** for managing the club's finances and ensure a smooth handover to a successor.

Electronic Payments

The club was steadily moving towards electronic banking. While Lloyds Bank still had a physical presence in Gillingham, they preferred not to handle cash transactions. Members were encouraged to use online banking for payments, as it allowed the Treasurer to track deposits more efficiently and coordinate with the Membership Secretary to send out membership packs promptly.

Members also needed to log in to the **BMFA-hosted website** to give consent for the use of their details, in compliance with data protection regulations.

Charitable Donations

The Treasurer proposed maintaining the same donation amount as the previous year: **£250**, split equally between the **Wiltshire Air Ambulance** and the **Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance**. This choice reflected the direct benefit these services provided to members, given their availability for emergencies at White Sheet Down. If members had alternative suggestions, the Treasurer was happy to consider them.

Closing Remarks

In conclusion, the club remained financially stable, with no pressing need to significantly adjust membership fees. As 2025 will be the Treasurer's final year in the role, the aim is to ensure that the transition to a successor will be as seamless as possible.

David Bradfield proposed a vote of thanks for the Treasurer, leading members in a round of cheers.

Appendix B: Scale Report

The Scale Secretary began by posing a question to the members, with the answer suggested by himself: as had been evident in 2024 at White Sheet, Scale flying was very much alive and thriving. While the weather had not been as good as in previous years, it had still been suitable, and there had been plenty of action.

White Sheet had welcomed a remarkable influx of new scale models in 2024, largely attributed to Chris's consistent contributions. The Vice Chairman asked how many new models Chris had produced, speculating it might have been around one per month. The Scale Secretary responded that it was likely even more than that, noting that Chris had to periodically clear out older models to accommodate the steady stream of new models.

Overall, the Scale Secretary reflected that it had been a successful year in most respects, despite the less-than-ideal weather. He noted that a Scale day had been held every month except September, when the originally planned event was cancelled due to poor weather. Although there had been plans to reschedule the event for the third week of September, adverse weather conditions once again led to its cancellation. Nevertheless, all other events throughout the year had been flyable.

A new technique explored in 2024, primarily by Will Hosie, was catapult launching. While using bungee cords to launch gliders from slopes was nothing new, whether for full-size or model gliders, it had not been used at White Sheet for some time, if at all. Will's initial attempts had a couple of false starts, but overall, the method had proven effective, especially for large, heavy gliders. It had been reliable, consistent, and safe, and those who had participated in the technique had agreed with its benefits.

However, there were a couple of caveats: the pegging system had to be secure, as this was a critical aspect that could not be allowed to fail. Additionally, the glider needed a strong enough tail to withstand the strain. Aside from these considerations, the technique had been successful. It was also safer for walkers, as there was almost nothing left on top, and the pegs were out of sight, reducing the risk of upsetting dog walkers. The Scale Secretary believed it had been an excellent system.

On a personal note, the Scale Secretary announced his retirement from the committee in 2024, as he had too many other commitments. He thanked everyone who had supported him and Scale flying throughout the year.

The Scale Secretary received heartfelt thanks and a round of applause.

The Scale Secretary then addressed one final matter, which, while not directly related to Scale flying, pertained to the NOTAM and Site Permits. He clarified that there had been some confusion surrounding the height limit, but assured members that they had been cleared to fly below it. The BMFA Site Permit had permitted flying up to 1500 feet AGL (Above Ground Level) for heavy gliders over 7.5kg. However, when launching from the slope, they were immediately around 300 feet above the ground, meaning they could only fly up to 1200 feet above the ground level below the slope before reaching the limit of the site permit. While the NOTAM permitted higher altitudes, the site permit had restricted them to 1500 feet AGL. Exceeding this limit could have potentially invalidated their insurance, although this was not entirely certain. It was likely that lawyers would have focused on this, as the insurance required flying legally.

Even if this had not been an issue, regardless of whether members had been flying at 300 feet or 1500 feet, they were still obligated to keep clear of other aircraft. The NOTAM and Site Permit had

not granted any rights of way—they had simply informed others of their presence. The Scale Secretary asked if everyone had been comfortable with this explanation.

The Treasurer supported the Scale Secretary's points, confirming that they had been aware of the issue throughout the year. He recounted an attempt to meet with a BMFA official at Buckminster, but unfortunately, the official had been absent that day. Subsequent efforts to get clarification from the BMFA had resulted in promises of follow-up, but nothing had come through. The Treasurer expressed confidence that the issue would eventually be resolved, attributing the confusion to poorly drafted regulations by the BMFA, CAA, or both.

The Scale Secretary then elaborated on further confusion in the regulations, specifically regarding gliders weighing between 7.5kg and 14kg. The regulations had stated that these gliders could fly up to 400 feet above the launch point, regardless of the height of the ground below the glider. For gliders up to 25kg, the Site Permit had allowed a maximum altitude of 1500 feet above the ground below the glider.

The Treasurer advised that, to be on the safe side, if flying a heavy scale model, it had been best to limit altitude to 1200 feet and not exceed that.

The conversation continued, with members discussing how this regulation might have been enforced. It was agreed that the local constabulary would likely not have been interested in monitoring this, and the only potential reports would have come from full-size aircraft. In these cases, the full-size pilots would likely have claimed the model had been either above or below them. Since the model glider pilot could not have proven their altitude, the law would likely have favoured the full-size pilot's word.

The Chairman thanked the Scale Secretary and moved on to the Competition Report.

Appendix C: 2024 Competition Report

The Vice Chairman had stepped forward to deliver the Competition Secretary's report in the absence of Nigel Witchalls.

During the report, Mike Bleathman asked Graeme Mahoney whether the club had held any winter competitions in the 2023-24 period. Graeme had responded that none had taken place.

Mike then continued, explaining that the only competition held at White Sheet in 2024 had been the White Sheet English Open. Both event days had gone ahead as planned, with the competition starting around midday on the first day. The participants had been fortunate to experience two excellent days of flying. Eighteen pilots had competed, and, for what was believed to be the first time in the club's history, a White Sheet member—Graeme Mahoney—had won the competition.

This announcement was met with a round of applause from the AGM attendees, who celebrated Graeme Mahoney's achievement. Graeme followed up with a lighthearted comment, saying, "You know, I've come second five times before this!" This had prompted laughter from the members.

Mike concluded the report by noting that no other events had taken place due to adverse weather conditions. Members reflected that the White Sheet English Open had been an excellent competition.

The Vice Chairman resumed, expressing gratitude towards both Nigel Witchalls and Graeme Mahoney for their efforts in organising the competitions over the past five years, including the Winter Leagues and the English Open. He announced that, moving forward, both Will Fourie and he would be jointly taking on the role of Competition Secretary.

The members voiced their agreement with a round of applause, showing their appreciation for Graeme Mahoney, Nigel Witchalls, and Mike Bleathman for delivering the report on behalf of the Competition Secretary.

Appendix d: Open Slopes Report

I was co-opted to the club committee in April 2024 to fulfil the new role of Open Slopes Secretary.

My remit was to make the weather calls for the Open Slopes scheduled dates and communicate the decisions to the membership. I was also required to attend most events and act as safety officer or appoint a safety officer.

I have been extremely fortunate in that all of the 2024 Open Slopes events during my tenure have gone ahead as planned. There were six events between May and October, three on Morgan's and three on Spencer's. Four events took place on Sundays, and two on Saturdays.

We experienced a huge variation of flying conditions during these events with the associated challenges, including, periods of flat calm to gusts in excess of 40 mph, and frequent huge thermals.

During these events a total of seventy-five members attended and flew which is an average of 12.5 per event.

A few recollections: -

- July. Jess flew his Saker to just over 2,000 feet.
- August. There were four maiden flights. Wind speed varied between 15 mph and 40 mph. The spot landing marker was destroyed by an enormous Rottweiler.
- September. Multi/Foss day. Jerry flying his 4M Alpenbrise was surprised to see a LIDL glider close up behind him at about 500 feet being flown by Russ! Thanks to Graham Hill for bringing a R/E glider and buddy box system for any interested parties to have-a-go.

During all of these events there was infrequent, minimal damage to models and I would like to thank the participating fliers for attending and for flying safely.

Peter Cushion
Co-opted Open Slopes Secretary

Appendix e: Petes Cushion — Slopes Safety Suggestion

Pete began by explaining that his suggestion was based on observations he had made while overseeing the slopes, recognising that safety could potentially be compromised when models weren't as airworthy as they should be. He proposed a simple yet effective solution: for pilots arriving with new models, recently finished models, or second-hand models to ask a fellow club member to check the aircraft before its first flight. He pointed out that it's easy to misalign control surfaces, experience intermittent connections, or overlook issues with the airframe, particularly when eager pilots are focused on the excitement of flying. He suggested that pilots could ask a buddy to quickly review the basics—control surfaces and linkages—before launching the model. Pete mentioned that this was something he did regularly, often asking Graeme to double-check his models, and suggested it become standard practice, or at least strongly encouraged.

The Scale Secretary added his support, sharing that he had often observed pilots wagging their ailerons to check their function, but not noticing if they were moving in the wrong direction. He confessed to having made this mistake himself in the past.

Simon Minson expressed his agreement with Pete, emphasising that this was something worth encouraging, although he was glad it wasn't being proposed as an official rule. He raised concerns about how such a rule could be policed, who would be responsible for carrying out the inspections, and the potential legal implications if a model deemed safe by a club member was later involved in an accident. He shared an anecdote about his own mistake: after setting up a model with everything seemingly functioning correctly, he discovered after launch that the rudder was reversed. This was because he had accidentally set his transmitter to memory one instead of memory two.

David Bradfield jokingly asked if Simon flew full-sized aircraft in the same way, prompting laughter from the group.

Simon replied, amid the laughter, that while he understood the humour, his point was that no matter how experienced a pilot is, everyone should feel comfortable asking for help when inspecting a model.

The Scale Secretary, who had previously taught full-size aviation, shared a similar experience, noting that even with aileron checks, he had made mistakes with models.

David Bradfield added, "If there's any doubt, you don't fly it."

The Vice Chairman then asked Pete if the model in question during the incident he witnessed was a Fox, recalling an earlier incident with a Fox model that had been landed precariously.

The Open Slopes Secretary clarified that the model wasn't the issue, causing some laughter among the members.

He continued, detailing a particularly concerning incident where a model had flown too far downwind and landed in a field on the other side of the track. Had the model come over the track, it could have posed a danger to pedestrians or vehicles.

A member commented that a similar incident had occurred during one of the Scale days, involving the same pilot.

The Treasurer remarked that the discussion seemed to be veering off-topic, as it wasn't necessarily about the competence of the pilots, but rather about offering assistance to those with new models who may have invested a great deal of time and money. He highlighted that pilots often hesitate to

ask if they've made any errors during the build or setup process. He shared a personal experience of flying a lightweight model, only to realise that one of the tail surfaces wasn't functioning correctly due to a mistake he made while swapping model memories on his transmitter. He emphasised that, while he got away with it this time, it could have ended badly, resulting in a costly accident. He expressed that Pete's suggestion was sensible, as it could prevent potential mishaps.

The Scale Secretary playfully asked the Treasurer if the tree involved in his earlier story was okay.

The Treasurer reassured him that the tree was fine and even looked beautiful, with bits hanging from the branches— "Christmas come early!" The members laughed.

Simon Minson suggested the idea of a short reminder talk at the start of each flying day to encourage pilots to check their models.

The Scale Secretary replied that while it was a great idea in theory, the fluid nature of attendance throughout the day made it difficult to implement a pre-flight briefing like those in general aviation.

Simon responded optimistically, hoping that members would continue to repeat the reminder as others arrived.

David Bradfield added that even with a constant briefing, some pilots might still neglect to check their models properly.

The Scale Secretary reiterated that the issue wasn't about the models themselves, but rather the piloting. He and Pete had both spoken to the individual involved, and others likely had too, but it hadn't made a difference.

The Vice Chairman reminded everyone that the individual in question was not a club member, meaning they had little control over his actions.

Simon Minson remarked that when everyone was gathered together...

The Scale Secretary interrupted, pointing out that this wasn't always the case, as the group could start with five members but end up with four different people throughout the day.

Simon acknowledged that, even if only a small percentage of members received the briefing at the start, it would still make a difference over time.

David Bradfield stated that the person running the event should always feel empowered to step in if they see something concerning.

The Scale Secretary agreed that this was already happening when the person running the day noticed an issue.

The Treasurer suggested that, in addition to changing the mindset of those who stand back, it would be helpful to encourage members to step forward and offer assistance, like checking a model if needed.

The Scale Secretary noted that part of the challenge was overcoming the reluctance some pilots have, either from a sense of superiority or from a fear of appearing hesitant.

The Chairman concluded that, ultimately, it was in everyone's best interest for the club to be seen as ensuring the safety of all users of the site, in cooperation with the National Trust.

Richard Edmunds raised a concern about how to communicate this suggestion to members who weren't present at the meeting.

David Bradfield replied that it would be minuted, so the information would be available to all.

The Treasurer suggested sending a short note to members, encouraging them to ask for assistance and to offer help when needed.

David Bradfield reminded the group that a similar initiative had been done after the Covid lockdown, where members were encouraged to check their models or have someone else check them, especially if they hadn't flown the model in a while. A reminder was always worthwhile.

Richard Edmunds asked if one of the Secretaries could send a note before specific events, such as Scale days or Open Slopes days.

The Scale Secretary agreed that this could be done, but cautioned that it was a larger problem than just sending out a note.

The Chairman agreed, noting that while the committee could send reminders for specific events, it was equally important to reach those who fly on ordinary days.

The Honourable Secretary clarified that Pete's suggestion wasn't intended to be a rule but rather advice. Before a model's first flight—whether newly built or newly acquired—it should be inspected for airworthiness by an experienced club member. It was an opportunity for members to ask for a second opinion without feeling embarrassed, and to make this process a normal part of pre-flight checks, much like Ian had suggested. No one is infallible, and creating an environment where asking for help is encouraged would be beneficial for everyone.

The Chairman concluded by emphasising that the key would be to continuously remind members of the importance of pre-flight checks.

Appendix f: Tim Brocklehurst — WSRFC 50th Anniversary discussion

The Club Secretary informed the meeting that Tim Brocklehurst had requested a discussion point be raised regarding the club's 50th anniversary. Tim had suggested extending an invitation to other local clubs, including the Bath, Wilts & North Dorset Gliding Club, for a special 50th anniversary event. The committee had already considered this and proposed using one of the Open Slopes days for the event. This seemed ideal, as Open Slopes is inclusive of all model glider classes, and invitations are typically extended to all members. While the committee had discussed the idea of elevating the event with additional attractions, no decisions had yet been made on what these could be. The Secretary encouraged members to contribute ideas during the meeting but added with a smile, "Don't just come up with ideas; tell us what you're going to do to help us with your idea!" This prompted laughter from the members.

The Secretary, nodding to the Treasurer, remarked, "I'm learning, Ian!" causing more laughter.

The Vice Chairman offered to prepare bacon rolls for the 50th anniversary event, to which the Secretary responded, "That's the sort of idea I like—brilliant!" The Treasurer then recalled that the F3F group had served cake from the back of a van at one of their events.

The Secretary continued, mentioning that the committee had already spoken with Russell about the 50th anniversary. This would be reflected in the 2025 calendar and membership cards, both of which had been designed by Russell. Russell Whittam then commented that it would have been nice to incorporate some gold elements into the design, but the printers had said they couldn't do that.

David Bradfield jokingly asked, "Isn't gold the traditional colour for a 50th anniversary?" The Secretary confirmed that it was, before inviting further ideas from the members.

David Bradfield suggested showcasing the oldest model any member had, prompting Richard Edmunds to quip, "That's the wife!" This comment caused members to erupt in laughter.

David Bradfield then asked if anyone had been a member since the club's founding in 1975. The Treasurer responded that he didn't think so, but Graeme Mahoney mentioned that he had joined in 1977. David Bradfield jokingly declared, "It's down to you then, Graeme, as the last remaining original member."

The Treasurer added that he had joined in 1980, and the Chairman mentioned that he had joined in 1976, with Mike Cooper likely being a year ahead of him.

Richard Edmunds suggested writing an article for the club's website and possibly for RCM&E. The Secretary thanked Richard for volunteering, prompting more laughter from the members. Richard quickly clarified that he hadn't been in the club long enough to take on the task.

The Scale Secretary reassured Richard that length of membership was not a requirement for writing the article, which resulted in more laughter from the group.

The Treasurer offered to help Richard by contacting Keith Thomas, who had been a writer for RCM&E and was known for his expertise. He suggested that it would be worthwhile to ask Keith for his thoughts on the club's early days.

The Chairman also mentioned Sean Wallbank, another esteemed member, who had been seen around Sherborne, and added that Mike Cooper was likely the longest-standing White Sheet member. He encouraged anyone with ideas or input to come forward, especially for celebrating White Sheet's 50th anniversary.

David Bradfield jokingly said that the responsibility probably fell to Jess Nicholls and Graeme Mahoney, the "old..."

Graeme Mahoney interjected, "The old gits..."

This caused more laughter among the members.

Graeme Mahoney then mentioned another original member, but the Chairman replied that he had passed away some time ago. Graeme, somewhat stunned, responded, "Bloody hell, oh well, that just leaves us then, doesn't it?"

The members laughed again, and the Vice Chairman joked, "You've been through them all, Graeme."

A member commented, "It's a bit frightening, really."

The Chairman agreed, then steered the conversation forward, saying, "Let's move on," as the laughter continued.

Appendix g: Honorary Secretary

The Chairman informed the meeting that, regrettably, our current Club Secretary has indicated that he will not be standing for re-election.

The Secretary confirmed that he wasn't standing for re-election but that he had not received any interest from members in taking on the role leading up to the AGM. He expressed hope that someone at the meeting might step forward.

Once again, silence filled the room, accompanied by the occasional sighting of tumbleweed crossing the floor!

The Secretary attempted to persuade members by highlighting an important point raised earlier by Ian Duff — the fact that if no one takes on the role of Secretary, the club cannot continue and will ultimately be forced to wind up. He emphasised how crucial it was for someone to volunteer for the position.

The room remained silent, with only the occasional sound of creaking chairs as members sank deeper into their seats!

The Secretary made it clear that he did not wish to continue in the role and asked once more if anyone was interested in stepping up as Club Secretary.

Once again, the room fell into silence, with the only sound audible being the steady drip of sweat from the Secretary's forehead!

Mike Bleathman raised the following question: "Could it be possible, I know it sounds daft, but as I'm already doing the Competition Secretary role with Will, are you only allowed to hold one post?"

The Treasurer and Secretary responded in unison, "No!"

Mike Bleathman then added that he would consider doing both roles, with Will helping him next year.

David Bradfield, somewhat taken aback, asked, "What, Club Secretary...?"

Before David could finish his sentence, Mike Bleathman quickly interrupted, "NO!"

Members laughed.

Mike continued, speaking directly to David Bradfield, "No, Competition Secretary, listen boy, listen!"

Members laughed again.

David questioned which role Mike was referring to. Mike clarified that he was talking about the Club Secretary position.

Understanding Mike's suggestion of sharing the role, much like the Competition Secretary role, the Treasurer remarked that it would indeed be possible to have joint Secretaries. However, it seemed there was still no interest in the position from one member let alone two. The Club Secretary asked Mike if he would consider taking on both the Club Secretary and Competition Secretary roles.

Mike Bleathman jokingly asked, "Do we get an Apple computer with it?"

Members laughed, with the Club Secretary replying, "Unfortunately, no... no Apple computer!"

Mike 'firmly' stated that he would not take on the Club Secretary role this year, adding emphatically, "I'm not doing it this year or next year."

Members laughed

David Bradfield, turned to the Treasurer and asked, "What does the club actually need to function?"

The Treasurer responded, "It needs three: the Chairman, the Treasurer, and the Secretary, as per our constitution."

David then asked if these were the key posts outlined in the constitution.

The Treasurer confirmed, "Yes, these three positions are critical. By virtue of the constitution, these posts cannot be held by just two people. One of these posts cannot overlap with another. However, a Membership Secretary could also serve as Club Secretary, as Membership Secretary is considered an ancillary post."

He continued, "It's a perennial problem. We have a very healthy club, with lots of people who enjoy flying at White Sheet. But, with that enjoyment comes the responsibility of keeping the club running. We need three key individuals who are willing to take on the tasks necessary to keep the club alive. There's no doubt that if the club were to wind up, it would rise again immediately because of the demand for access to the slopes."

The Secretary added, "The problem is, we don't seem to get any volunteers. No one is stepping forward."

The Treasurer, with a grin, teased, "Do I hear a volunteer? Did I hear you say you volunteered?"

The Secretary and the members laughed, with the Secretary replying, "No, I didn't say I volunteered."

The club Secretary continued, explaining that he had mentioned in March at the committee meeting that he didn't want to stand for re-election as Club Secretary at the 2024 AGM. At that time, Ian, the Treasurer, had reminded him that if no one volunteered for the role, the club would have to wind up. Reluctantly, the Secretary agreed that if no one came forward on the run-up to or at the AGM, he would stay on as Club Secretary until a volunteer comes forward. The Secretary said he would also remain to offer support to the new Secretary.

The Secretary then said, "It seems we still have no volunteers for the role, so, not that I have much choice, I will stand again as Club Secretary, that is if the members vote me in."

Members applauded.

The Secretary added, "As Ian said earlier, members will need to think seriously about this and discuss the need for a Club Secretary before the next AGM. Ian will definitely be stepping down, and I will likely be stepping down too."

The Treasurer commented that he believed in fairness, it's important to rotate committee members, and having a changing committee is vital for the club's long-term health.

David Bradfield quickly interjected, "No!"

Mike Bleathman agreed with David, saying, "We've gotten used to you."

The Treasurer reiterated, "A healthy club has a committee that rotates regularly."

David Bradfield quipped, "I have a picture of this on my wall at home — with soap in their hands."

Members laughed.

The Secretary then said, "If I'm going to do this, we need someone to propose me as... For goodness' sake... look at how quickly the hands went up!"

Members, led by the Treasurer, erupted in laughter.

The Secretary remarked, "I don't know who raised their hand first; so many hands went up at the same time."

The Treasurer continued to laugh.

Mike Bleathman added, "You wouldn't have gotten a fiver out of the sky then!"

The Secretary responded, "Okay, we'll say Mike proposed."

The Honorary Secretary post was quickly approved.

The Treasurer continued to laugh while commenting, "There is no escape!"

The Chairman thanked Andrew for continuing as Club Secretary and reminded members that they needed to start thinking about filling the positions of Club Secretary and Treasurer for 2026. He also expressed a hope that more members would attend the AGM in the future, joking that it would be great if the room became too small — though he didn't foresee that happening.

The Club Secretary took the opportunity to thank all those who had attended the AGM, expressing his sincere appreciation. He acknowledged that the lingering effects of COVID had likely impacted attendance, as many members were understandably still cautious about returning to social gatherings.

Appendix h: Membership Secretary

The Chairman moved on to the next role, Membership Secretary, and mentioned that there was one volunteer but asked if anyone else might be interested.

David Bradfield invited other members to express interest.

The Treasurer, joking, remarked that he couldn't hear anything over the stampede.

This elicited laughter from the members.

The Chairman continued, acknowledging that the position wasn't necessarily long-term but noted that the current Membership Secretary had held the role for over twenty years.

A member commented that this must be a record.

David Bradfield agreed, congratulating Den on this remarkable achievement.

The Chairman also congratulated Den, expressing deep appreciation for his long-standing commitment.

Members applauded.

The Chairman concluded by confirming that the only nomination for Membership Secretary was David Bradfield.

Appendix i: Mike Bleathman presents & Prize draw

The Honourable Secretary informed members that Mike was getting ready.

Mike Bleathman responded, “He’s getting ready.”

The Chairman then said, “Mike Bleathman takes the floor.”

Mike Bleathman continued, “He’s getting ready!”

Members laughed.

Mike Bleathman began by saying, “The AGM is upon us, and another year has flown by—it’s almost gone now. I just want to take a moment to mention some club members, their families, and others I may not know, who have been battling serious health issues this year. I’ve spoken to some of them and passed on the best wishes from the committee and members.”

He then said, “Along with William, now as joint Competition Secretaries, I’d like to thank Nigel and Graeme for their work over the last five or six years organising the competitions. Thank you very much.”

Mike then shifted topics: “Now, I’d like to move on to the esteemed Mug.”

Members laughed.

Mike continued, “I’d like to thank David for donating these mugs every year. Bless him.”

The Secretary led the members in thanking David Bradfield.

David Bradfield jokingly said, “You say that now...”

Members laughed.

Mike Bleathman added, “They are highly coveted and often the subject of bribes—buns, mostly—by people trying to bribe me. But I’ve rejected all of these.”

Members laughed.

Mike then announced, “The Save of the Year award goes to Nick Whittaker for a fantastic save at Morgans. Nick, you’ve won Save of the Year!”

Members applauded as Mike presented Nick with the mug for Save of the Year.

Mike continued, “Now, we have two long-service mugs to award today—one to Den Larking for his many years as Membership Secretary, and another to Jim Emptage.”

David Bradfield called out, “You can treasure that!”

Members applauded as the mugs were presented.

Mike then turned to the next award: “Now, for the Land-Out award...”

Members, in true Parliamentary style, called out, “Awww.”

David Bradfield remarked, “It’s the biggie!”

Members nervously laughed as the tension built for Mike’s announcement of the winner.

Mike Bleathman built the suspense like a judge on a talent show, saying, “The award has been won by a pilot who’s a member of the National Team... in a discipline that requires precision landing... I was there to witness this stunning display... of pride before a fall. The pilot had told me how his power-flying mates had praised his ability to land his model at his feet. But this next flight... did not end well. In fact, if he’d been wearing a pair of canoes, he wouldn’t have been close!”

Members laughed.

Mike then announced, “This one is for you, Ian. I know, it’ll be in landfill tomorrow.”

Members laughed loudly and applauded as Ian Duff accepted the 2024 Land-Out award.

Mike then informed the members, “The Worst Launch award goes to William Fourie. That’s three times in a row. I think it must be because Jet2 don’t supply mugs.”

Members laughed.

Mike continued, “In Will’s absence, I’ll take this on his behalf. He’ll be really proud.”

Members laughed again.

Mike concluded by saying, “Lastly, we have the ‘It’ll be Fine’ mug. This one goes to Mr ‘I’ve flown inverted across the channel twice...’ Mr Hosie, this is for you.”

As Mike leaned forward with the mug, Will Hosie asked, “Who is this for?”

Mike replied, “For you, It’ll be fine.”

Will Hosie said, “Thank you so much.”

Members applauded.

Mike Bleathman finished by saying, “And that’s it for another year...”

The Honourable Secretary interjected, “No, we’ve not finished yet. We still have the prize draw.”

The Chairman added, “Oh yes, in the back of your AGM agenda booklet, you will find a number.”

The Honourable Secretary explained, “The prizes are three sums covering the BMFA membership for 2025.”

The Chairman asked the Treasurer, “Is this to use some of the funds?”

The Treasurer replied, “Yes.”

The Honourable Secretary clarified, “Yes, and also as a thank you for attending the AGM—putting yourselves out, fuel to get here, time away from family, and spending some of your valuable time with us this afternoon.”

The Treasurer informed members that the committee had decided on this early, but as you all know, the BMFA has not yet set their fee structure. Given that the 2024 fee was around £47.00 and the

2025 fee is likely to increase, we proposed a sum of £50.00 for three prizes to be given to those who attended.

The fastest response of the afternoon came when the Honourable Secretary asked if everyone had an agenda with a draw number on the back page. Not surprisingly, there was an immediate response.

The Honourable Secretary continued, “For fairness, I will ask my unbiased assistant, Apple’s Siri, to generate a random number. If that number matches the number on your agenda booklet, you’ve won a prize.”

David Bradfield jokingly said, “I don’t trust Siri.”

Members laughed.

The Honourable Secretary assured members that if, in the unlikely event, Siri picked the same number twice, the second number would be skipped to ensure fairness—members could only win one prize. But of course, Siri had other plans!

