

## **BMFC 2019 Chairman's Report at AGM - Richard Sharman**

May I remind you that the purpose of the BMFC is to manage model flying at the Beaulieu Heath airfield on behalf of the Forestry Commission(FC) which has responsibility for Crown Lands within the New Forest National Park. I am pleased to report that 2019 has been a good year for model flying in general. I am again much indebted to Mark (secretary), Ian(flight line), Trevor(treasurer) and Roger(freeflight) for their excellent work during the year.

**The number of permits issued in 2019** was 280, down slightly from 288 the previous year. 200 were renewals and 80 new flyers. 6 permit applications were refused for non-payment and/or inappropriate activity. 100% of permit holders were BMFA members, but we are unable to tell the distribution between club members and country members as the new BMFA membership system does not give us this information.

*The Beaulieu flying community seems to be in a healthy state.*

**Model flyers** have been mainly RC (88% of all permits) with Free Flight(12%) down slightly on last year. Electric power has now definitely taken over: 48% of power users claim electric, whereas only 34% name IC although some IC users may have converted to electric as well. 15% of power users name multi-rotor (drone) use, and 4% helis.

*The increased bias to Electric power is appreciated by the FC as more environmentally friendly.*

**The proportion of flyers having some BMFA certificate** is still low (71% having no achievement qualification, and 27% having at least an A certificate. This is similar to last year. It is important as a demonstration of the awareness of public safety that we work to increase the proportion of flyers with some qualification, and it is disappointing that despite having your chairman as BMFA Area Chief Examiner for the BMFA Southern Area the number people attempting qualification has been low.

*The BMFC would like to help raise the level of skill of pilots.*

**The BMFC website** has been well used. 82% of renewals or new applications have been via the website, the remaining ones either at the field or directly with the secretary. This will continue in 2020.

*Permits will still be available by application in person at the field, but not by post.*

**The weather** has been varied this year but some long spells of good weather have allowed much normal flying activity.

*As a result the facility has been well used.*

**The access track** from the Lymington Road, was not closed by the FC over the winter, so that the alternative entry system was not required. However we have established the use of the alternative entry as standard, in case it is needed.

*The access track is on the FC schedule to maintain in 2020.*

**The condition of the car park, airfield and surrounding areas** is good. The area seems to be less frequented by dog walkers this year. We have had a spate of "trail bike" abuse recently. A very good "site clean up day" was held recently when a number of flyers helped scan the heath for lost models, repair the separation barrier, and clear obstacles from the runway. One of the FC Rangers was on hand to check and advise.

*My thanks to all those who turned out and did an excellent job.*

*The FC are generally very positive about our good influence on the area.*

***Flight Line discipline*** has been good, with relatively little flying behind the flight line, and most pilots being intelligent over the need to take turns.

*This is very much appreciated.*

***Drone operation.*** The designated place to operate drones has been used by multi-rotor flyers as far as we have been aware, and this has largely prevented clashes between drone operation and normal FW and H operation.

*Drone flying has not become as popular as expected.*

*Illegal Drone usage elsewhere in the Forest is becoming a serious matter and the Police and Forestry are working on it.*

***Air Law***, as it affects model flying, has changed in 2019 and may change again in 2020. The BMFC is keeping a close watch on the changes as they may affect operation at Beaulieu. We are cooperating with the BMFA to understand and react to proposed government legislation. The Drone Bill which was supposed to be passed by parliament has not made its way into law as yet, but is in the current Queens Speech list, albeit without a date. The government is set to introduce registration and competence testing in November. We will discuss this whole topic separately later in the AGM.

*Conventionally operated fixed wing and heli flying can continue. .*

***Issues for 2020 are:***

- changes to Air Law, including registration and qualification,
- supervision of varying activities on the airfield (drones vs conventional flight)
- Potential changes to Licence in 2020 to meet new environmental requirements.