

## **BMFC: Chairman's Report for 2020 - Richard Sharman**

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.

It is an understatement to say that 2020 has been an unusual year. However, I am again much indebted to Mark (secretary), Ian(flight line), Trevor(treasurer) and Roger(free flight) for their excellent work during the year. As you are all aware the Covid-19 induced Lockdown prevented flying at the airfield from March until June. Limited flying access was obtained in July and full access since August. Sadly, the best flying weather was experienced during the lockdown. Since the resumption of flying the weather has been variable, but some exceedingly good conditions did occur.

**The number of permits issued in 2020** was 232. This total number is down significantly from 289 the previous year. The proportion of new applications to renewals was down from about 30% to 24% this year. Renewals were up from 70% to 76%. This probably is an effect of the Covid restrictions reducing occasional visitors. 6 permit applications were refused for non-payment and/or inappropriate activity. 100% of permit holders were BMFA members, and CAA operators.

**Model flyers** have been mainly RC (89% of all permits) with Free Flight(11%) down slightly on last year. The proportion of electric to IC usage remains the same, although this may be because we didn't carry out a systematic poll this year.

**Flyers were required to have a competence qualification this year.** Most flyers have a CAA competence qualification, or the equivalent BMFA qualification (RCC or Achievement) The few that didn't were because models under 250grams do not require it.

**The BMFC website** has been well used. Nearly all permit renewals and new applications have been handled via the website, the remaining ones either at the field or directly with the secretary.

**The weather** has been generally good this year, but unfortunately the long spells of fine weather corresponded to the lockdown, and extended lockdown period and so were lost. Since the lockdown has been relieved the weather has been mixed, but much good flying has taken place.

**The access track** from the Lymington Road, was closed by the FC during the lockdown period. The alternative entry system from the Brockenhurst Road was used successfully during the relief period until the Lockdown was ended.

**The condition of the car park, airfield and surrounding areas** is good. The frequency of dog walkers has again been low, but we have had several bad incidents "trail bike" abuse again.

**Flight Line discipline** has again been good.

**Drone operation.** As far as we are aware the incidence of drone flying has reduced. Conversations with the Forestry seem to indicate the drone flying is problematic in the forest and may be restricted in future.

### **Issues for 2021 are:**

- further changes to Air Law, including registration and qualification, are expected.
- potential changes to our Licence conditions to meet new environmental requirements. are expected.