

ACU EASTERN

(AFILIATED TO THE Auto Cycle Union)

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Board 2022 held Sunday 13th November 2022 at Gt Blakenham Parish

Rooms

President	Mr A Penny
Chairman	Mr P Armes
Vice Chairman	Mr A Foskew
Treasurer	Mr A Hay
Secretary	Mrs L Ralph

C Ralph	Woodbridge	P Fenn	Essex & Suffolk
A R Chaplin	Sudbury/VP	K Doherty	ECMC
Mr J Blyth	Woodbridge	Mr D Cordle	Ipswich
A Wright	Halstead	A Kenny	Harwich
R Hearn	Stowmarket	K Weavers	Halstead
Mrs V Hearn	Stowmarket	Mrs D Blyth	Woodbridge
P Sewter	Norwich Vikings	J Read	Woodbridge
C Keeble	Essex and Suffolk	Mrs B Douglas	Norwich Viking
S Harvey	500cc Association	G Brace	Chelmsford
T Steward	500cc Association	Mr P Hubbard	Diss
C Cook	Braintree	E Hood	Triangle

1. Mr Armes opened the meeting and thanked all for their attendance.

Apologies were accepted from: Mr R Greengrass: Mr A Brace: Mr R Booty: Mr P Nash: Mrs Y Smith: Mr C Dopson: Mr A Waters

2. **Previous Minutes** from the 2nd Board of 2022 held on 21st July were accepted as a true record. Proposed: K Weavers 2nd J Hearn.
3. **Matters Arising:** C Keeble: Minutes still not uploaded to the website. Enduro since 2018 and Grasstrack since 2019. Mr Foskew stated that the Grasstrack minutes were imminent. Enduro have had a change of committee- they will be reminded.

C Ralph: Centre Support Charge. Mr Hay confirmed that all clubs have paid apart from the Norfolk and Suffolk Junior MCC. This is ongoing but is difficult as it is in essence 'voluntary'. Mr Keeble stated that as this was voted in at Board level, it should be a matter of honour. It transpired that the Youth Centre Championship trophies had already been engraved and awarded by the N&SJMCC. Discussion on the way forward. Mr Hay recommended that time be given to pursue this matter before taking any further action.

4. **Election of Centre Secretary:**

No nominations have been received. This may have to be discussed by the Emergency Committee if no-one comes forward.

5. **To elect a Permit Secretary:**

Mrs B Douglas had been nominated and accepted the nomination. Agreed unanimously.

6. To Elect Members of the Competitions Committee.:

Nominations had been received from C Keeble: A Foskew: A Wright: P Fenn: M Beadle. All elected enbloc. Approved unanimously. Mr Keeble and Mr Foskew are ex officio members by way of Chairman and Vice Chairman but were elected as full members.

7. To confirm the recipients of the Bill Spurrell and Dick Williams Awards: Mrs Lyn Ralph (Dick Williams) and Alex Wright (Bill Spurrell). Mrs Ralph pointed out that she had already won the Dick Williams previously and that as it was a 'Lifetime' Award, felt that she should not accept. The Board disagreed and she gratefully accepted the Award. Approved unanimously.

8. To receive a report from Mr A Penny Interim Chair of the Competitions Committee.

The minutes of the 3rd competitions committee meeting held on 26th May had been circulated prior to the meeting. Item 3: End time of Permits. Mr Foskew reported that this had been discussed in AOB as the NMC Meeting where Mr Thompson had stated "Unspecific but don't take the mickey". This was felt to be unacceptable and would certainly not stand up in a court of law. Mr Harvey (500cc Assoc.) confirmed that as long as workers signed on each time they were working putting up or taking down circuits, that they would be covered. Mr Ralph suggested that Clubs, if possible, should arrange their own cover. Mr P Hubbard was concerned as he stated that clubs do not ensure that workers do sign on each time. This should be advised to all clubs by the Centre. Mr Harvey suggested that the Insurance page on the ACU website is used as a reference.

Mr Penny sought adoption of the 3rd Competitions Committee minutes. 2nd C Cook – carried unanimously.

9. Treasurers Report: To receive a report from Mr A Hay:

Mr Hay had circulated his report for Centre Finances for 2022 and Budget Proposals for 2023 prior to the meeting. Mr C Cook commented that the Honoraria had been set in 2016 and questioned if this should be increased. Following discussion, it was agreed that in the current financial situation, it would be left and discussed at another time. Mr Keeble had compared the current figure in line with what Bill Swann had received (10 guineas – now worth £1253 if updated by average wage growth or £2288 based on the national living wage for 4 hours per week): ACU Head Office owed approximately £400 in respect of unpaid rebates for basic permits issued in 2020/21, Mr Armes said that he would send an email to Neil Doctor

The recommendation of the Treasurer was as follows:

That the Board notes the current level of income and expenditure for 2022 and the approved funding arrangements between the Centre and the Gazette for the cost of the Centenary Dinner have not been put in place yet.

The Centre Board considers, and if thought fit, approves payment of the Honoraria to the 2022 Centre Officers as set out in Para 8 of the report.

The Centre Board considers, and if thinks fit, approves the draft budget for 2023.

Agreed unanimously.

10. To receive a report from the Facilities Fund Chairman, A Kenny

"This year saw the F/F Committee examine the first request from a club to assist them in running meetings, for quite some time. The application for extra funding was for Track racing and came from the 500cc Sidecar Association, a well-established club who once ran top quality meetings at High Easter and have now moved their circuit to Writtle. The fund request was in the form of a listed, "wish-list", containing some seventeen items, totalling: - £48750:00, which the club wished to purchase in order to improve the way their meetings ran. Phil Armes having retired, Sidge Kenny was (I think...) elected as Chairman with the Committee consisting of Roger Chaplin, Clive Dopson, Alan Foskew, Andy Hay with our secretary, Lyn, included for both discussion and advice. Paul Nash was invited to replace Phil, which he kindly agreed to do. After an initial "Zoom" meeting to establish the general feasibility of the application, the Committee later met again on "Zoom", with two representatives from the club, Trevor Steward and Shaun Harvey. Our discussions with them were very useful and convinced us that their request was worth taking up. In my opinion, two major principles should be uppermost for any committee in our position. Firstly, how secure is the club, its operation and members - and the site (or sites) where they wish to conduct their meetings? Second: How committed are they to run further meetings for many seasons into the future. For the benefit of riders, including those in this Centre? On both those points we were as reassured as I think anyone could be. The future is uncertain and we have to be cautious. We want to help clubs and further the sport but we are dealing with Centre funds – members money.

No doubt about it, the lion's share of the work was undertaken by our "moneymen": Andy and Clive. Indeed, Clive drafted out a formula whereby the club would have to purchase and prove its purchase by rendering receipts or similar on which we would donate a 20% grant per rota. This aligns with the former rule of the Facilities Fund. There is also included a time limit to get this done. Similarly, a time limit on further aid requests. In this particular case we approved an aggregated sum of: £4950, which fell below that requiring Centre Board approval – as per the rule. We had gone through the "wish-list" to deselect those items not directly concerned with either preparing the course, safety, or running the meeting. I must make a personal comment that I found a priced list of items the club would wish to purchase, useful, though we have had "single item" requests approved in the past.

May I thank the Committee and Lyn for their work and we await any further applications which may be made. "

A discussion ensued following Mr Kenny's report:

Mr Armes did not take part in this application due to ill health but he had asked the Centre Secretary to keep him updated. He was satisfied that the Facilities Fund Committee had carried out due diligence but noted that their hands are tied, as per the rules, to 20% of any application total, as long as it is not above 5% of the total fund at the time, bearing in mind that £100,000 does not last long. The Fund is intended to give Clubs a helping hand and a caveat is in place enabling applications to come before the Board for discussion if required. Reference was made to a previous grant paid to Halstead MCC, which originally had been for a request for £5000, but subsequently increased to £10,000 as it was to purchase a water bowser (one item). This was agreed by the Board, money released on receipt of a paid invoice. The current Facilities Fund membership say that was the incorrect way to handle it and subsequently changes were made to the way the Fund is administered. The 500cc Association is the second request for assistance. Mr Steward, on behalf of the 500cc Association was invited to speak. He explained that current club funds stood at £15,806.02 and if the way the Facilities Fund offer was expressed, it would mean the club would have to spend £21,000 to be able to claim back 20% (£4950) which would be ridiculous. The Club do not have an issue with the amount offered, although more would have been preferable, but it the way that it is offered. The original application made in 2020, just as lockdown struck) was for £10,000.

Mr Ralph commented that it appeared that the Facilities Fund had made the offer that way by pressure of one member rather by democratic means: He also pointed out that each time the fund was accessed, 20% of what was left would obviously reduce: that in his opinion, it may be better to consider splitting the current monies between the 17 clubs (approx.) that still run events.

Mr Cordle suggested that the Facilities Fund should be able to award 50% of any application without reference to the Board.

Mr Armes proposed that £4950 should be forwarded to the 500cc Association (in one amount) on production of a pro forma invoice and asked if that was acceptable to the Board. On a vote, 17 agreed and there was one abstention.

Mr Hay asked that the suggestions to amend the terms of the remit of the Facilities Fund be referred back to the Facilities Fund Committee for discussion – agreed.

OUTCOME: Release of the total sum of £4950 on receipt of a pro forma invoice; refer back to the facilities fund for revision of terms.

11. Report from the National Management Council Delegate (Mr A Foskew):

Mr Foskew had attended the Zoom meeting held on 12th November in place of Mrs V Hearn. Among other discussions were:

A blanket ban remains on the running of any ACU permitted event on Remembrance Sundays.

There were no candidates for the Board of Directors:

Trials and Enduro Sporting Committee: 3 vacancies filled by M Bates (19 votes) S Sewell (19 Votes) Elaine Connor (11 votes)

Colin Boniface received 5 votes.

Licence Fees: Adults £70. Youth £40. Trials Registration £20.

No increase in the price of Premier Permits. Basic permit cost tba. One day licence £15

Affiliations are all now to be made via Sport 80. Goes live on 28th November. Would like all Club affiliations completed by 1st December. Costs to remain the same for affiliation. All permits to be issued by Rugby from 1st January 2023. Delegates had complained that if this was to be the case, local knowledge would be lost. Following discussion, it was agreed that Centre permit officers would check the permit applications and then forward to Rugby to be actioned.

Improper use of social media – an addition regarding this was added to the A CU rule book.

Comment made that reports from Board and Committee meetings have not been published.

Access to Forestry Areas – a ‘test’ is to be completed with licence holders being the point of contact for Forestry matters. S Harvey had attended a Sustainability Meeting and commented that if clubs run events in woodlands, someone in the club needs to have this ticket as the FC may be asking for CO2 emissions information. Clubs encouraged to contact ACU Rugby for assistance and information on this. To be raised with Andy Waters.

There will be no ACU Handbook printed. May be downloaded. The meeting had concluded at 15.40pm.

Mr C Keeble enquired if anything had changed on the issue of someone standing for Director having to resign from a Sporting Committee first. J Blyth responded that nothing had changed.

Mr Penny advised the Board that the ACU will be re-structuring and this is to be discussed at the May meeting. It will also review the Sporting Committee Chairs automatically becoming Directors. Mr Armes commented that ACU Rugby should be looking to run on a more professional level.

12. **Eastern Centre Gazette:**

To receive a report from Gazette Editor, Mr P Armes.

Mr Armes stated that as there is effectively no need for regs and entry forms to be printed in the Gazette, there is no longer any need for a paper gazette. Over the last 6 months, only Trials have published their regs, and with the permits for Trials now being issued from Rugby, via Centre Permit Officers, this will also cease as all entries will be online only.

Personally, Mr Armes feels that the Gazette would benefit from being a quarterly magazine which would contain articles, event reports etc and could therefore be extended for sporting fans to access. Mrs Blyth asked it would be both online and in paper form. That is to be further discussed by the new 2023 board .

C Ralph said a decision need to be made as clubs would need to set their membership fees soon and clubs will need to decide which way to go.

To receive a report from Gazette Finances and Distribution:

Mr Greengrass had sent apologies and circulated a finance report prior to the meeting:

It showed a deficit for the period 1st July to 30th September of £1406.38. Mr Armes stated that the figure was nearer to £1000 as he had recently sent several cheques to Mr Greengrass.

Barclays Current Account stands at £14,686.68 with the Reward Account balance at £37,111.94.

Current copies of the Gazette distributed are 273 + some complementary copies sent by Mr E Hood.

13. **To receive a report from P Sewter Webmaster:**

Following appeals last year for more reports from some of the disciplines, this year has seen a greater variety of editorial content on the site. This welcome change has helped make the site a much better experience for our visitors, the numbers of which have remained fairly constant. I would also like to thank the recorders for regular updates to championship standings throughout the season. Unfortunately, this does not extend to those involved in youth motocross, who have never supplied me with any information on either individual events or Centre championships. In addition to improving the website, the knock-on effect of these submissions has been to enable the development of the Gazette into a more editorially based magazine, now that it is no longer needed for the distribution of entry forms.

As I have noted in the past, the vast majority of clubs now use Facebook and other social media options to communicate with their members. An increasing number simply use the Centre as a flag of convenience, having no interest in the day to day running, or financing of ACU Eastern. In addition to the established alternatives, the site is now about to be undermined by the ACU itself with the introduction of the Sport80 system - the latest in a long line of attempts by the ACU Chairman to achieve his avowed intent of destroying the regional centres. One of the facilities supposedly on offer is the option for clubs to run their own website within the system. This is very similar to what we offered clubs almost 15 years ago to a very lukewarm reception. It will be interesting to see how this develops.

Given the above, it would seem that there is no longer a need for the Centre website. However, if clubs still wish to run Centre Championship rounds, there would still be a need for a central location for information such as championship regulations, results, event dates, mail shots of important notices, lists of local officials etc. It would also be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to administer the reserved number scheme for motocross.

In my report last year, I mentioned that I was retiring in July 2023 and closing down my server. Given the loss of both Phil Armes and Lyn Ralph from key positions I do not wish to create yet another vacancy to be filled, but because I am ceasing to trade upon retirement it will no longer be possible for me to continue to run the site on a commercial basis.

I therefore put forward the following options for consideration at the AGM:

1. I stand down as webmaster and we turn the server and website off in April 2023.
2. The Centre rents its own server space and the site is transferred to this, with a new webmaster. *
3. I continue to run the website with an annual bursary to cover the cost of running the server, software updates etc.

Whatever decision is reached I am contracted to run the site until March 31st 2023, and will honour this contract, if required, or give all reasonable assistance to a new webmaster.

Paul Sewter

** If a new webmaster is appointed, it should be noted that the existing site is created on a Mac using Rapidweaver with Stacks, Foundation, Total CMS and several other plugins. These*

Following discussion of the above report, the Board took a vote and option 3, to carry on with an honorarium, was approved unanimously. The amount of the honorarium to be set at the 1st Board of 2023.

Mr Sewter was asked if the Gazette went to a quarterly publication, if he would edit it? He stated he probably would.

C Ralph proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Sewter.

14. Access, Environment and Rights of Way matters: To receive a report from Mr Ray Booty.

Mr Booty was not present but had forwarded the following report:

The first responses from the Landscapes Review have now been received. There is much work going on in the background to create a workable solution. In essence the government have understood that a legislative solution will be extremely difficult to implement. As a result, LARA (Land Access and Recreation Association) have issued the following statement:

"Since Defra's consultation on the Landscapes Review has closed, we have been in dialogue with Defra about next steps. Discussions are revolving around an alternative to legislation, which we hope will progress to a successful conclusion and enable us to announce further details over the coming months. There is no doubt that all those who supported the campaign have helped to make the Government consider other options to legislation."

Thank you to everyone who took the trouble to complete the questionnaire, your responses have made a difference.

15. To receive a report from Mrs D Blyth, ACU Eastern Benevolent Fund Officer:

July and August saw a steady follow of donations to the ACU Ben Fund, with large donation from the South Western Centre from riders' donations, and a large donation from the family of Roger Stockton in memory. Donations are still down on pre Covid, with no cases in the Eastern Centre being claimed for at this time. The Ben Fund has now received from this Centre a cheque from the Motocross Riders numbers scheme, the total being £1215, many thanks should go to the riders.

16 ACU Eastern Centenary Celebration: Mr A Penny/Mrs V Hearn

Mr Penny reported that the event had been held on Friday 21st October at Stoke by Nayland Resort and attended by approximately 70 people. This had been funded partly by The Centre. Mr Penny stated that those who did not attend had missed a really good evening. Unfortunately, Mr Gary Thompson and his wife had been unable to attend due to suffering from Covid, but ACU Chairman, Mr Roy Humphrey, and his wife had been invited guests.

Mr Humphrey was Guest Speaker and Mr Kenny, ACU Eastern Archivist also spoke on the history of ACU Eastern. Mrs Hearn stated that a thankyou card had been received from the Newmarket Club, Ed and Hazel Curtis, thanking the Centre Officials for putting on a lovely event.

17. Any Other Business:

Mr Armes thanked Mr Paul Sewter for all his invaluable help to him personally and for all his work with the Gazette and the Website.

Mr C Keeble – expressed thanks to those present for voting him in as the new ACU Eastern Chairman.

He sought agreement to change the first Board of 2023 to take place in January instead of March – agreed by all present.

Also sought permission to act as Chair Designate to enable him to speak to Officials on Centre business – agreed.

There being no further business, Mr Armes closed the meeting at 4.50pm