

ACU EASTERN
(AFFILIATED TO THE Auto Cycle Union)
Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the Board 2023 held Monday 10th July 2023
Claydon and Barham Community Centre

President	Mr A Penny (AP)
Chairman	Mr C Keeble (CK)
Vice Chairman	Mr A Foskew (AF)
Treasurer	Mr A Hay (AH)
Minutes Secretary	Mrs B Fenn (BF)

Also in attendance were:-

P Fenn (PF)	Essex & Suffolk Border	D Blyth (DB)	Woodbridge
E Hood (EH)	Ipswich Triangle	A Kenny (AK)	Harwich
R Chaplin (RC)	Sudbury	I Johnston (IJ)	Castle Colchester
J Douglas (JD)	Norwich Vikings	P Sewter (PS)	Norwich Vikings
B Douglas (BD)	Norwich Vikings	A Waters (AW)	Diss
C Cook (CC)	Braintree	R Booty (RB)	West Essex

Following the numbering of the agenda:-

1. The Chairman, CK, opened the meeting and welcomed all present. BF was welcomed as the new Minutes Secretary.

Apologies were accepted from Mr R Greengrass, Mr C Dopson, Mr M Neale, Mr C Ralph, Mr G Brace, Mrs Y Smith and Mr J and Mrs V Hearn.

2. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the last Board meeting in January 2023 had previously been circulated following that meeting and were deemed to be approved. This is in line with the agreed policy of preparing and circulating minutes within seven days of the meeting

3. Matters arising from those Minutes

The Chairman invited any further comments about those minutes – none were made.

4. Financial Report

The Centre Treasurer, AH, had prepared a Financial Report. This was circulated prior to the meeting. AH went through the contents of that report.

AK made the point that he assumed the ACU had taken a financial hit during Covid and that this had affected the figures. AH agreed but said that the introduction of Sport 80 may also be responsible.

CK commented that there is something of a lag with the ACU at present. He has asked Rugby about this and they are still getting to grips with Sport 80. The system has also taken over the management system at Head Office and there is a lot of work still to do to ascertain how much

money is due to the various Centres. It is likely to take around a year for the ACU to become settled with the new system – we will then be able to see how well it works. CK commented that affiliation fees are due to the Centres but money has not come through in respect of some of the clubs. He is closely monitoring this. Hopefully a year or so of trading will sort the issues out.

AH asked for approval of the recommendations within the financial report being:-

- The Board notes the current financial position for 2023 – **Approved**
- The Board approves the Expenses Policy attached to the Report – **Approved**
- The Board considers the proposed budget for a display at the Copdock Bike Show – **Approved**

5. Eastern Centre Gazette

Mr R Greengrass (RG), the Gazette Treasurer, had prepared a Report. Again this had been circulated prior to the meeting. As RG was not present CK read through the contents of this Report.

The postage costs for the period from January to June 2023 were higher as the stamps for the entire year had been purchased in one go at the beginning of the year. This was to cover the costs of the Gazettes being sent to Centre Officials.

CK commented that the Report was based on income in and expenditure out for the entire period. However he had also broken this down to look at the costs per month and has concluded that the Gazette is breaking even on a monthly basis. He was happy with this position.

No further questions were raised on the Report and this was unanimously approved by the Board.

6. National Council Delegate

CK confirmed that Vera Hearn had asked him to accept her resignation as the National Council delegate. This is because she is over the statutory age set by the ACU to continue in this role. CK proposed a vote of thanks to Vera Hearn for her service in this role and all were in favour of this. DB proposed that a bunch of flowers be sent to Vera Hearn to show the Board's appreciation and this was agreed.

CK confirmed that we would usually ask for nominations to take up this role. However CK has agreed to deal with the role for the rest of the year but will not be doing this on a permanent basis.

7. Copdock Bike Show

The budget for the Copdock Bike Show had already been approved in accordance with the Financial Report from the Centre Treasurer (see point 4 above).

CK confirmed that the Centre has a pitch next to Ipswich Triangle Club at the show. It was agreed that the sport needs more people both as competitors and as helpers. It is the biggest event in the area for motorcycle enthusiasts and is a chance to reach other like minded people

and hopefully get them involved in some way.

CK indicated that the event runs from 9am to 5pm and he would ideally like to have volunteers from the clubs within the Centre to cover the pitch during the day. He suggested two to three volunteers for a slot of two hours at a time. This would be to try and entice people to the stand, engage with the public and hand out flyers. It was agreed that those volunteers should be willing to mix with attendees of the show and engage with them.

CK also mentioned that it would be good to promote the Youth side of the event and wonders if any junior club members could also attend to assist with the stand. IJ indicated that the Castle Colchester club have a tent and plan to be part of the arena trial as they had done last year. He had already spoken to David Cordle (Ipswich Club) about this. CK indicated that there should be some discussions between them and the Centre before the Show to ensure that the various stands do not overlap in their content.

DB agreed that the leaflets used last year to try and encourage youths into the sport were useful and she offered to try and obtain some for this year's show.

8. Hybrid meetings

There has been a request from Clive Dopson (Wymondham) that the Board considers hybrid meetings going forwards. This would involve some members attending in person at a venue where there would be a big screen to then allow other members to join at home via Teams or Zoom.

CK indicated that he had no experience of doing this. He had however done some research. There were three options open to the Centre. The Centre could run the meeting themselves but would need to purchase the equipment needed which would include a decent webcam, speakers, laptop and a directional microphone. We would also need a venue which has a good internet connection to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly. The Centre already has a screen and projector. This would obviously incur some expense for the Centre.

The other option would be to rent a meeting room in serviced offices. CK commented that these are generally not available in the evenings or at weekends.

The final option is to use a hotel with conference facilities. CK has approached the Holiday Inn at Copdock. They have fully equipped meeting rooms for up to 28 delegates which should be sufficient. We would still need a laptop. The basic cost for a four hour session would be £237.00. There may be extras which we would need and this could escalate the costs potentially up to £1,000. However we could try the basic option first to see whether this would be sufficient for what was needed.

The general view was that this would be expensive for the Centre. DB commented that she did not have a problem with the idea of hybrid meetings but not at this expense if it would only be for the benefit of one person. CK indicated that he had asked for views as to whether, if a hybrid meeting option was offered, would people be more inclined to become a delegate. He did not receive any positive responses about this.

AW indicated that in his experience it was very expensive to get the right set up and buy the equipment needed to offer hybrid meetings.

CK also added that in order to be able to offer hybrid meetings it needed someone who was familiar with the technology to run this. He admitted that this would be a problem for him. The Holiday Inn had invited CK to go and have a look at the facilities but he had not taken this up as yet.

CK also indicated that he was concerned that if hybrid meetings were offered, you would not have complete control over who else could be listening in i.e. if there was someone sitting in the corner of the room out of sight of the camera. The current Board meetings are not closed but we do know who is in attendance. This may cause an issue e.g. if there is an environmental issue being discussed. There could be an environmental sympathiser listening in who could then make an issue of what was discussed and cause problems at a later date for the Sport. PS did make the point that people could be listening in next door at today's meeting which was acknowledged by CK.

It was generally acknowledged that there was no real substitute for this meeting being held in person where possible.

RC asked whether we could do voting online. It was confirmed by IJ and other delegates that we could create polls and also get transcripts of what was actually said during the meeting. The host of the meeting could also mute people to control who was speaking throughout.

AP asked whether it would actually increase the numbers attending if a hybrid meeting was offered. CK indicated that he had been through the attendance figures from 2019-2022 and the figures were roughly the same for in person and Zoom meetings (which had been held during Covid lockdowns). AW did suggest that we could trial a promotional meeting online where people could just log in and listen but not actually engage. This would be a way of gauging what interest there would be in hybrid meetings.

CK summed up that it was a point which was worth exploring but there were concerns about costs and whether it would actually bring any additional delegates to the meetings. It was agreed that members could have time to consider this and any judgments would be deferred until the November AGM.

9. Amended Bye Laws

CK commented that the amended Bye Laws had been circulated prior to the meeting. The updates are designed to pull everything together and explain what each Committee should be doing. CK had started with the original set of Bye Laws and had then tidied these up and added some points to make them complete.

There has been an issue with the bank account for the Gazette (held at Barclays) as the bank had asked for proof as to its constitution. This had been difficult to resolve and therefore this has now been incorporated into the updated Bye Laws.

CK confirmed that a couple of queries had arisen from the circulation of the Bye Laws. CK was now proposing the following:-

- Anyone who does a job for the Centre will get a vote in the meetings
- Vice Presidents of any type should have a vote
- The Vice Presidents are to be elected every three years
- Any disagreements not resolved within the various sub-Committees should be referred to

the Management Committee who will then refer this to the Board. They will then have the right to decide how to deal with the disagreement.

AK commented that he thought Vice Presidents should be elected by a Committee and anyone who is worthy of this should retain the title for life. He also confirmed that he was happy for the Secretary to have an enhanced position on the Board. CK confirmed that the Centre Secretary is an Executive Officer.

AW indicated that CK had done a good job of putting the Bye Laws together. On the question of sustainability (and without being negative) he asked whether we should be looking at the structure of the Centre and whether we needed all of the various Committees and meetings that would go with them. Should we not be trying to streamline the process?

CK said that we needed to keep the separate Committees for the various disciplines.

DB asked why we needed a separate Competitions Committee which could then override the various sports Committees. There was some discussion about roles which only the Competitions Committee could undertake such as dealing with disciplinary issues. EH asked if the Management Committee could deal with this instead. CK confirmed that there were usually only one or two disciplinary issues per year but the structure needed to be in place to deal with this properly. The current structure gives the sports Committees support if needed. The Competitions Committee can also monitor the situation if people move on from the various sports Committees and ensure that they continue to run.

AW also raised the question of whether we actually needed the Management Committee in addition to the Competitions Committee as the expertise lies within the actual sports Committees.

CK confirmed that there was no appetite for further Board meetings but the Centre has to be run. Matters could be dealt with informally on the telephone. However the Management Committee was brought in so that nothing was hidden and things were dealt with on a formal basis. Anything decided by the Management Committee is then brought to the Board thus ensuring that a process is followed.

AW agreed that the idea of the Management Committee made sense on that basis but did we then also need a Board on top of this? Both EH and PF commented that the Board was useful as it gave club members a say in matters. The Board was also needed as a way of communicating with the Management Committee. CK confirmed that the purpose of the Board meeting was to ensure that those on the Committees were then doing what they had been asked to do. If we tried to re-write the bye laws completely then this could cause problems. He has tried to follow what we already have in place as much as possible and in accordance with the Model Centre Bye Laws set by the ACU.

There was then some discussion about whether the Centre would become redundant. The South Eastern area has not had a Centre for the last ten years. It was generally agreed that there is still a need for the Centres. The Centre has the local knowledge which Head Office would not have. CK had also spoken with the ACU who had agreed that they do not see the role of the Centres changing.

BD (Permits Secretary) confirmed that at the moment the ACU will approve any dates requested by the Clubs. CK agreed with this point but noted that he had agreed a proviso to

this arrangement with the ACU General Secretary. Our fixture list is sent to Head Office and there is a live list on the Centre website. It is agreed that permits will automatically be issued for the events on those lists. If a date is applied for which is not on that list, the request now goes to BD who has 72 hours to respond to Head Office. If this is not done then there could be issues particularly where a Motocross and Enduro event are held in a similar area and could upset local residents.

The ideal would be to send regulations and permits to BD and she can then add this to the fixture list provided there is not a clash.

CK indicated that he would discuss the practicalities and implications of the points concerning the various Committees with AH AF and AP and the chairman of the Competitions Committee. They would need to come up with a workable proposal before we could move things forward.

CK confirmed that he was planning to appoint an Environmental Officer for the Centre – it would be an advantage if this person had an environmental profession.

Any final decisions about the amended Bye Laws will have to wait until the November meeting. However, CK had prepared the drafts on the basis that, in November, he could have a reasonable expectation that what had been put forward would be approved. CK confirmed that Matthew Wear of the ACU was planning to attend the November meeting.

CK asked who would be in favour of supporting the amended Bye Laws for the November AGM. All 11 delegates voted in favour of this. The new Bye Laws would be enacted from 1st January 2024 if they are approved in November.

DB queried whether we should change the November AGM from Remembrance Sunday as this could affect attendance. It was traditionally set on this date as there are no motorsport events being held. CK said that he was not against the idea of changing the dates in the future if something different was proposed. It was noted that the new Bye Laws changed the meeting dates so there would be the usual AGM in November followed on the same day by the sustainability meeting, then formal Board meetings in January and July.

10. Any other sustainability matters

AW commented that one sustainability issue is the loss of land for events. He is concerned that they may lose land for Motocross events.

It was generally agreed that we need to be on the look out for new land and ways to boost numbers within the sport.

11. Any other business

PF raised the issue as to whether the Gazette was supported in paper form. CK confirmed that financially it was breaking even. We need to work on getting clubs to put announcements in to the Gazette which would boost numbers.

PS confirmed that he is getting enough editorial content but this generally comes from the same couple of contributors. It would be good to try and involve more people in this. BD made the point that she refers new people coming to trials to the Gazette and Centre website but there is not a great deal of content on there. PS indicated that he could ask Richard Snowden

for the current standings. CK will mention this at the next Trials Committee meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting after thanking everyone for their attendance.

Next meeting on 12th November 2023