



BKFA Update

No 11 December 2009

TO ALL CLUBS: Please feel free to reproduce all or part of this update in your club's own newsletter. Following some useful feedback, I have produced this abridged version of the update to make it more digestible – let me know what you think.

Jerry Swift

Chairman's message

A message from BKFA's new chairman, Keith Griffiths, also National Director of STACK

Hmm, how did this happen? I was planning to reduce my administrative duties over the next year, probably stepping down from being STACK National Director, and getting back to flying kites. Now I find myself chair of the BKFA as well!

How is probably not important, but WHY is. I believe the BKFA is a vital link in the chain of organisations involved in kite flying. It is the oil for the wheels (not the oil on water as some would have you believe). It has a role to play in chasing down those tedious items that no-one wants to do; checking the CAA regulations, health and safety, child protection, insurance. I want to ensure that this work carries on, because as a STACK official if the BKFA isn't doing it then I have to anyway. What's the point in every club chasing the same things independently, when one organisation is there offering to do it for them?

Let's get this clear, as far as I am concerned the BKFA is NOT a threat to local (or national) clubs; we are not there to take your members away from you, and could not replace the local clubs even if we wanted to. We are here to help, to be a resource, and above all to be a louder voice than any one club could be at a national level.

Why would anyone not want that?

AGM highlights and the new committee

Does an AGM have highlights? This year's full Council meeting (effectively BKFA's AGM), took place on Sunday November 29th.

Jon Caton stood down as Chairman as required by the constitution – and was promptly co-opted back onto the committee. You can't let a good man go!

The draft minutes of the Council will be on the BKFA website shortly.

The good news is there is an end in sight for the BKFA insurance saga, see next item

BKFA say they are keen to assist George Webster, Malcolm Goodman and Paul Chapman with ideas beginning to emerge about the conservation of UK historical kite material. They also hope to run two competitions in 2010, subject to agreement with event organisers.

STACK were commended for their work collating the scores from the rokaku challenge with thanks to Pete Dawson in particular.

The new committee is:

Chairman: Keith Griffiths

Secretary: John Dobson

Treasurer: Jerry Swift (co-opted)

Ernest Barton, Doug Jones, Derek Kuhn, Michael Lowe, Jon Caton (co-opted)

Insurance update

Decision time. BKFA now has an insurance offer which it is able to pass on to clubs. STACK has indicated they will probably take the offer up and we are inviting other member clubs to join.

Full details of the offer, which will be attractive to some clubs but not others, have been given to club officers. The strength of the proposal is that it provides cover at any time, anywhere in the UK and Europe, which is not the case with some club policies.

There are extensions available for anyone running workshops in schools and for power kites. BKFA hopes that the policy will address the issues some clubs have had with obtaining adequate cover for their members.

Using the report form

The festival season now seems a distant memory. We know of only one incident, that of a Rolf Zimmerman inflatable 'popping' all its bridles. Problem then was that the drogue caught the wind, swung in front of the inflatable and the whole lot set off across the field at fairly high speed.

CAA are quite clear, they expect airports to monitor their own safety. If we don't, CAA might impose mandatory reporting and that is in no-one's interests. BKFA has developed a suitable report form and asking all clubs to use it. As responsible kite fliers we need to learn from anything that goes wrong.

BKFA will keep reports confidential, but will report on the outline of incidents so that everyone can take steps to prevent repetition.

Photos for press use and BKFA website

BKFA is keen to include royalty free photographs on its website that can be used by the media. They need to be high quality JPEGs and we will request a credit for the photographer, but cannot guarantee one is given.

We also want to photos that tell the story of kiteflying in the UK and abroad today, photos that will attract people to join clubs and take up kiteflying that we can use on the BKFA website.

If you have suitable pictures, please send them to Jerry Swift (treasurer@bkfa.org.uk) , making it clear whether they are freely available for use by the media or whether their use is restricted to the BKFA website.

Child protection

Jerry Swift, BKFA Treasurer and Child Protection Officer, has successfully completed the NSPCC's Child Protection Awareness course. He is now starting a more detailed course covering the subject in greater depth.

'Elf and safety

Given the worries that all club officials have when the public are near a flying event, this seemed to offer hope.

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) has welcomed the debate opened up by comments on 'elf n safety' culture made by Conservative leader David Cameron.

In his speech Cameron said that: "what began as a noble intention to protect people from harm has mutated into a stultifying blanket of bureaucracy, suspicion and fear that has saturated our country, covering the actions of millions of individuals as they go about their daily lives."

Whether this is headed or not remains to be seen but at least we are now getting a more sensible debate.

Coastal access

Many people enjoy combining kiteflying with a walk along Britain's beautiful coast line. But as we know all too often there are barriers to progress. [The Guardian](#) reported on coming changes in an article at the end of July.

The obstacle course of barbed wire, live ammunition and beetling cliffs facing England's planned coastal path is revealed in detail for the first time today.

Maps drawn up for the marine and coastal access bill, which is expected to become law in November, trace a vivid red and green snake round the 2,748 miles of mainland coast. Each of the red sections is either private, inaccessible or dangerous.

The audit by Natural England and shoreline councils is part of an effort to make all of England's coastline accessible to walkers. "There will be 10 years' work to be done before we can walk the whole way," said Paul Johnson, coastal access manager for Natural England, "but we reckon that the first rights of way between major seaside towns could be in place by 2013."

Don't forget to take the kite bag!

Jerry Swift
December 2009