



BWPA Chairwoman's Report to the AGM 06 December 2020

Welcome to the AGM of the British Women Pilots' Association Ltd in this our 65th year as an Association. Thank you to Nicky Rowan for preparing the notices and documents for the meeting and to the committee for preparing their reports in a timely manner.

2020 has been the most remarkable year of challenges and achievements and in true British style the members of the British Women Pilots' Association have faced those challenges head on. As the world was being turned upside down we slid sideways into a 'virtual' world that proved the most successful way of communicating and helping to support each other.

We were the first aviation organisation to take our Committee meetings online thanks to an initiative from our Communications lead, Annabel Cook. It was shortly after that first online meeting in March that we organised a professional account with Zoom and have not looked back since.

We anticipated our new virtual world to be a brief brush with a different technology for a few months, although we also saw the immediate benefits. We found that not only were committee meetings being moved online but our Scholarship Interviews and announcements too, then our Events Team were embracing it to enable 'Social Chats', 'Chats with the Chair', hosted guest speakers, instructional tips, and archivist briefings. As an organisation we grew socially, expanded our reach and encouraged our members to volunteer as Regional Representatives. We have gone from being a single Region centric Association, to a five Region (and growing) community full of hope and new friendships. Although almost half of our members live in London, East Anglia and the South East, the establishment of these new regional groups has encouraged new joiners from other areas and I anticipate further growth in line with this initiative which is overseen by our Deputy Chairwoman Rosemary Clemo.

For the renewing 79% of our members from 2019, you may remember that our biggest investment then had been the new website, a key aim of which was to attract more new members; the professional appearance and new online payment system has worked well and any initial 'teething problems' have been resolved by our website facilitator and membership coordinator, currently Helen Hennessy. This online membership system, combined with the increased capacity to network via Zoom has seen the total membership increase by more than 60 members (25%) in 2020 to 330 members, compared to an increase of 8% in 2019 (figures correct as of 03 November 2020, with family memberships counted once regardless of how many family members are covered).

Most of our new members are looking to build their network and receive advice and support from other female pilots and there is an even spread of members across the various age groups, with an increase in the 18-29 year age group of 8% compared to last year (please see Appendix for further membership statistics).

Year to date website views have increased 56%, from 7,315 for January to October 2019, to 11,415 for the same period in 2020, with the most visited page being the 2020 Scholarships which attracted 10% of those views. The majority of user acquisition was through social media, bringing 42% of visitors, compared to 21% in 2019.

In addition to this our Communications team have been responsible for; a number of website updates including new sections for the 2020 Scholarships and Simulator Bursaries, 30 news stories (over twice that of 2019), press releases leading to 11 known stories in the aviation and local press (both print and digital), over 30 event publications, 19 Mailchimp campaigns,

and a social media increase of 14% for Facebook and 22% for Twitter. An example of their success is the distribution of the recent news story for sim bursaries, which resulted in it being the homepage feature story for Pilot Career News for well over a week.

The social media section of the BWPA has gone from the sole input of Annabel Cook, with occasional input from myself, to having the addition of our Twitter specialist Steph Smith (also a Regional Representative), while the Communications team have further expanded, with Bronwyn Fraser taking over the Gazette from Rosemary Clemo and Gemma Jefferies responsible for the e-news via our Mailchimp facility. I extend a hearty welcome to Steph and Gemma and congratulate the team for their commitment to our members. Please be sure to acknowledge their efforts by contributing and sharing your news where you can.

The Scholarship campaign this year led to eleven lucky members receiving help towards their chosen projects. Our busy selection teams were coordinated by Sue Tuddenham and all performed a sterling effort in making their final choices. We have maintained a good relationship with our sponsors; CATS, easyPPL, Bristol Ground School and our new Wings Alliance Scholarship.

The BWPA committee had doubled the amount used from the scholarship funds this year with the aim to help more of our members. We then released additional funds by offering bursaries of 2hr sim sessions through Motion Flight for our commercial pilots' who suffered the effects of the pandemic on our industry in the latter part of this year.

For next year we have a generous donation in the name of 624 Squadron whose roots were from 1575 Flight, Special Duties, Tempsford (later to become 624 Squadron, Special Duties). This will be fairly open and described as available in the spirit of adventure for the winner to achieve their own 'special mission'. I look forward to receiving some interesting applications for this particular award over the next 4 years.

Further sponsorship is given to us in the form of advertising and we remain honoured to have the support of Pooley's who continue to advertise via the website and newsletter as well as provide our members a valuable discount. Other discounts and collaborations have been with 'Gifts4u' – these websites are available through our member's area of the website.

Following on from the supportive nature of scholarships and sponsors, in support of the BWPA's STEM outreach aims with The Aviatrix Project, 36% of BWPA members are willing to take part in STEM events on behalf of the BWPA, compared with 25% in 2019.

1st November marked the 5th anniversary of The Aviatrix Project which has supported over 500 schools, colleges and events to date. This has all been possible due to the incredible generosity of all their volunteers. Kanchana Vanhove is working tirelessly with STEMPOINT EAST and The Nuffield Foundation to deliver Science 'catch up' support and provide opportunities to complete STEM projects.

The Nuffield Foundation supports less advantaged, yet talented, year 12 students in completing research projects in STEM subjects. A change of approach was made this year with online classrooms and a new programme called Nuffield Future Researchers. Aviatrix worked together with a number of pilots and researchers to create a project around the topic of COVID-19 and its' impact on the aviation industry, asking students to complete studies around the social, financial and environmental impact of the pandemic on air travel across the globe. This helped an incredible 36 students, supported by 24 supervisors, who were able to write a research report and create a poster. The BWPA further supported the Aviatrix Project by covering insurance costs.

The finances for our various projects are ably handled by our Treasurer, Catherine Hollywood. The accounts for 2019-2020 have been prepared by Catherine to be independently assessed and verified by Camfield, Chapman & Lowe and show a pre-tax profit of £503. The accounts have been changed from a cash to an accruals basis which Catherine can explain more.

Prior to Catherine taking the role of Treasurer, Beverley Harrison had stayed on committee in the role of interim Treasurer while providing a suitably timed handover process. Beverley and Nicky Rowan had swapped roles (Treasurer and Secretary) and worked closely with Catherine for a smooth transition. They enabled this process to be completed for the beginning of the new financial year and to maintain stability within the committee.

Nicky's first year as Secretary has been somewhat different to what any of us expected, but none-the-less it has been an exhaustive year of Committee, Strategy and Director's meetings that has kept her busy. Minutes of meetings have been produced within 2 weeks of each meeting.

The committee members co-opted Fenella Jefferson onto the committee in September to help maintain a good mix and committee size. Fenella had previously offered her time to help with the 'Careers' email enquiries in May 2020 and continues to do so, although this particular role appears to be reaching its own form of redundancy with only 5 enquiries since she took over.

There will be further changes at this meeting as both Cheryl Sullivan and Sue Tuddenham step down from their committee positions and respective subsidiary roles of 'events' and 'scholarships'. I want to thank them both for staying on to help in my first year as Chairwoman. They are both grounded and reliable people who have been much appreciated.

Cheryl has covered an astonishing 25 years of events, being a key figure for organising the post AGM Awards Dinner and reception, always willing to attend and participate in many other promotions including the 2018 FEWP UK weekend at Old Warden. Sue has organised the scholarship teams, adopted a scoring system and process which she is willing to pass on to her successor.

Although Beverley is no longer on committee, she is still active in our community as our archivist. She has run a series of talks, bringing the committee and other volunteers up to date with the BWPA 'Heritage' plan. As promised in 2019, there will be a section on the website dedicated to BWPA Heritage and this project is planned to be put in place next year. This will be one of 6 actions in the form of a new 5 year Strategic Plan which will require help from our members, mostly in the form of working groups for some or all of these areas; membership retention, safeguarding our heritage, establishing a training resource and education area on the website, provide monthly education events digitally and one annual face-to-face training event, provide a platform for BWPA volunteer opportunities, and double our revenue compared to 2020.

I am very proud of the tremendous amount of involvement that had been put into the Strategic Plan meetings during lockdown from all of our committee members and those who have volunteered to take this forward (listings are available in the winter edition of the BWPA newsletter).

Marion Wooldridge will be standing down from her role as GAAC and APPG representative at this AGM. Her replacement is expected to be announced after the January 2021 committee meeting. Thank you Marion for your many years of service to the BWPA in a number of different roles.

Lesley Runnalls will stay as our GASCo, GANG and RIN representative. There remains involvement and recognition within these organisations of our former Chairwomen, please

also look out for the TOP NAV competition which was planned for May 2020, now deferred to 2021.

I will continue to represent the BWPA on the FEWP board. The Annual Event was due to be held in Cyprus this May and has been postponed to May 2021. I acknowledge that many of you will be unwilling to travel and anticipate that the numbers attending will be reduced from most countries. It had been intended for me to take on the role of FEWP President this year, a position currently held by the Austrian appointee, Brigitte Gaal, until such time that the organisation's banking system has been changed from Luxembourg to Austria, therefore the change is anticipated in 2021. Future events have been moved back one year; Romania 2022, Serbia 2023 and Slovenia 2024.

Other events are run by a team of volunteers, and the Regional Representatives currently sit within the area of 'events' as their monthly meetings are included in this section. A huge thank you to Andrea Van Poeteren, Claire Hatton, Alison Field and Steph Smith who have stepped up to the challenge of running these meetings and joining our veteran Essex Representative Amy Chau. Please consider joining this amazing team and running your own Region – speak to Rosemary for details.

Tara Cawdell has most likely been missing the opportunity to promote members at the usual events, but is already optimistically planning ahead for 2021 and has busied herself with other promotional projects around our 65th Anniversary year. Thank you Tara for your enthusiasm.

We have achieved a great deal through the challenges thrown at us this year, yet we have continued to grow and invite you to welcome our new committee members joining at this AGM and help us continue to raise the awareness of women in aviation.

Sharon Nicholson

6th December 2020

Abbreviations:

APPG	All Party Political Group (Aviation)
BWPA	British Women Pilots' Association
FEWP	Federation of European Women Pilots
GAAC	General Aviation Awareness Council
GANG	General Aviation Navigation Group (RIN)
GASCo	General Aviation Safety Council
RIN	Royal Institute of Navigation

Appendix to the BWPA Chairwoman's Report – Membership Charts (courtesy of Helen Hennessy)



