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PRESIDENTS REPORT 2019 - 2020

Once again, another quiet year flying wise, and another dry summer continued to take its toll on the airfield. A heavy downpour in early February proved ideal for the germinating of lots of caltrop. We didn't host any major events this year but did run Orange Week and a Coaching Course which contributed to our income. The Rock n Roll weekend in May 2019 contributed to about \$2200 towards our finances. The COVID-19 crisis put a stop to all flying from the end of March this year.

AIRFIELD, CLUBHOUSE & GROUNDS

We were very fortunate to engage the services of a caretaker/maintenance couple after advertising this position via the Grey Nomads website. Michael and his partner Terrie arrived in late November and immediately took on watering, mowing, weeding, tree trimming, cleaning, equipment maintenance, security, etc, etc. This took a huge load off my back and the clubhouse and grounds look in very good order. Much comment has been made on the state of the pads after having such regular and extra watering. We had to engage the services of a contract sprayer to spray the extensive germination of caltrop. I've not seen so much for 10 years. It just goes to show how hardy the seed is, so we must always keep on top of it. The caretaker spent many hours chopping it out near the pads and a working bee one morning cleaned up the rest. Thanks to those helpers. Thanks to Craig, we sprayed the gazanias on the pads earlier and this proved successful. Another application this July should see them almost eradicated. We have made a written submission to Council seeking their services to top dress the pads to fill all the hollows left by the gazanias. We also plan to fertilise the pads prior to top dressing. The scrap metal heap was cleared, thanks to Mark for co-ordinating this. The Council terminated the lease of Phil Hollick and his site has been vacated. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 crisis, Michael & Terrie had to leave earlier than planned. We hope to find another couple for this coming season.

We were approached by a trade services company to assess our ability to access the free lighting scheme (REES) and they have quoted us \$200 to replace all fluro and floodlight lighting with LED's. we have accepted this offer and the upgrade should be complete in April.

WORKING BEES

Apart from the caltrop working bee, we didn't hold any others this year. We still need to complete repairs and fitting out of the laundry and storeroom. Thanks again to Ron Brock who keeps the tractor and ride-on mower going as well as weedicide of the lawns and pavers. The fuel tank was emptied and Mark was able to get inside and repaint the small area where the paint had peeled, causing contamination. Thanks to Mark and Lloyd assisting with this and the outcome was much cheaper than anticipated. With the left over paint we plan to repaint the outside. The fuel tanks in the tug shifted over the years and the metal cover plates were cutting into the filler pipes and fuel gauges. Thanks to Mark and Lloyd again who repaired this fault. The main kitchen freezer had a habit of frosting over, and thanks to Shirley & Lynn, all the out of date stock was tossed out and any useful stock was relocated to the club kitchen. The freezer was turned off but then loaned to Meals-on-Wheels to hold frozen meals during the COVID-19 crisis. Many thanks to Lloyd & Kathy who thoroughly cleaned both family units and installed new curtains in them as well as replacing one mattress. They also undertook to tidy the hot water room and did a major clean and tidy of the club bar and washed, folded, sorted and re-arranged all the linen.

EVENTS / COMPETITIONS

As stated above, we had the Rock N Roll weekend in May 2019 . The COVID-19 event meant that the 2020 festival has been cancelled. Orange Week was held in November, and the Coaching Course in January this year. Many thanks to the members who volunteered with the running of these events. Once again, we were represented at Horsham Week in February with by Craig, Adam, Haidyn and Patrick with Craig placing second in Open/18m and Haidyn & Patrick sharing the Kestrel topping the scores in Club Class. Craig and Sid represented us at Stonefield for the SA State Comps in March with Craig being crowned State champion.

OPERATIONS / SAFETY

We didn't have any safety concerns this year. Craig and Patrick have now been upgraded to L2 instructors. Well done to them, it's quite a commitment. I'd still like some of our other instructors to help out on the roster – even if for only 2 or more Saturdays a year. We now also have more Official Observers with myself, Craig, Alan and Lloyd completing the course. We are down to 3 tow pilots following the resignation of Greg (see below). Many thanks to Pete Siddall, Lloyd Baum and Kent Andrew for their efforts again. Lloyd and Kent are currently recovering from health issues, so we wish them well.

AIRWORTHINESS / CLUB FLEET

In line with the decision at last years AGM, the LS4 was withdrawn from sale and the LS7 was advertised instead. A very strong offer was unfortunately rejected only due to the pilot being unsuited to the cockpit. In late March, we made an offer to Morgys Glider works for the purchase of the Duo Discus and this offer was accepted. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, we have had to delay the delivery. However, a deposit has been made to secure our lien on the glider. The Duo refurbishment is complete and only awaiting a test flight. It looks amazing, especially with the winglets added. It has been fitted with instruments to our specifications. The ASK21 has been fitted with a power Flarm and another is waiting to be fitted to the Discus. We still plan to purchase two more for the LS4 and tug.

We are very concerned with the ongoing maintenance of the fleet, especially annual inspections. Our current inspectors who have done a sterling job over the years are now often sidelined due to illness, extended holidays, working away etc. With our small membership, it's hard to see where we can expand this source of volunteers. We won't be in a position to pay to have this work done.

MEMBERS / COMMITTEE

With much regret we accepted the resignations of Greg Jackson and Peter Paine. Greg was a keen pilot and represented us often at Horsham Week as well as Orange Week. Greg was also a committed tug pilot and logged over 1600 launches in his 17 years with us. Peter served as Vice-President for many years and was our most prolific glider pilot, especially in his beloved LS7. He also represented us with distinction at Horsham Week. Both will be sorely missed. At our last AGM, Haidyn Dunn accepted to take on duties as Club Secretary, replacing John Ridge who did a sterling job over many years. Thanks John. Patrick Dunn stepped up as Vice President and the casual vacancy on committee was filled by Adam Howell. Mark Morgan has volunteered to be the clubs Authorised Airworthiness Officer (AAO).

We welcomed back Rodney van den Brink, as a full flying member. Rod last flew at Waikerie 15 years ago. He has purchased an Astir 77 which is housed in the hangar along with a golf cart to tow it around. Rod also owns a Tomahawk light plane which he uses to commute to Waikerie (hence the golf cart). Selected members will be able to make use of the cart. He spent some time here over Easter and has washed all the windows in the clubhouse, dusted the window sills, vacuumed all the carpets, dusted and polished all the tables, washed the recycling crates, put sanitiser in the men's toilet, moved the bar stock to kitchen fridge and weeded the recycling area. A very valuable new member!

My thanks go to the committee for their input, support and commitment.

THE FUTURE

The imminent purchase of the Duo Discus will be an exciting a new era for the club. The experience at other clubs when moving to a high-performance two-seater has been positive, so I hope this will be the same for us. With Craig & Patrick now L2's and with other experienced cross-country pilots amongst us, it will get plenty of use. With more instructors we can now take on more students with confidence that they will be catered for. Our planned weekly course last October was cancelled due to participants pulling out at the last minute. We may try again this year.

The Council is still dragging on with the renewal of our lease, but recent contact may see this completed this year. There have been investigations into building a shelter for the glider trailers but the cost is beyond club finances. A solution involving private owners may result.

With the purchase of the Duo, our self-insurance glider replacement fund will be exhausted along with some of our operating revenue. Until the LS7 is sold, we will need to be very prudent with our spending. No transactions above about \$100 will be allowed unless approved by the committee or treasurer. We are also considering selling some of our water allocation although the high prices have dropped recently.

Looking forward to the end of the current crisis and getting back to some serious flying!

Bill Mudge

President, Waikerie Gliding Club Inc.

23/04/2020