

Minutes of the FIA Council Meeting

held at The Saracens Head Hotel, Towcester

on Thursday 4th December 2003 at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Mike Phillips – Chairman
Mike Gilmore - Treasurer
Paul Bateson
Peter Thompsett
John Colton

Jane Morrison – Secretariat

Apologies: John Cupitt
Dave Carswell

1. Apologies for Absence

As above.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th September 2003 were taken as read and agreed and were signed by the Chairman.

3. FIA y/end accounts to 31/8/03 – formal approval

The year-end accounts had previously been emailed to all Council members. There being no queries the y/end accounts were formally approved by those present.

4. AGM status

The status was as follows: 3 vacant places for Council. 4 nominations received. 9 members other than Council members are expected to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 10.45 a.m.

The meeting re-convened at 1.30 p.m. (after the AGM) – those in attendance were as follow:

Mike Phillips, Mike Gilmore, Paul Bateson, Peter Thompsett, John Colton, Peter Lythgoe (new Council member), Ken Williams (new Council member)

Jane Morrison – Secretariat

Observers: Andrew Watson – FIA Commercial Activities, Nigel May – FIA PR

Apologies: John Cupitt, Lee Funnell (new Council member)

5. Welcome new Council members

Mr. Phillips welcomed Messrs. Lythgoe and Williams. Both were asked to supply Mike Gilmore (mike.gilmore@btinternet.com) with their biographies (approx. 250 words) and a photograph (85 x 100 pixels) for inclusion on the FIA Council members' page of the FIA web site.

ACTION: PL/KW

The Secretary will contact Mr. Funnell with this request also.

ACTION: SEC/LF

6. Confirmation of Council officers, Directors and industry sector portfolios

Mr. Colton nominated Mr. Phillips as FIA Chairman for the coming year, this was seconded by Mr. Thompsett and unanimously agreed.

Mr. Phillips nominated Mr. Gilmore as FIA Treasurer for the coming year, this was seconded by Mr. Colton and unanimously agreed.

Mr. Colton nominated Mr. Thompsett as FIA Vice-Chairman for the coming year, this was seconded by Mr. Bateson and unanimously agreed.

Portfolios are as follows:

Technical Director: Mr. Gilmore

Commercial Director: Mr. Thompsett (in conjunction with Mr. Watson)

Test & Measurement: Mr. Bateson

Installation: Mr. Cupitt & Mr. Lythgoe (Mr. Cupitt to be informed)

ACTION: SEC

Training & Qualifications: Mr. Colton (Training) & Mr. Funnell (Qualifications) (Mr. Funnell to be informed)

ACTION: SEC

Passive Components: Mr. Williams

Mr. Phillips explained that the role of Council within the above industry portfolios was to represent that sector of membership and ascertain their requirements.

He added that Council members were usually appointed as Directors of FIA Ltd. Both Messrs. Lythgoe and Williams accepted Directorships. The Secretary will contact Mr. Funnell to see if he is also willing to accept the Directorship. She will arrange the relevant appointment forms and resignation forms for Messrs. Carswell and Buckingham.

ACTION: SEC

7. Mike Phillips – FIA Special Project update

Mr. Phillips summarised that the special project for 2003 has been awarded to ICS Ltd. to develop a light source reference lead. The FIA has agreed to fund the project for an amount of £5,000. Upon completion FIA members will be offered the resulting product which will establish known measure launch conditions for Light Source/Power Meter measurement of optical fibre insertion loss, at a specially discounted price.

There has been a slight delay in progressing due to IP matters. The original plan was for the FIA to retain ownership.

Due to time constraints Mr. Phillips has handed management / liaison of this project to Mr. Watson.

Mr. Watson explained that there are some problems in writing and finalising the contract. He has now put the onus on ICS and the technicians responsible to produce a draft contract that will make sense to all concerned. He has been contacting them on a weekly basis to try to expedite the matter

To protect the IP rights could work out very expensive. A patent search has been done but needs to be chased. Mr. Phillips stated that the original contract did state that the FIA would retain the IP and this had accepted by ICS Ltd. The FIA funding of £5,000 will cover only the development costs of the product, which are about one third of the project. There is also the possibility that the cost of protecting the IP would be too large for the FIA to consider owning the full IP rights.

Mr. Watson was authorised to adopt a pragmatic approach with the aim of optimising the benefits of the project for FIA members and the FIA itself. He will continue work on this and will keep Council informed via email.

ACTION: AW

Mr. Phillips said that it is hoped that the FIA can fund a different special project each year. However, further funds, over and above the £5,000 for the project with ICS, are not expected to be released until all the lessons that result from this first project have been learnt and assimilated.

8. Financial report / Technical report (MG) - see attached

Mr. Gilmore explained to the new Council members present that he emailed management accounts to Council on a monthly basis. As well as creditors, debtors and membership information this includes historical profit and loss as well as monthly accounts.

The year to date profit (1/09/03 – 31/10/03) stood at £5,211.60.

The year-end accounts (1/09/02 – 31/08/03) showing a loss of £4,626 had been accepted by the AGM earlier that morning. These accounts, (3 sets), together with the letter of representation were signed by Mr. Phillips. The Secretary will also sign and return to Deloitte Touche LLP for the bound copies.

ACTION: SEC

Web-site: Mr. Gilmore has been investigating a new web site host. He has been in contact with a company in the Leeds area and received their proposal the previous day. The fee required is quite high and he now requires a breakdown of the costs. Once he has this information he will make a proposal to Council. Due to this possible move the current passwords, which have been in place since September 2002, have not been changed. He is aware that this is something that does require urgent attention and he envisages that the move of host will enable a scheme whereby each company has their own password making it easier to block access in the event of a cancelled membership.

ACTION: MG

Technical report: The Polarity Maintenance document is now available. Mr. May has circulated a press release and as a result of the press release one of the magazines wants an article on the subject.

The LAN ASG and the Optical Power documents have been updated.

Documents in progress are: Cords, User Guide, Splicing document and the Connecting Hardware Guide which was started by Mr. Strange.

The photographs relating to the Connecting Hardware Guide are on the website (but not available for

member access) and some text has been added. As Mr. Williams is taking over responsibility for Passive Components Mr. Gilmore will send him details of where to find the draft document.

ACTION: MG

Documents on dark fibre and a users guide are to be developed in due course. All the FIA documents published can be easily updated in line with new standards.

Seminar: Mr. Gilmore will be giving a presentation at the SELECT event on 14th January in Edinburgh. FIA members will be emailed with details of this event that they may attend free of charge.

Future seminars for 2004 will be under the remit of Mr. Watson.

9. Secretariat report – see attached

Membership: Current membership is 217.

Newsletter: After a short discussion it was agreed that the mechanism for producing future Newsletters should be reviewed at the next meeting.

Web site ads: Although 3 more members have taken adverts there are still 13 pages remaining. Messrs. Phillips, Bateson, Colton and Lythgoe expressed interest and the Secretary will contact them in the next week with a list of pages and the relevant costs.

ACTION: SEC

Mr. Gilmore asked the Secretary to investigate the status of the advert from QA Developments.

ACTION: SEC

10. Andrew Watson – Commercial Manager

Seminar programme for 2004: As yet this is not defined. Mr. Watson asked for Council to email him (arwatson@btinternet.com) with input on any subjects they feel will be of interest. He will prepare a list for the next meeting.

ACTION: AW

Promotional Plan for 2004: See proposal from Mr. May attached.

Mr. Watson explained that he hopes to build up the PR momentum again for 2004. It is fundamental to build up the relationship with the editors. The FIA must be willing and ready to respond to requests for articles.

Mr. May explained that the offer from Professional Electrician regarding regular articles should be taken up.

Mr. Gilmore is happy to prepare articles on the following 4 subjects: Clearing up the confusion surrounding OM1 and 2 etc., 10Gb Ethernet – the implications, Safety practices – model on-site patches and Testing – a key requirement.

Mr. Watson felt that articles on basic topics could also be interesting. The UFO document was something that could be promoted.

Mr. Watson also suggested inviting the FIA members to comment on or write articles. The FIA could give its prospective/position on an issue and we could also seek members prospective.

Council was asked to email to Mr. Watson any topics they felt could make interesting articles and Messrs. Watson and May will produce a list for the next meeting.

Mr. May felt that better communication with members could be an area that Council looked at for 2004. He could quite easily email the press releases to the members at the same time as they were sent out to the magazines. Mr. Gilmore wondered whether the Newsletter (or a sub-Newsletter) was the best way to achieve this aim. He would not like to see the members inundated with numerous FIA emails.

Mr. May felt that as the press releases were only issued on a monthly basis this would not be a problem. Mr. Williams felt that as long as the emails were 'short and sweet' and were clearly marked with FIA in the subject line this would not be a problem.

Mr. Phillips finalised the discussion by explaining that of course the ideas in the report were of all of great interest but there was the budgetary consideration to be made. He asked Messrs. Watson and May to prepare a document with suggestions and costs.

ACTION: AW/NM

Mr. Gilmore will send Mr. May details of the new Splicing Document that is being prepared now so that a press release can be organised.

ACTION: MG

The FIA document for BSI on EN50174 should be ready shortly and this will need promotion.

11. FIA Training Qualification

As this item requires rather lengthy discussion Mr. Phillips advised those present that a sub-committee will meet immediately after this Council meeting to discuss this matter in detail. Hopefully a proposal/plan of action points can then be submitted to Council at the first meeting of 2004.

12. Any Other Business

Directors Liability: Mr. Lythgoe questioned the responsibilities and liabilities of Directors, particularly concerning travel to and from Council meetings.

It is understood that Council members, being the representatives of member companies, attend Council meetings under their company jurisdiction and not in a personal role. Unless of course they are undertaking a particular action on behalf of the FIA within their allotted portfolio.

The Secretary to investigate the Directors responsibilities etc. further.

ACTION: SEC

New C&G launch: Mr. Colton advised Council that he has been asked to attend the launch of the new C&G qualification in January.

13. Meeting dates for 2004

It was agreed that the next Council meeting will be held on:

Thursday 15th January at 10.00 a.m. at Towcester.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 18th March and future dates will be suggested by the Secretary at the next meeting (May, July, September and December).

The meeting closed at 3.45p.m.

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4th December 2003
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