



The British Model Flying Association

WHY JOIN

When you join the BMFA you are taking part in the development of model flying in the United Kingdom.

You become part of the National Governing Body dedicated to the promotion and protection of the sport of model flying at all levels.

UNITED WE ACHIEVE

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WHAT IS THE BMFA?

The BMFA is the National Governing Body for the sport of model flying. Its aims are to promote, protect, organise and encourage model flying within the UK. It comprises of over 800 clubs and over 35,000 members who have all entered a partnership to ensure that model fliers have a voice and their rights are recognised by the authorities. The mandate for the BMFA to do this comes from the Royal Aero Club, dating back to 1922, the Civil Aviation Authority and Sport UK.

The BMFA also represents the UK in the international forum through its recognition by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) and its model flying sub committee, Commission Internationale d'Aeromodelisme (CIAM), participation in Europe Air Sports and membership of the European Model Flying Union

WHO RUNS THE BMFA?

The membership elects officers to represent them at all levels of the organisation. All members of affiliated clubs have a vote and their club representative is entitled to vote at the AGM and their Area elections. Club representatives also have the right to represent their club at Area meetings. Should a club wish to raise any issues with Council, this is proposed through their Area Committee, which is represented on Council by the Area delegate.

Therefore, the BMFA is a true democratic organisation whereby every member has the opportunity to influence BMFA policy.

Once elected, the responsibility for running the BMFA rests with the Council of Management which is in effect the Board of Directors of the SMAE Ltd, the BMFA's parent company. The Council of Management consists of 32 elected members and is responsible to the membership. It is governed by the Articles of the Association.

Council is supported by other specialist councils and committees:

Areas Council which consists of: elected representatives from each of the 13 areas, the Honorary Secretary and Public Relations Officer, and is responsible for all club and area issues, and the achievement schemes.

Technical Council which consists of: elected representatives from the technical committees, the Technical Secretary, the Competition Secretary and FAI Delegate, and is responsible for all competition and safety issues.

The five technical committees which consist of elected representatives and are responsible for the detailed administration and organisation of the various model flying disciplines.

Executive Council which consists of eight elected officers of the Association and the CEO and is responsible for managing the Association's business matters.

All of the above are responsible to the Council of Management and meet 2 or 3 times per year with the exception of the Executive Council that may meet more often as business demands. Elected officers and representatives serve for a term of 2 years although may stand for re-election should they wish to do so.

WHAT DOES THE BMFA DO FOR ITS CLUBS AND MEMBERS?

The BMFA offers a complete assurance package to promote and protect model flying in the UK and undertakes to represent all model fliers at the highest level. This includes negotiation with our national and local government departments, the Civil Aviation Authority, international bodies such as the FAI and CIAM, and a wide variety of aviation, sports and recreational bodies. By maintaining close contact with the authorities we maintain the model flyer's status by achieving national recognition and self regulation.

The following services are also provided to its members and clubs:

- Extensive insurance cover.
- Member's Handbook.
- Flying Site Planning and Protection.
- Instructor Scheme.
- Achievement Scheme.
- Education Programmes.
- Personal copies of BMFA News.
- Regular Club Information Bulletins.
- Advice, Assistance and Support whenever required on all aspects of model flying.
- Provision of free information pamphlets on a wide variety of topics.
- Club website hosting.

WHAT DO THE CLUBS AND MEMBERS DO FOR THE BMFA?

The most important contribution that affiliated clubs and members offer to the BMFA is their support to the partnership that is committed to investing in the future of model aircraft flying. It is this support that ensures the BMFA has the strength and resources to address the many problems and issues that are faced on a regular basis. There is no doubt that the anti-model flying lobby grows stronger each year and the BMFA is the only body able to counter the threat on behalf of all model fliers.

All members and clubs are ambassadors for model flying as their community will judge model flying on local perceptions. By flying safely and responsibly, and by contributing to the local community through schools, youth groups and displays, you and your club can demonstrate the BMFA is a responsible and caring organisation.

Clubs' and members' voluntary work in support of the Association and in the promotion of model flying is vital if it is to have a cohesive future in the UK. The best work is often done by unsung volunteers at the grass roots level.

HOW GOOD IS THE BMFA INSURANCE?

Any insurance is only as good as its settlement track record. Our insurers have proven to be utterly reliable and supportive and we are able to offer the most comprehensive package available for model aircraft flying. It covers all aeromodelling related activities and includes:

Up to £25M Third Party Indemnity with:

- Overseas Cover (Visits to USA and Canada to be advised before departure)
- Member to Member Cover
- Club Cover*
- Club Equipment Cover* (Theft/Damage)
- Committee Cover*
- Event Organisers Cover
- Landowner Cover, including the MOD*
- Ab Initio Flyer Cover*
- Foreign Visitor Cover*
- Helper Cover*
- Product Liability Cover
- Paid Flying Instruction Cover (Subject to Conditions)
- Airside Cover

Up to £35,000 Personal Accident Indemnity (including workshop accidents)

Indemnifications marked * are automatically available to clubs on affiliation. Individual members may be granted indemnity for some of these elements on application to head office. Should you have mixed modelling activities in your club, the insurance covers boats, cars, steam powered models and kites. There is no limitation on the size of model aircraft or engines, provided CAA regulations are complied with.

The BMFA does not sell insurance as a commercial transaction but, as a responsible National Governing Body, it provides you with the best available as a part of an assurance package.

WHAT DOES THE MEMBERS' HANDBOOK INCLUDE?

It is an essential reference book for all model fliers. Not only does it give details on the British Model Flying Association, it includes a comprehensive safety code drawn up from the legal obligations all model fliers have to meet, such as Air Navigation Order Articles 240 and 241, Civil Air Procedure 658, the DOE Noise Code and the Environment Act. It also includes measures and advice on accident prevention and how to avoid the many pitfalls that can befall model aircraft fliers.

The independent model press have stated it to be essential reading and should be read from cover to cover.

The Members' Handbook is issued individually to every member and is reviewed annually, with addendum sheets being issued if required.

WHAT IS FLYING SITE PLANNING AND PROTECTION?

With our ever shrinking island and increasing lack of public tolerance the pressures on our flying sites are increasing every day. Noise complaints, land development, perceived risks to the public, animals and the environment are all on the increase and all have to be addressed.

To counter the threats, the BMFA employs a Club Support Officer and Development Officer, one of their tasks is to protect existing sites and advise on new sites. The BMFA has vast experience in countering threats, interpreting bye-laws, advising on planning applications, and negotiating with local authorities and the Home Office. This has had significant importance since model flying became a recognised sport as authorities are now obliged to assist clubs to find sites whenever possible.

The Club Support Officer's and Development Officer's work is constantly expanding and their help has been invaluable to countless clubs in protecting existing sites or obtaining new ones. Their advice is free to all affiliated clubs, although the club may be requested to make an agreed contribution should extensive legal work be required.

HOW DO THE INSTRUCTOR AND ACHIEVEMENT SCHEMES HELP ME OR MY CLUB?

The instructor and achievement schemes are complementary and are designed to raise safety awareness and improve the standards of all types of Radio Control model aircraft flying in the UK for the benefit of all.

Although both schemes are voluntary, many clubs are using them to ensure that safe standards are maintained within the club. In addition to the BMFA, the majority of independent organisers now insist upon all public display pilots having the relevant competency certificate or LMA or SAA equivalent.

The benefits to the individual flyer are that he or she learns to fly using a proven and structured methodology that will enable development of skills, instil confidence, and give tangible standards in safety and flying for the trainee pilot to aim for.

WHY DOES THE BMFA RUN AN EDUCATION PROGRAMME?

The BMFA, like many organisations, recognises today's young people are tomorrow's aeromodellers. Many of us experienced the thrill of building and flying our creations in our youth only to give it up because of other commitments such as family or education. However, the seed was sown even if it did germinate much later in life when time and finance permitted.

The Education Programme, which has been running since 1989, has one aim; to give every young person the opportunity to build and fly at least one model aircraft, thereby sowing that seed. To achieve this the BMFA provides a simple range of kits at very low cost which form the backbone of our model aircraft workshops and are designed to meet young peoples' requirements up to secondary education. The Education programme also runs the BMFA Payload Challenges, competitions for Universities, Schools and Youth Groups. See <http://payloadchallenge.bmfa.org/> for details

The Education Programme is constantly under review to ensure it remains current and relevant for the 21st century education system.

WHY DO WE HAVE A BMFA NEWS?

The BMFA News is the Association's newspaper and covers a myriad of activities. It is not a modelling magazine and is not designed to compete with the many excellent magazines on the market. Although it contains many interesting articles on construction and flying, it also contains items of Association business of interest to the members, including the events calendar, safety notices, notification of competition rule changes and brief reports on Association business. It is one of the prime means of communication for the BMFA members on every aspect of Association activities.

The BMFA News is published every 2 months and is managed on a commercial basis. Advertising is arranged by our agents and the advertising profits used to fund and improve future editions, for the benefit of the membership.

WHAT ARE CLUB BULLETINS?

Just as the BMFA News is one of the prime means of communication to members, the Club Bulletins are one of the prime means of communicating on a regular basis to the Association's affiliated clubs. It also contains safety notices and notices of a general nature but primarily reports to clubs on the detailed proceedings and decisions of meetings. Therefore, clubs are kept abreast of what business the Association's elected officers are undertaking on behalf of the membership. This gives all clubs the opportunity to comment through their area committees should they wish to do so.

Club Bulletins are produced 8 times per year, supplemented by extra safety bulletins if required.

WHAT ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE DOES THE BMFA PROVIDE?

The BMFA employs three experienced and knowledgeable aeromodellers on a full time basis; the Chief Executive Officer, Development Officer and Club Support Officer. Much of their time is devoted to providing advice on all aspects of model aircraft flying and club organisation. Should they not know the answer immediately, they will either find out or direct you to a person who does. Such advice covers situations from "Why do my glo plugs keep blowing?" through to "Help! The treasurer's just absconded with our club funds".

All clubs who consider affiliation are given the opportunity of receiving a club talk which is free of charge to the club. This gives the BMFA the opportunity to advise on the advantages of affiliation and the club to ask any questions they may have. It is also an opportunity for debate and to dispel many of the myths that abound about the BMFA. Update talks are also available on a free of charge basis to affiliated clubs should they be requested.

The BMFA regards its advice and assistance service as fundamental to its clubs' and members' needs and as such it is always given a high priority. We are here to serve our members and clubs.

WHAT DOES A CLUB HAVE TO DO TO AFFILIATE?

To accord with the philosophy of the partnership and to ensure clubs have the requisite insurance cover, all affiliated clubs are required to have 100% BMFA membership. Social members do not have to be included in club membership for the process of affiliation provided they do not fly and do not take an active part in the organisation of the club.

All a club then has to do is complete the necessary paperwork, naming a minimum of 5 club members whose BMFA subscriptions are paid through the affiliating club. There are no additional costs for affiliation and no hidden clauses. Special arrangements can be made to permit clubs to make the transition as easy as possible in the first year of affiliation.

DOES THE BMFA INTERFERE WITH CLUB ORGANISATION?

The BMFA is not empowered nor does it wish to interfere with club organisation and will give help and advice only when requested to do so. This will normally be by the club committee but very occasionally we are requested to assist by local or national authorities. Should the latter be the case, we are obliged to do so as the BMFA is the National Governing Body but this would only be done so in full consultation with the club.

The BMFA is not empowered or mandated to do anything but offer advice to clubs and members, although this advice is based upon common law and CAA recommendations. Should a club or member transgress in any way, it is the responsibility of the authorities to take action as this is not within the BMFA's remit.

DOES THE BMFA PROFIT FROM MEMBERS' SUBSCRIPTIONS?

The BMFA is a non profit making company by law, although reasonable reserves are maintained as a matter of sensible precaution. All members' subscriptions are used to support model aircraft flying and nobody makes money out of the BMFA. The majority of work is undertaken by volunteers for which they make no charge. They do, however, receive payment to cover all reasonable and auditable out of pocket expenses. All BMFA budgets are subject to an annual audit.

The volunteers are supported by a small nucleus of full and part-time staff who provide the continuity and administer the members and clubs. These are the people who provide you with the routine help you require and develop and manage the Association in accordance with Council policy.

HOW MUCH MONEY IS SPENT ON COMPETITION FLYING?

All BMFA competitions have to be self funding and not a penny of the members' money is spent on them. Control of the competitions is the responsibility of the Technical Committees who set competitors' entrance fees to ensure the books balance. If profits are incurred, the Technical Committees have the option to transfer the surplus to their international team travel fund.

The infrastructure of national competitions is funded from an element of the competitors' fees and the admission charges for the public.

At international level, limited support is given to teams entering World and European championships. Generally this covers competition entry fees, accommodation costs and the formal prize giving banquet. Should the support given be inadequate, it has to be topped up from either the team travel fund or more often, the competitors themselves. It is not unknown for competitors to take a weeks holiday and spend over £1000 each to represent their country at an international level.

The amount spent on supporting international teams is less than 4% of each member's subscription. A good investment considering our teams take more medals than our athletes in international competitions!

Our participation and success in the international forum is essential as not only does it give the BMFA an international voice, it also strengthens our national identity as a credible sport.

NUMBERS DO COUNT

The BMFA's strengths are its proven expertise and its membership. Without the backing of its clubs and members we could not have accomplished the many things that have given us national and international credibility and recognition. Major achievements have been: Sports Council recognition, the negotiation of the CAA limitations under which model aircraft are flown to ensure we retain the right to fly in common airspace without draconian restrictions, the introduction, retention and expansion of the 35 Mhz band, the introduction of the 2.4GHz band, the retention of flying sites for free flight, indoor and R/C, and the implementation of the National Trust agreement.

The sheer weight of numbers of model aircraft fliers we represent has enabled us to be heard at the highest levels. Therefore, we require continuing support as without you the BMFA would not exist. The BMFA is its 35,000+ members and 800+ clubs.

We are a respected organisation and can move forward into the future with confidence to promote and protect the sport of model flying in the UK.

United we have achieved and will continue to do so.

CONTACT US

More information can be found on our website: <http://www.bmfa.org>

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THE BRITISH MODEL FLYING ASSOCIATION'S NATIONALLY BASED WORK

Some examples of work in this in no particular order are:

The BMFA obtained exclusive use of the 35MHz band for model flying to prevent other users' interference. Remember the 27MHz days, CB etc?

The BMFA obtained expansion of the 35 MHz band to give clubs greater flexibility.

The BMFA negotiated and obtained use of the 2.4 GHz band.

The BMFA successfully rebutted CAA proposals to restrict all model aircraft to 400ft altitude and a maximum weight of 2 Kg. This actually resulted in the BMFA being granted the status of a delegated self regulatory body, answerable directly to the CAA.

The BMFA negotiated a national agreement with the National Trust for the use of their land for model flying.

The BMFA negotiated a national agreement with the Home Office to prevent local authorities amending bylaws that would affect model flying without consultation.

The BMFA put in place a watertight insurance for model flying.

The BMFA rebutted the revision of Planning Policy Guidance Document 17, The Use of The Countryside for Recreational Purposes, due to its adverse affect on airports.

The BMFA is monitoring The Public Access to The Countryside Act to ensure it has no adverse effect on model flying.

The BMFA secured model flying as a sport thereby opening up the opportunity for the use of public land for model flying, club grants and funding, subject to application approval.

The BMFA secured the use of MOD land for model flying, subject to the commanding officers approval.

The BMFA has secured the use of national airspace under the same rights as all other users; i.e. The Air Navigation Order. For example: Following an airmiss between two Tornadoes and a model aircraft the pilot of the model aircraft was cleared of any blame.

The BMFA secured CANP reporting procedures as detailed on Page 10 of the Handbook.

The BMFA introduced a nationally recognised safety code on which CAP658 is based.

The BMFA introduced nationally recognised training and achievement schemes.

The BMFA introduced a model aircraft building programme for schools.

The BMFA negotiated a national noise code to give the local authorities objective guidance thereby preventing arbitrary closure of flying sites.

The BMFA monitored the impact of EU directives concerning the use of IC engines for non vehicular use.

The BMFA has been at the forefront of negotiations with the European Aviation Safety Agency and has had a direct input into their proposed rules for unmanned aircraft, which could otherwise have captured model flying disproportionately.

Please note these are activities which are above those services routinely given to Clubs and members.

All of this costs money and time and the beneficiaries are all model flyers not just BMFA members. Fundamentally, those who do not belong to the BMFA depend on those that do. The majority of model flyers are BMFA members otherwise model flying would not survive as we would not be big enough nor have the resources to be effective.

