

The Meeting of the Interest Group Considering the Establishment of a Airsoft Players Organisation

Held on the 30th November 2009 at the Midland Red Social Club, Birmingham

Attendees

Matthew Furey-King
David Murphy
Gareth Perkins
Phil Bucknall
Jamie Stevens
Ken Elston
James Williams
Mark Wood
Ben Meloy
James Sanders
Gareth Neale
Sam Fellows
Ken Elston
Hayden Morgan

Agenda

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. To hear any objections.**
- 3. To consider and establish a players organisation.**
- 4. To agree temporary officers for the year 2009 / 2010**
 - (a) Chairman**
 - (b) Secretary**
 - (c) Treasurer**
 - (d) Registrar**
- 5. To agree a Name.**
- 6. Constitution.**
- 7. Any other business.**
- 8. Date of next meeting.**

Introduction

A select group of airsoft players were invited to discuss the formation of an airsoft players organisation. It was decided beforehand that it would not be prudent to openly invite all airsoft players, as in the past airsoft players organisations have been started in this manner with the result that they are heavily criticised before they have had the chance to form, and have subsequently been dissolved. Ken Elston, current registrar and founder of the UKASGB and initial chairman of UKARA, was asked to chair the meeting in order that

a chairman could be fairly selected from the players during the meeting.

To hear any objections.

the Chairman Ken Elston asked if there were any objections to the formation of an airsoft players organisation. There were no objections.

To consider and establish a players organisation

Chairman Ken Elston advised that we should open all executive positions to re-election at the AGM which should be held within a year.

After discussion, we concluded that executive positions within the organisation should only be held by players with no interests in an airsoft site or shop. This would be essential to maintain the independence of the organisation. We agreed to defer the precise ruling till later in the meeting.

To agree temporary officers for the year 2009 / 2010

Chairman

The only person to volunteer for chairman was Matthew Furey-King. There were no objections to this and Matt was backed by Phil Bucknall and seconded by Jamie Stevens. The players present voted unanimously in favour. Matt then assumed chair of the meeting from ken. Ken was asked if he would sit in the rest of the meeting as an advisor.

Secretary

The only person to volunteer for secretary was David Murphy. There were no objections to this , Matt was backed by Phil Bucknall and seconded by Jamie Stevens. The players present voted unanimously in favour.

Treasurer

The only person to volunteer for treasurer was Jamie Stevens. There were no objections to this and Jamie was backed by Phil Bucknall and seconded by Gareth Perkins. The players present voted unanimously in favour.

Registrar

The only person to volunteer for registrar was Hayden Morgan. There were no objections to this and Matt was backed by Phil Bucknall and seconded by James Sanders. The players present voted unanimously in favour.

To agree a Name.

Two potential names were put forward by the Chairman Matthew Furey-King; UKAPU and UKAPA. United Kingdom Airsoft Players Union and United Kingdom Airsoft Players Association and Jamie Stevens offered UK Airsoft Players Organisation. UKAP was agreed as a desirable prefix as it brings the name into line with the existing site and retailer bodies. Although UKAPA was decided to have been more descriptive of the organisations structure, UKAPA had been used before a number of players association which failed to get off the ground.

When taken to vote, the players present unanimously voted for UKAPU

Constitution

It was decided that during the next year the executive would need to ratify a constitution. Ken suggested that we should leave the constitution unratified till the first AGM, which would enable us to make changes to the constitution during that year without formal process. The ratification of the agenda was deferred to the agenda of the next meeting.
Action: the chairman will produce a preliminary draft of the constitution before the next

meeting

Any other business.

The chairman had several items which he wished to discuss as a matter of priority

Legal Status

It became clear that all members present did not wish UKAPU to become a company for reasons of integrity and to maintain the trust of players.

It was proposed that the organisation should move forward as an unincorporated association. The vote was unanimously in favour, but that further clarification on the exact legal term was required.

Action: chairman to seek legal advice on the exact terminology of the associations status and implications of such

Who will we represent?

Matt proposed that we represent all people who use airsoft replicas for leisure purposes This would include re-enactment groups that used airsoft guns, IPSC shooters, people who held invite only airsoft games on private property with the owners permission (grass roots players) as well as players who pay to skirmish at insured, organised sites (players recognised as legitimate skirmishers by the VCRA specific defence) This view was supported by James and Gareth as this was the origin of airsoft, and it is neither illegal or antisocial.

Phil put forward that only skirmishers as defined in the VCRA should be allowed to become UKAPU members, Jamie was in agreement.

Ken pointed out that the body would be liable for the actions of its members and that It could be harmful for the sport and the organisation if we were to let anyone join, and could leave the executive personally liable. Should grass roots members act in an unlawful or disreputable manner in the holding of airsoft games, the consent of the association may be implied if we allowed them to join.

in the current social climate It was decided that it is an unnecessary risk to represent players whom the home office does not recognise as skirmishers, and that the liability would be greatly reduced if VCRA defined skirmisher were the only group to be represented

It was put to a vote and it was unanimously decided that, at least for the foreseeable future, we must only represent skirmishers as defined in the VCRA defence.

As such, some form of player vetting must be performed before members were accepted.

Gareth suggested that in addition some sort of prospective membership scheme should be considered for junior members and members who are looking into entering the sport.

action: chairman to discuss practicalities of electronic vetting/registration system with Gareth Llewellyn (technical advisor)

Action: registrar to obtain list of contact details for all UK skirmish sites with public liability insurance

Players with vested interests

clarification of exclusions from elected positions for players with outside interests was sought. Site owners and shop owners are nearly always players and should be encouraged to join UKAPU, however all parties present agreed that executive positions should not be held by people who may have interests in airsoft that are not primarily that of a player.

Gareth Perkins submitted that many players are also marshals at sites, and should not be excluded from executive positions, as helping to run games does not compromise you as a player, it is in fact an important part of being a player.

A vote was not taken but consensus was reached that if you were drawing money from the activity then you should be excluded from executive positions within the association. This includes site management and anyone on an airsoft shop's payroll.

Phil Bucknall clarified that he would be very happy to help with the launching of UKAPU even if it is not to be in a non executive role. Phil does not draw money from fireball squadron, but is part of the management team.

It was also noted that James Williams, manager of the former spectre wargames airsoft sites, is not trading at this time and therefore able to perform the duties of treasurer without a conflict of interest.

Benefits to members

Many possible benefits to players were discussed, a great deal brought forward by James. It was agreed that the most important things to offer are openness and honesty to the members, feedback to players from discussions affecting the hobby, and representation of players interests to the government and the media. However, more immediate, palpable benefits would need to be offered to players in order to encourage them to join

A specific defence database was discussed. It was not ruled out entirely but decided that a database would not be the right option for UKAPU in the immediate future, as UKARA already offers this.

Secretary and Press Releases

It was agreed upon that the existence of the association should remain a secret to players until we feel ready for a public launch.

Matt suggested that any press releases or posts on internet forums are created and release by a central source and that individual officers of members do not release anything as individuals. it was proposed by Jamie Stevens that the executive position of press officer be created to enable this. He volunteered himself for the position, and was proposed by Phil Bucknall and seconded by Ben Meloy. There were no further volunteers and the players present voted in favour.

In order to spread the workload, Jamie then relinquished the role of treasurer and a re-election occurred.

The only person to volunteer for treasurer was James Williams. There were no objections to this and James was backed by Gareth Perkins and seconded by Marc Wood. The players present voted unanimously in favour.

Forum

the existing private internet forum will remain private, but accounts will be created for the players present at the meeting who do not possess accounts currently.

Points of action

the following tasks are to be carried out for the next meeting;

chairman will produce a preliminary draft of the constitution before the next meeting

chairman to seek legal advice on the exact terminology of the associations status and implications of such

chairman to discuss practicalities of electronic vetting/registration system with Gareth Llewellyn (technical advisor)

registrar to obtain list of contact details for all UK skirmish sites with public liability insurance

Secretary to draft the minutes and distribute

Treasurer to set up the bank accounts

Press Officer to design 3 alternative logos for selection and approval

Gareth Perkins to contact his sister about using the back room of her pub for the next meeting

Date of next meeting

Around the last weekend in January. It would be an advantage to hold the meeting on a Saturday evening, but this will not be possible with the current venue. Wait out on word from Gareth about the use of his sisters pub.

Insert photo