

HEADCORN AERODROME CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Headcorn Aerodrome
Kent TN27 9HX

01622 890 226

Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 2.30 pm
Wings Bar & Restaurant
Headcorn Aerodrome

Present:

Jamie Freeman – Chairman
Brian Bristow – Vice Chairman
James Thomas – Chairman Headcorn Parish Council
Linda Thorogood – Vice Chair Headcorn Parish Council
Lester Gosbee – Frittenden Parish Council
Terry Hodges – Museum/Private Owners
Ziggy Trzebinski – Maidstone Borough Council
Gerald Hodges – Thurston Helicopters
Jane Buckle - Skydive Headcorn
Pete Sizer – Skydive Headcorn
Chris Yates – Headcorn Special Events
Stefan Christodoulou – Clerk Headcorn Parish Council
Jo Mitchell – Assistant Clerk Headcorn Parish Council
Sue Line – Secretary

1 Apologies for Absence

Ken Mulholland ABC
John Perry - MBC
Martin Round MBC

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting were read and signed.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Referring to the Minutes Linda Thorogood asked if there was any date for the Emergency Services Show in 2023. Chris Yates confirmed that there would be no show this year.

The Secretary was asked to circulate the non-aerobatic days to the Committee after the meeting.

4 Planning and Events

The question was raised on the subject of the Fire Show event and the noise of fire engines and explosions. This had been noted by the aerodrome and it was reconfirmed that there would not be a Fire Show during 2023. ZT had been specifically approached on this subject by residents. Daytime noise would be reduced for further shows and the aerodrome should hopefully be free of complaints. CY confirmed that Combined Ops was also not being held during 2023 and that the Model Show, which was being held, would not have explosions or fireworks. There was a discussion about keeping people informed with circulated notes.

CY confirmed that the Battle of Britain show would open at 4pm on the Friday 30th June 2023 and that the Parachute Club/Skydive and the Flying School would be able to fly as normal during the day. The actual show permission does not trigger until 4pm in the afternoon. There was a RAT (Restricted Airspace (Temporary)) from 9 in the morning.

BB in discussion with CY confirmed the intention that the Red Arrows would close the show on Sunday 2nd July. There was to be a Lancaster believed to be at a similar time, possibly on the Saturday, but still to be confirmed. All timings for aircraft were unconfirmed at this point.

ZT raised the question of planning for the Battle of Britain and it was confirmed that the planning had yet to be dealt with. CY said that Martin Round was still away.

5 Correspondence **No correspondence as such.**

6 Complaints

Jane Buckle confirmed that The Parachute Club had not flown customers until Saturday but had been doing currency circuits meanwhile. The weather had been bad for parachuting. JF and BB were still waiting to meet at Bletchenden but when weather was so poor there had been no point. JF confirmed that residents of the aerodrome had been emailed with instructions and maps of where to fly, and that notices were issued to visiting pilots. He confirmed that they were already aware of this information but he had advised them again. James Thomas raised the discussion about the village offering to put some money towards some signage, suggesting signs like 'Noise abatement' and 'Climb out on track until you reach the church before turning' and suggested the signs could go at the Holding Point. JPAF said that buffering with another sign would improve education.

JF said he would prefer to be at the site monitoring the flying personally along with BB as he was not confident that the information he was getting back was 100% accurate and it was difficult for anyone to make judgement as to whether they were being flown over the top or not. Phone photographs could be useful as the phone would have longitude and latitude as a reference from where you were standing at that point.

JPAF referred to the Report from the Airspace User Response at the CAA which had come to his attention and which was requested by residents at Bletchenden last year (2022). Both that report and JPAF confirmed that the ATZ has a radius of 2 nm and all of Bletchenden is well within the ATZ. It is not open air space. That report is not helpful to the residents and states that the aerodrome is allowed to do what it wants to do but also states that interaction between the aerodrome and residents should be maintained, which is what we have always done. TH said that continued engagement was the way forward and the Committee agreed.

As mentioned above, JF reconfirmed the plan to meet Bletchenden residents on a day when it is busy, on runway 28 with the wind down the runway. He reminded the Committee that if there is a strong wind from the north it is very possible that a pilot or student learning to fly could just fly off track and then correct. BB felt it would also give a general sense on a busy day how many visitors there were and how many training. JF also reminded the Committee that there would be aircraft doing circuits, plus aerodrome residents.

BB had observed the parachute aircraft and discussed this with JB. She confirmed to him that she was an experienced and confident pilot and had been flying at Headcorn for a good number of years. JB reminded the Committee that many pilots had been flying from the aerodrome for a long period of time. She confirmed that they were all aware of the windsock.

BB confirmed that he felt Aero Legends routinely flew straight ahead. CY said you would need to monitor the wind on days of complaint. GH felt it important to record that all pilots tried to do the right thing. CY reconfirmed that Skydemon would show tracks.

It was generally felt that perception of the position of aircraft was an important factor and the Committee had previously had these issues with a Waterman Quarter resident. There was a brief discussion about the Let aircraft which had been much noisier.

It was generally felt by the Committee, and especially by CY, JT, GH, LG and ZT, that times had moved on what with people working from home, social media, immediate publicity and ease of complaint plus newer residents and even newer housing developments. ZT indicated

he would like more engagement with them. JF said he had met with groups both at Bletchenden and at the aerodrome, and had flown people round the circuit so that they would understand.

It was generally agreed that publicity and noise abatement signs would be helpful. BB said that there is a perception which I think is unjustified. GH asked BB if he had seen Thurstons flying correctly. BB agreed they were, but pointed out that this was not a busy day. BB agreed that using the church tower before beginning a turn was a good idea as it does stand out easily. JT felt pilots were likely to be concentrating on other things at that point. GH made a comment that we have noise abatement everywhere.

ZT asked about specific complaints/statistics: JF listed as below:

JF said there had been a complaint about a visitor from a flying club at Redhill. We did speak to the pilot. We do make contact with people who might have caused an issue and we go back to the pilot. He confirmed to the Committee that the aerodrome does act if it gets the information.

4th February complaint; JF was on Air/Ground. The complaint was that they were 'all flying over a resident's house'. JPAF spoke to both pilots. They were both fully qualified instructors and both categorically said that they were not flying over Bletchenden. These people are professional people flying accurately for many years and JPAF said that he cannot be seen to keep pushing accusations like this at them. Most pilots will not be making an effort to turn left - it is much easier to continue straight ahead. Bletchenden is 800m from end of the runway and a turn would need to be quite sharp. Residents at Bletchenden need to be informed of what we have said this afternoon. BB appreciated that the aerodrome was trying.

7. Any other business.

ZT had asked the Committee whether it would consider inviting parishioners to the meeting. He had had representations from near neighbours of the aerodrome about this and especially following last year's Emergency Services Show. TH pointed out that it would need a change in the Constitution. This was a point that had previously been raised by residents of Bletchenden and Waterman Quarter and the Committee takes the view that Parish Councillors, as democratically elected members, represent their own parishioners.

JT spoke to LG on the subject of the weather. So far this had not been as good as last year, being unsettled for most of March. LG has a Facebook page where he reports on the weather.

8 Date of next meeting

**Tuesday 13th June 2023 at 2.30pm
Wings Bar and Restaurant.
Headcorn Aerodrome**

GWD 14SS
17th Oct next meeting