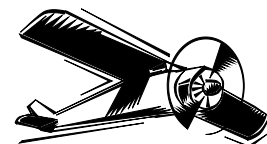


FENLAND AERO CLUB - Committee

Fenland Airfield, Jekils Bank, Holbeach St Johns Spalding, PE12 8RQ

EGCL / Tel: 01406 - 540330 / Email: secretary@fenlandairfield.co.uk



MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB

Present:	Neil Buck, Claire Buckley, Robin Hoile, Carl Husain, Tim James, John Parker, Peter Watson, Martin Williams.
Ex-Officio:	Kerry Allen (Runways).
Others in Attendance:	

THURSDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2020

Meeting Convened 7pm

- 1) **APOLOGIES:** Steve Brown, Paul Brian, Angelo Sapiano.
- 2) **PREVIOUS MINUTES:** 23 January 2020 were approved by the Committee after an amendment was made to Item 12.
- 3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** (Peter Watson):

(i) Septic Tank: Peter reported on the matter of the septic tank. This is ongoing waiting for the Environment Agency to issue (or not issue) a permit to discharge sewage into the ground following our recent application.

(ii) Trees: Peter raised the matter concerning the trees down the eastern side of the car park which, over a number of years, are believed to be responsible for errors in the tower's wind data information.

Discussion followed.

The consensus was that we wait until we have more reliable information as to what is causing the problems with the tower's wind measuring equipment. No action is to be taken just yet.

(iii) Signage: Peter asked the committee to consider his idea to put some signage on the old hangar frontage, for example "Fenland Airfield" and the services available at the airfield raising more public awareness.

Round the table discussion followed.

It was agreed by majority vote that the principal sign will say Fenland Airfield rather than Fenland Aero Club. Peter will ask the sign makers for a quotation believed to be around £700.

(iv) Airfield Runway Waterlogging: Peter went on to report his discussion with two companies that might address our airfield drainage problem. Using an auger it was shown that there are areas of compacted clay and that water will not drain away properly as a result.

Peter described a number of methods which could be employed on the airfield. He said he is waiting for a quote on one particular method to help drain the airfield.

He informed the committee that the runways should have been 'spiked' to help the situation; this he said would cost £1,000, although he said this was too late now. Peter said that he was told that the only thing that would work is to put in land drainage.

Some discussion followed.

As soon as Peter receives the quotations he will distribute them to committee.

(v) Insurance: Peter said that the club pays £10,000 [per year] to insure the airfield – the hangars, people on the airfield, and other such items. Peter said he gave the insurance brokers three scenarios. He described the scenarios...

The outcome is that we are contacting all pilots asking them to show the club their insurance; and the amounts they are insured for.

There was also a concern by John Wright [Landlord] about events when cars park on his land and who is responsible. Therefore a notice must be posted where drivers drive in about owner's responsibility.

Tim James added this could be done by handing all visitors the notice on a piece of paper or printed on tickets.

Discussion followed.

Peter added that the pilots [owners] talk to their insurance company if it's shown there is a requirement for [third party liability] of over £2.5m.

(vi) New IER Manager: Peter reminded the committee that David [Westall] is a volunteer like the rest of us... He's not here for fun, he's volunteered to help us out and he wants to do it his way Peter said; that we give him our support as he is an asset to this airfield.

There was unanimous support in a vote of confidence in David.

4) TREASURER'S REPORT (Peter Watson):

Peter reported that he had transferred £25,000 from the Current Account and deposited it in the Savings Account. Therefore there is now £51,126 in the Savings Account. This money, he said, has been slowly building up the kitty particularly if the fuel tanks go wrong. And this should be kept there [for contingency] for fuel tanks.

Peter added that there is £27,141 in the Current Account, plus whatever value we have in fuel stocks.

The Fuel Manager [Carl Husain] confirmed there is just over 13,000 litres of 100LL which represents 60% of the tank; 70% about 4,500 litres of UL91; and nearly 70% which is just over 13,000 litres of JetA1 fuel. Lots of fuel at the moment Carl said.

Tim James said our balance sheet goes up and down due to the fuel. It was stated that we have approximately £100,000. When we haven't this amount, Tim said, it's because we have increased the fuel stocks.

Carl estimated about £20,000 [fuel value in stock].

Short discussion followed of the overview of where we are financially.

5) **SECRETARY'S REPORT** (Claire Buckley):

(i) Members: The Secretary said that there had only been one Flying Member join this month, Vincent Asquith. The Secretary explained to the committee that Vincent took up a flying membership to hangar his Topsy Nipper temporarily as he couldn't get away due to weather. This was with the agreement of John Parker [Hangar Manager].

(ii) CAA Return: This had been completed and returned to the CAA the Secretary said. The same figures were used as our previous return. As a result, we will be receiving an invoice for about £2200 at the end of March which is our fee for our CAA license.

(iii) Gas Inspection: Claire said that the kitchen gas appliances are due an inspection. This was done by a local supplier previously which cost us £260 for the inspection and a written report she said. Kerry Alan [Runways] said it's a different oven now, and had suggested her husband could organise this for us.

(iv) Airfield Radio License: Claire said she had contacted Ofcom and requested a copy of the invoice for our radio license fee as this should have been received a few weeks ago. This had arrived today and is in the process of being paid she said. The amount is £200 due by 28 February 2020.

(v) Fenland Flyer: The Secretary said the Spring edition is being planned for publishing at the end of March. Some ideas are currently being considered. This is on-going the next few weeks.

(vi) Marketing Manager: Claire said she believed the Club could benefit from someone who could look specifically at marketing the airfield; to pull things together she said and asked if the committee had any opinion on this.

Discussion followed.

James agreed he will come back at next committee with some suggestion as to a budget, and possibly some other ways we might progress this working alongside Kat [Baldwyn] and via other contacts we have.

6) **AIRFIELD RUNWAYS & WORKING PARTY** (Carl Husain):

Carl reported that he walked the runways [a few days earlier] and they were still sodden, but remarkably little wind damage. He listed a number of repairable issues. He said the runway is still unusable.

James Baldwyn had been asked to keep a list of works required these included:

The portacabin roof, marker boards, welcome sign at the entrance and various signs, fencing, the sand box at the AVGAS fuelling point, atc tower stairs. The caravan was also mentioned.

Discussion followed.

Martin Williams will arrange for someone to have a look at the state of the portacabin roof with a view to repairing.

7) **SAFETY REPORT & SAFEGUARDING** (Tim James):

(i) Safety Reporting: Tim reported that everybody is urged if there is an accident or incident on the airfield to submit a safety report and to submit it to the flying school and we will collate it. We then discuss the reports in Committee and then they are filed on DropBox.

(ii) MOR: Tim also spoke about Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR) which was picked up at the airfield inspection. Tim went on to say he will have to redesign the safety report. He explained there are different sections of reporting; people who service aeroplanes; aerodromes; pilots. This is something he is working on and we have until the 26 April to correct it according to the CAA inspectors Tim said.

Tim also reported that the other matter raised at the airfield inspection was that the fire truck cannot get across the ditches. The inspectors suggested some form of ramps attached to the Landrover.

Discussion followed.

Tim said that this matter was something the Accountable Manager was asking about, and invited anyone with a query about this to speak to David Beale.

Tim said he is going to undertake the Mandatory Occurrence Reporting matter.

(iii) Safeguarding: Tim showed Committee the safeguarding map produced on a 1:50,000 scale OS map. Tim said when the CAA inspectors visited we talked to them about safeguarding as we were unaware at the time as to what safeguarding should take he said; the CAA insisted we put it in [safeguarding].

Tim explained to Committee what the map represented; some information of the visit to the Planning Officer at South Holland County Council and why safeguarding is important to Fenland Airfield.

The Committee thanked Tim for his work.

Tim said he did not want to hear that hare coursers have been on the airfield, or that something has hit someone in the eye and have to ask if a safety report has been done. If there's a safety incident, fill in the form, put it into the flying school... and we'll bring it forward [to Committee] and it will be filed Tim said.

At the end of the year the reports are reviewed to check that the Safety Management System is still fit for purpose.

8) IER & EVENTS MANAGER'S REPORT (James Baldwyn):

(i) **IER:** On behalf of David Westall, James reported that 10 full fire kits have been purchased, which are good specification, although second hand but in good condition he said. Each person he said will be measured up and allocated a number for their kit – the right size.

James went on to say that flash hoods have been obtained, giving additional protection. We're also trying to source some new boots as well but explained they were trying to spread the cost a little.

James said they are a couple of members down with some having resigned for different reasons; as a result David has placed a few adverts [locally]. James added that he intends to do another appeal on Facebook and spread a few more leaflets around the airfield.

As regards the hangar fire extinguishers James said he'd emailed Fenland Fire [Appliances] asking for 2 powder, 2 foam, stands and signs, but David believes he can get a better price for the stands and signs than Fenland Fire.

James said he'd get the extinguishers from Fenland Fire, and the stands and signs elsewhere.

It was confirmed the equipment is for Hangar 8 and the Nissan Hangar.

(ii) **Events:** James said he was considering the option of doing on-line ticketing making it easier on the day [referring to Wings & Wheels]. James explained he and Kat [Baldwyn] had recent experience of this and said it was really good and it worked really well. He outlined how it might work for Fenland.

James outlined other future planned events.

9) FUEL MANAGER'S REPORT (Carl Husain):

Carl reported we have in current stock 13,129 litres of 100LL; 4,546 litres of UL91 and 13,192 litres of JetA1 fuel.

Carl said that Forest Aviation had done the half-annual service on the pumps and the installations. He also said that he was advised that we should have the fuel tanks inspected internally as the underground fuel tanks have never been inspected internally. However, he added, Forest Aviation believed they couldn't do it as they were unlikely to get the manways off without breaking the concrete.

Carl advised, although he felt it was not imperative that we spend any money today, this year, possibly next year, we should be positively planning to replace both those fuel tanks with above ground storage units, which he said, will be in the region of £32,000 each.

Carl said that we will continue to do the water checks and that we don't expect there to be a contamination problem if the tanks are damaged – an environmental contamination problem, but the fuel may become expensive if we get contaminated fuel.

Carl went on to say there is no evidence there is water in the tanks; there is no evidence the tanks are about to implode, but we just don't have the means to be able to monitor the condition of the tanks he said.

10) HANGAR MANAGER'S REPORT (John Parker):

John said there was nothing to report.

Peter Watson added that the contract had been finally signed for Hangar 8 and the Nissan Hangar.

11) SUBSCRIPTIONS & FEES (Tim James):

Tim reported that with the help of our Bookkeeper he had reviewed the club accounts. At this point Peter added for information that anyone on the committee is entitled to see the accounts.

Tim said he looked at the year-to-date figures for the airfield. He then looked at the projected out-turn for this year and with the help of our bookkeeper it was the opinion that if we break even for this year we will be extremely lucky he said.

Tim gave more information to the committee in order to set the financial scene.

As it relates to our fuel sales, a document was distributed to the committee which reported that in year to date 2020 we had sold 70,269 litres of Avgas which represented £96,820 of sales equating to £1.38 per litre or £1.65 including VAT.

His recommendation as to our fuel was that we give greater consideration to competitor information and provide a lower margin [price] for non-members.

Tim gave mention to the club's objective which is to make flying affordable for as many people as possible, then, he said, he didn't believe we can use the fact that previous committees have not put the memberships up... he didn't think this justifies us doing a 'catch-up'.

He referred to a table he produced which showed what a 3.5 per cent; a 5 per cent and a 10 per cent increase in memberships looked like and invited the committee to take view on what would be an acceptable increase, bearing in mind they haven't gone up since 2016.

In order for the club to survive he said, it needs a runway that planes can land on; it needs a good restaurant as Ray [Nicholson] will tell you when we didn't have a restaurant nobody came; if nobody comes they won't buy the fuel.

Tim said he had discussed social memberships with Paul Brian [as was agreed at previous committee]. Paul's belief was that no restaurant, no visitors; no visitors, no non-member fuel sales.

Tim added that he and Paul believed that the restaurant should show a differential in price for member and non-member, which in turn, he said, would encourage more social members who would benefit from lower restaurant prices... and preferential access to booking tables.

Discussion followed.

Tim said he didn't think there is a case to putting membership fees up by more than inflation, plus a bit; that he believes 5 per cent is where we should be.

There followed discussion as to how we might inform the members of a proposal for the increase in membership fees.

It was agreed to move on to the fuel pricing before making a proposal on which the committee could vote.

Fuel Pricing:

Tim James explained that he and Carl Husain had spent a lot of time with the figures; it's difficult he said. The [fuel] accounts are done on a cash basis. On a month to month basis we cannot calculate what the average margin will be, because the figures never match up. But over the year we probably can he said.

Tim again outlined the quantities of fuel sold over the year to date and how this works out at £1.38 per litre which is £1.65 including VAT - both grades [100LL and UL91].

Tim explained whatever we pay for fuel [from our suppliers], a mark-up of 48p goes to non-members; 34p to members; and 18p to the flying school.

Carl added that although we can get an overall figure for the discount given... we can't divide that up in a way that we can tell you how much fuel we've sold to the flying school, how much fuel we've sold to members, and much we've sold to non-members – we've got this sort of vaguery.

Tim said if we could get figures of what our competitors are charging for fuel, he believed we could be very very competitive.

Carl summarised to say that if we are going to make more money on fuel, the only way is to sell more fuel to non-members... that we can cut the fuel quite drastically for non-members to attract people in without it having much effect on our profit... it only works if we don't change the discount that members get.

Tim said he was not advocating that these discounts change. Members and the flying school stay exactly where they are at the moment. Carl added that they will be reducing the margin between members and non-members.

Discussion followed.

As to JetA1 fuel, Tim stated that there is a case of speaking to our customers seeing what effect it would have on them if we had a deal with them – trade some price for volume. Also generate some PR by giving the Air Ambulance, for example, a much better rate.

We should consider meaningful competitor information when available; a lower margin for non-members something where the Chairman can talk to Carl and say this is the competitor information, and the Committee should back that strategy rather than come back to the Committee for a decision, Tim said.

Carl spoke about trying to get a better understanding of the discount fuel card, how they're issued and accounted for – it's either discount or it's not discount. Which means, he said, he has no idea how many discount cards have been issued; anybody can use one. He said he would like to track which card is being used and how much fuel is being used.

The Chairman asked the Committee to vote on the following options:

1. Telling the members that they are to get a 3.5 per cent increase on their membership subscriptions, with a fuller explanation why [this was being done].

OR

2. A full explanation, and that we ask the members if we can put up the membership fees.

The Committee voted for option 1 by seven (7) in favour, and one (1) against:

Telling the members they are to get a 3.5 per cent increase on their membership subscriptions, with a fuller explanation why [this was being done].

A vote was taken for the Landing Fees to be increased by 10 percent.

This was passed by five (5) in favour, and three (3) against.

Tim James proposed that the fuel prices be set by the Fuel Manager [Carl Husain] and the Chairman [Peter Watson] knowing what the competitors prices are. We need to move on this Tim said.

The Chair asked if anyone disagreed with this. No-one disagreed.

The proposal passed by unanimous consent.

Neil Buck stated that he agreed that we should move on the fuel prices, but he said an option that wasn't floated was to scrap landing fees and make the fuel competitive [as well].

Neil asked if there is a good argument not to put up the landing fees just yet and to wait. Is there a slightest possibility that we might decide not to after we look at the fuel market strategy in a few weeks time, he said.

Peter Watson in reply said we make £7,500 in landing fees. This was acknowledged by Neil.

12) ELECTRICAL WORKS (Tim James):

Tim outlined the schedule concerning the electrical work being carried out the following Monday by John Heanes.

13) RUNWAYS RESTAURANT REPORT (Kerry Alan):

Kerry said she would be closing the restaurant the following Tuesday and Wednesday [due to electrical works]. She asked the Secretary if she would put out a mailing to members. This was agreed.

14) FENLAND FLYING SCHOOL (Steve Brown)

Steve Brown was not present.

The Chair read out a statement from Steve Brown. Steve requested it be entered into the minutes.

The Chair asked the Committee to vote whether Steve's statement verbatim be entered into the minutes.

There were no (0) votes in favour; there were seven (7) votes against; with one (1) abstention

The Committee voted not to enter the statement into the minutes.

15) AOB:

There was no other business.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 09:22pm.

Signed **Date**

FAC Chairman