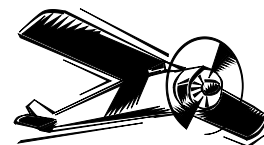


FENLAND AERO CLUB - Committee

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

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB

Present:	Neil Buck, Claire Buckley, Carl Husain, Tim James, John Parker, Angelo Sapiano [delayed 1.25hrs], Peter Watson, Martin Williams
Ex-Officio:	
Others in Attendance:	

THURSDAY, 25 JUNE 2020

Video Conference Meeting Convened 7pm

1) APOLOGIES: James Baldwyn, Kerry Allen

2) PREVIOUS MINUTES (28 May 2020):

The minutes of the previous meeting 28 May 2020 were approved.

3) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (Peter Watson):

The Chairman reported that since the airfield re-opened there had been an excellent response. However he also stated there had been a number of incidents on the airfield, one involving the destruction of a runway marker board at the end of runway 18. This has now been repaired. Also the northern windsock together with some fencing had been repaired. Apart from these issues Peter reported that the airfield has been running quite well.

The Chairman opened this to questions.

A question was asked about the hangar signage.

Peter described the proposed hangar signage 'Fenland Airfield', would be 7 metres in length, 1.2 metres high and that he had contacted a number of members about the colour scheme. A question was raised earlier as to whether the club required planning permission for this. Peter said he is liaising with the Wrights about this. He said there will also be signage about others on the airfield; fenland aero club; fenland flying school for example.

Peter reported that the price for this will be approximately £1,500.

A question was asked if we could also add in 'All Welcome' and airfield altitude.

Martin Williams agreed to speak to the planning officer to get more information.

Peter explained that the material will be a composite with a UV protection of 10-15 years. He also said he would like to place a triangular sign near to the Northern windsock saying 'Fenland Airfield, All Welcome.' He said he will put a design together so the Committee can have a look to see what it will look like.

Tim James said he had still not heard back from Ray (Nicholson) concerning the prohibited signs. Tim will contact Ray again about whether he has heard back from the CAA.

4) TREASURER'S REPORT (Peter Watson):

Peter reported that our accounts are with the accountant, but our bookkeeper said we were £15,000 down compared to this time last year. However, and since we had the grant funding, in 2019 the club made approximately £4,500 profit; in 2020 [due to the grant funding] this brings the Club back to £3,500 – just £1,000 less compared to last year.

In the bank at the moment: Current Account £57,234; Savings Account £51,159 and the Charity Account £338.

Peter said that once the accountants are finished he would send the details to Committee members. There should also be a few hundred more to add as Mary [Payne] flew in to collect the monies in the box at point 'Charlie'.

Peter went on to say that he had submitted [to Committee Members] the email Kerry [Runways Restaurant] had received from the Council telling her she was not entitled to any grant funding. Peter asked Committee to consider providing some financial support.

The Chairman invited comments from around the room.

Discussion followed.

It was agreed that the Chairman would come back to everyone in the next week asking in the meantime Committee to give further consideration to this matter.

5) SECRETARY'S REPORT (Claire Buckley):

The Secretary reported that Carl Jarvis had applied to become a flying member at Fenland with a R44 helicopter. As he didn't know anyone at Fenland the Secretary asked Carl to provide some background about himself. Earlier, Angelo [Sapiano] proposed his application, and the Secretary seconded the application.

Carl Jarvis' application and membership was approved by Committee.

The Secretary went on to say that she had attended a zoom video meeting with the Airfield Operator's Group [AOG] on behalf of Fenland Airfield; about 20 attended the meeting from airfields around the country.

Of interest was a discussion concerning a return to flight training was expected after July 4 or after; the Secretary reported that she had passed on this information to the flying school and a video published on YouTube of some of the preparations being done at Earls Colne airfield. She also said she was awaiting confirmation as to the role of the Accountable Manager, as it was mentioned there was an expectation from the CAA that the Accountable Manager was to oversee this, although this was not confirmed.

6) SAFETY REPORT (Tim James):

Tim James said we have had a few issues:

The first a flex-wing without the wing doing a run-up which Carl and Peter attended. Carl [Husain] filed an MOR. The pilot went to hospital suffering a broken foot. He is reported to be recovering.

Tim reported that the pilot took all precautions, but got caught out. Tim was of the opinion there is nothing we could or should do concerning this.

The second, the 10 June, following satisfactory pre-flight checks, an aircraft took off on runway 08 and at 100-200 feet the engine started to run rough. This was witnessed by John Parker from his house opposite. The pilot flying from the rear seat decided to do a low-level left-hand circuit to land back on 08 as her view ahead (she reported) was limited. The pilot lined up the aircraft on 08 but came in too fast. Tim said John Parker will file an MOR. The pilot was also asked to file an MOR but thought that as no-one was hurt an MOR was not required. Tim said he told her otherwise. He went on to add that this is the line we take with everyone, that any incident that is reportable; where life is endangered a MOR must be filed.

As regards this incident a runway inspection was completed. FOD was found but it was not believed to be from the aircraft involved.

Tim went on to say that the third incident was a PA28 that over-ran runway 18 after landing. Fenland Flying School attended towing the aircraft back to the parking area and should therefore submit an SMS report Tim said. Reported was the incorrect parking of the Fire Truck in the old hangar; not in the right bay. Tim said this needed to be reported to James [Baldwyn] IER and Dave Westall to make sure that the Fire Truck is parked correctly and to be accessible should it be required at short notice.

The pilot of the PA28 had undertaken to file a MOR. Photographs were taken by Claire [Buckley] who also walked the runway before flying commenced the next day; she reported the runway serviceable.

Tim said the flying school took issue that no-one from the aero club was present. Tim said that he believed this made no difference; if no-one is present pilots land at their own risk he said. The Chairman agreed.

The CFI reported to Tim that 'unauthorised' people were manning the A/G radio. No names were given, but one person who was likely being cited was indeed qualified according to Tim, and being qualified that person would not give conflicting instructions.

The Secretary said she had spoken to Ray Nicholson who confirmed that the person being referred to is qualified and had been 'signed off' by Ray to operate A/G. Likely the CFI was unaware of this.

The second accusation for unauthorised use of A/G radio was Peter Watson; Peter did not deny this, but did deny the accusation of giving confusing instructions

Tim said the CFI had reported that he had received two complaints from pilots about confusing instructions. Tim asked the CFI for more information, but this has not been received.

In response, Peter said this was a month ago only saying the runway in use was 08 – only information was given. Peter added that he should not have done it according to the rules without the appropriate licence and accordingly admitted it was wrong. However, Peter did want to know if while on IER duty in the fire truck and if they are required to give runway condition reports, are they allowed to talk on the radio? He went on to say we are told what the rules are and that you can't, but we do. Peter added that we need to confirm [clarify] this.

Discussion followed.

Reminder was given that without an A/G operator's licence it is illegal to use a base station to call aircraft or other operations from that base station. It was suggested that people should take the A/G exam and that the Club has to accept that there are costs to running a licensed airfield.

It was proposed that advice be sought from Ray Nicholson and Simon Cooke.

Peter asked what of himself and people similar who have done the same?

Tim said perhaps we put out a circular the next time a safety bulletin is issued, saying we know people are trying to be helpful, but it is simply not permitted – that's the law. Tim said he would talk to Steve Brown about drafting a safety bulletin.

Tim James raised the matter of the clubhouse/restaurant being able to open again on 04 July. He had spoken to Kerry and said she could not afford to run the club restaurant as a restaurant; it would not be cost effective he said. Kerry proposed to continue as she had previously. Tim agreed with this as being the safest thing.

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

Carl reported that in May we sold just over 5,000 litres of AVGAS including UL91. This was a huge amount as the previous month we had sold only a 1,000 litres in total. Carl further reported that since the last meeting no JetA1 had been sold.

The price [of fuel] he said had gone through the floor and he managed to get a good price purchasing 10,000 litres of 100LL and 6,000 litres of UL91 in what was counted a single order but over two deliveries. This had led to the fuel pricing at the moment of £1.62p/litre.

Carl explained he sent out a spreadsheet as the low price of fuel has highlighted a couple of 'anomalies' the major one is the differential between 100LL and UL91.

He added the mark up for non-members is 48p/litre for 100LL and 39p/litre for UL91. That means he said, if we use those mark-up figures and the 87p/litre price which was the buying-in price of 100LL, and the 92.5p/litre price which was the buying in price of UL91, that means the prices should be £1.62p/litre for 100LL and £1.58p/litre for UL91.

Carl said what he did was to lift the price of UL91 to £1.62p/litre pending a discussion at Committee; whether we thought the pricing structure is okay; what the thoughts were about how we might change it; or whether we should keep it as simple as possible and do what he has already done boosting UL91 to the same price as 100LL.

He added that it is unlikely that this will last very long as the price is going back up again, therefore talking about cutting prices further is probably moot.

He said that this is something we should discuss on a regular basis to make sure we are getting enough money from the fuel, but also the members are getting a good deal. But also is the fuel price affecting [visitor] attendance. At the moment they are not he said, but we're still in 'strange times'.

The last full [flying] year 2018-2019, sales to non-members was 34 per cent of our fuel [sales]; sales to members was 20 per cent; sales to the flying school was 46 per cent of our fuel [sales], giving an idea of the distribution of our income across the sectors [contributing £29,700 to the club balance sheet].

Carl went on to add this should give us some degree of confidence what the effect on our budget would be if we were to change the price of our fuel. The Committee has access to this information as the price of fuel is not one person's decision but must be a club decision as it affects the whole club.

Discussion Followed.

The consensus was that Carl had got the price about right given the circumstances, and that visitors are still coming and buying fuel. When the fuel price does rise Carl believed that our price will remain the same for the time being.

The Chairman asked Carl to explain to Committee members who can then tell the membership what we are doing as to the dipping of the tanks, testing the fuel... so we can answer those questions if they are asked.

Carl said he did a risk assessment [discussing this with David Beale the accountable manager] as we knew no-one was going to be able to fly, so there was little opportunity to do daily fuel testing. But we also knew we were on standby for emergency services and essential services, also selling fuel to the electricity and gas-line inspection people.

He said that now we're doing the fuel sampling once a week and once a month we're sampling the bottom of the [fuel] tank as well; checking to see if there is any water in the tank.

To do that he said, we are putting the water-sensing paste on the end of the dipstick, putting it right down into the bottom of the tank – as far as it will go. No water has ever been detected he said.

David Beale is minded to leave it at seven-day testing, to write it into our procedures as seven-day testing. Carl said he needed to check CAP748 to make sure that is okay; but he believed it was.

He said we also test when we have a new set of fuel delivered; immediately we have new fuel.

Tim James added that he believed we cannot make any changes to the daily operations manual at this time as this might detract from the duties and responsibilities of the Fenland Flying School. Presumably, he said, once they start flying they will undertake their duties as before.

Carl said we should cross that bridge when we come to it, but if there is a case to do it once a week, he didn't see the problem.

Tim agreed.

Angelo [Sapiano] entered the meeting [20:15hrs]. Angelo gave his apologies.

8) AIRFIELD RUNWAYS (Peter Watson):

Peter reported that the runways are being cut every other week, and cut very nicely in stripes. All the markers are all good, reporting earlier that the damaged one had been repaired. One thing he forgot to report [earlier in the meeting] was that a Tiger Moth hit our greenlights at the northern end of 18 [the 18 threshold] and smashed a couple of lights and ripped the wire out. Peter said it was made safe, and at some time they will be replaced.

There a few cracks in the runway and that these will be filled with sharp sand. A lot are clearing up; the grass is beginning to grow. Angelo commented that the runways look lovely and whoever is doing the grass cutting is doing a fine job he said.

John [Parker] added that with respect to finding someone to do the refurbishment of Runway 36 he had made contact with someone and would update Peter in a few weeks – a local farmer who does a lot of contracting work.

Claire [Buckley] said that she'd mentioned to Peter of the problems at the intersection of 36 [on runway 26]. Where we applied the auger in March, some have sunk... Peter said he would do that possibly at the weekend to see what materials would be needed.

9) EVENTS IER REPORT (James Baldwyn):

James was not present but had said he had nothing to report.

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

John said as he reported previously he is having a shift around [of aircraft] which is coming up this weekend.

11) RUNWAYS RESTAURANT (Kerry Allen):

Kerry was not present; no report had been received.

12) FENLAND FLYING SCHOOL REPORT (Steve Brown – Submitted in writing):

The Secretary read out to Committee the report from Steve Brown of the Fenland Flying School:

[It was acknowledged that some aspects of this report were covered in the preceding Section 6 Safety Report by Tim James].

“One safety related matter that needs addressing, is the improper use of the airfield radio.

The ground station of an Air to Ground service should only be operated by a suitably qualified and licensed person (unless that person is under training and being supervised). That person can give NO instructions over the R/T to pilots.

It really should go without saying, but obviously needs to be, the airfield authority should not be tolerating such improper use.

If there are no suitably qualified persons available, then it is almost certainly safer (as well as more lawful) to allow pilots to 'do their own thing' by way of blind calls; rather than having an incompetent person broadcasting confusing information and, as has been the case, confusing INSTRUCTIONS.

An incident on Tuesday afternoon has highlighted a couple of safety issues:

There was no-one in authority in attendance at the airfield when the accident happened. It was just by chance that FFS staff were present and were able to attend.

Secondly, it took an inordinate amount of time to extricate the fire truck from the hangar, because it wasn't possible to get it out by opening just the first hangar door (it hadn't been left in the allocated marked bay). Had the pilot been burning or bleeding, every second counts (or in this case several minutes).

It just brings into question the wisdom of re-opening the airfield, prematurely, when there is no-one in attendance representing the Aero Club?”

Steve Brown CFI

Comments were invited

Neil [Buck] gave comment; an observation he said based at a different airfield. Mentioned at the beginning of this meeting were incidents on the airfield.

He said that Wickenby had asked all based pilots to sign waivers absolving Wickenby staff of any liability... They are allowing people to operate in maintenance flight regime plus he said, but without any staff manning the emergency trucks, air-ground radio. They've identified there is a risk to them in terms of liability. Whether we ought to be thinking something similar, or at least have a conversation about it. At these times, when pilots are keen to get up but can't get instruction they have to fly solo... if incidents are going to happen, now is probably the time they will happen he said.

Discussion followed.

Mentioned were waivers are often not worth the paper they are written on; in the end the pilot is responsible for his/her flight. Failing to go around for example is not the responsibility of Fenland but of the pilot who has likely had few flying hours in the last three months.

Tim said he would contact Steve Brown to get something out to the membership in the form of a Safety Bulletin, or similar.

The chairman passed on to the subject of locating CO2 extinguishers at Hold Bravo brought about by John [Parker] attending a recent runway exertion as a result of an emergency landing due to an engine problem.

John gave description of his experience attending the incident.

It was agreed that John would get in contact with David Westall to get his advice concerning CO2 extinguishers at Hold Bravo.

13) AOB

- a) Peter asked for a volunteer to do research if the aero club could purchase an aircraft for club members who don't have an aircraft to fly. Preferably a permit [to fly] aircraft that could be looked after on the airfield available for aero club members to fly. It won't be on a shared basis he said, but the club would own it and rent it out only to club members. It needed to be suitable and cost-effective. **Next Committee: do we agree to having one; what sort of aircraft; shall we buy it; and what will the costs be?**
- b) The Secretary was contacted by a company with the acronym NEBO wanting expressions of interest to locate an electric charge point for the Pipistrel Velis electric light aircraft. The offer was they would make the installation for free but this didn't align with a request to sign a letter of intent she said. The person who runs this organisation is known to some members. **After discussion, Committee's decision was to monitor but not respond.**
- c) Neil [Buck] wished to raise attention to an email he sent concerning recent matters with Steve Brown. As some members of Committee were not aware of a mailing by Steve to some club members the Chairman asked that Committee members would like to become aware of what's been said by Steve and give consideration over the weekend.

In the meantime, the Committee agreed to maintain a dignified silence. This was agreed, as was also to meet again on Wednesday 01 July 2020 at 7pm to debate this.

- d) Angelo [Sapiano] said Carl had provided lots of information about fuel pricing and that he would go through that and send out an email later looking to bring the price down more and present this at next Committee.
- e) The Secretary said that as Committee only adopted the Zoom Video Conferencing method for meetings for a limited period, the Secretary would like to propose that Committee permanently adopts this method as part of the ways Fenland Aero Club Committee may conduct committee business in the future.

This was agreed unanimously around the room, with one exception that Committee decisions or voting are 'done around the room' by the Chair to ascertain the decision of all members are correctly polled agreeing or disagreeing, yes or no; accepting this is a susceptible electronic environment.

This was agreed and adopted.

As there was no other business the meeting was closed by the Chairman at 20:49hrs.

Signed Peter Watson **Date** 23 June 2020

FAC Chairman