

# FENLAND AERO CLUB – Management Team

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

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## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB COMMITTEE

<b>Present:</b>	Braden Connolly (BC), Jeff Helm (JH), Rynardt Spies (RS), Robin Hoile (RH), Graham Kiddy (GK), David Capon (DC), Steve Brown (SB)
<b>Remote:</b>	David Petters (DP), Ziggy Krasa (ZK), Colin Albone (CA)

**TUESDAY, 12 July 2022 19:00**

### AGENDA OF THE SAFETY MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB

#### **Incident and Digger/dumper airside without permission**

SB stated that an incident happened at the end of June. No one was hurt but the incident occurred during an air test by a commercial pilot who owned the microlight. Viewing from the back office - SB saw the aircraft hovering approximately 30 feet off the ground and then drop onto the runway in a stalled condition. SB mentioned it was an LAA permit test.

SB completed a runway inspection. DP asked if there was anything to learn from the incident which SB confirmed no. The pilot is trying to blame the engineer for the set up, however he had been flying it round for the duration and the incident occurred on landing. SB completed a report stating his views that it was pilot error.

A digger appeared on the runway on the morning of Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July.

JH spoke to the contractors at 0910 and questioned why there was a digger on the runway. The response JH received from the contractors was that Mr Wright had authorised this. JH said this shouldn't be happening - the contractors couldn't take it away (soil pile) and they parked it in the corner. Mr Wright phoned JH at the weekend denying his authorization.

JH stated that Mr Wright had hired the contractors to move the soil as per discussion in minutes from years ago that said the soil pile was an issue. JH wasn't sure who was expected to pay for it - Mr Wright or the Club.

SB questioned what Mr Wright was going to do with the soil as you are not allowed to take it away according to the environmental agency.

DP has had a word with Mr Wright about the current container and bringing things onto the property but Mr Wright clearly either doesn't remember these conversations or respect what is being said as only a few weeks after their chat, Mr Wright instructed these diggers to come.

DC asked if these incidents now warrant a solicitor's letter or a visit / letter from someone on the committee.

BC said something has to be done due to the seriousness of the matter.

RS confirmed they have had several conversations last year with the Wrights.  
BC confirmed the incident needs to be written up either by solicitors/committee.  
DP stated that this is the third incursion and a solicitors letter stating they are jointly liable as members if the insurance doesn't cover the club is the next step.  
GK asked if we could seek advice from the CAA to which JH said they would only be interested if an incident took place.

**Action: JH will pass on the solicitors contact to DC who will take this forward. DC will formulate a letter and send it to the committee/JH for review prior to sending it off.**

Safety meeting closed

## **AGENDA OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB TUESDAY 12 JULY 2022**

### **3. Apologies**

Phil Parsons, Peter Begley, Kerry Allen.

### **4. Election and roles**

JH ran this session. RH joined at 1931 and confirmed he wasn't keen on a role.

- a. **Chairman** - It was suggested DP take on this role - the room agreed and DP accepted.
- b. **Vice-Chairman** - DP asked who was in favour of BC to be the Vice Chair, everyone agreed. BC will take on this role.
- c. **Treasurer** - It was agreed BC would take on this role.
- d. **Fuel manager** - It was agreed JH would take on this role.
- e. **Hangar manager** - Peter Begley was confirmed as Hangar Manager with RS as Assistant Manager
- f. **IER manager** - No one put themselves forward. The role wasn't filled
- g. **Events manager** - DP put himself forward for this role and was accepted in. CA will join DP as Events Assistant.
- h. **Airside manager** - DC put himself forward for this role and was accepted in.
- i. **Non-airside manager** - ZK put himself forward for this role and was accepted in. RS will join ZK.
- j. **Safety officer** - It was agreed GK would take on this role.
- k. **Rule 5.4, sign declaration that they will act in good faith and always act in the club members' best Interests.**

DP asked those in the club house to sign the declaration and those on TEAMS to do so next time they are at the airfield.

#### **I. Publish who's who/pictures**

There were no objections to pictures being taken/published.

**Action: JH confirmed he will send a draft around for review.**

#### **m. CAP168 named persons, update CAA**

JH confirmed the CAA needs to be made aware of the roles and the confirmed leads for the roles listed above. The CAA will keep this on file along with a contact number for their records.

**Action: JH confirmed he will update the CAA.**

#### **5. Minutes of previous meeting**

DP asked if everyone had read the minutes and if there were any objections to please come forward. The minutes were approved with no objections.

#### **6. Matters arising**

BC referred to the AGM minutes and confirmed that some changes need to be made. When BC and DP were noted as speaking the minute taker has mixed them up on a few occasions.

**Action: JH confirmed he will update the minutes along with adding the attendees names and will send it round. DP agreed to this.**

DP asked if there were any more matters arising for this section.

JH confirmed he has all the actions including rule changes which he needs to action and asked if anything needs to be done about the proposal re setting up of a Gyro school.

JH explained it's regulated but you don't have to be DTO. There are around 25 instructors for gyros in the country and approx. 25 people get their licence a year - every instructor gets one student a year based on the math.

SB spoke to Craig the other day re gyro instructors and there is only one person who can appoint gyros instructors and he charges £30,000. The financial benefits don't outway the cost of setting it up.

JH confirmed the nearest gyro instructors are based in York and Norfolk.

DC questioned the proposal as it's not up to the committee to find someone to run this, it's up to the proposer.

DP disagreed as members said they would be keen on a Gyro school and Flexwing school.

DP suggested offering something out publicly

BC seconded that members are in favour of a Gyro/Flexwing school. Putting up a news article on the website regarding members' interest in a Gyro/Flexwing school and that the club would welcome applications from anyone who wants to run a school here would be a good start.

DC thought as Jim and Carol proposed it they should have someone in mind to run and instruct it and have an official plan in place. ZK seconded Jim and Carol should have more of a plan in place.

DC mentioned helicopters - feelers have been put out and lots of work has been done to implement this but they have yet to get a significant amount of interest back from the Helicopter schools.

DP stated the reason the helicopters didn't come to anything was because there is no hangarage and we need that before we do anything else.

CA said if Jim and Carol want to do this they should provide a proper business plan.

RS responded - to operate from FEN they would need a licence and for this to happen they would need to submit a business plan.

BC stated the committee needs to take some action to progress this as the members are in favour of it. If the action of the committee is that we approach Jim and Carol to bring their proposal forward we should at least put a note on the website stating we are interested in applications. We will then need to look for the best possible school.

DP agreed that both should happen - a letter to Jim and Carol and a note on the website.

**Action: DP confirmed a sub committee will talk to Jim and Carol.**

**Action: a news article put up on the website regarding members' interest in a Gyro/Flexwing school and welcoming applications from anyone who wants to run a school here.**

DP mentioned the orange container and the fact it wasn't requested and it doesn't open.

**BC confirmed to mention this in the letter that is being produced and sent to the Wrights regarding the digger issue.**

BC confirmed that Mr Wright spoke to him at the AGM meeting disputing that it was our leased land and when Mr Wright was shown the paperwork/diagram he said it was wrong.

**DP confirmed we need to reaffirm the parts we believe are leased to us and to include the diagram in the letter being sent to the Wrights.**

**Action: JH to send the diagram to DC and he will add it to the letter.**

ZK questioned condensation in the hangars and if this was a seasonal issue? ZK also asked if there were any plans to put an extractor fan and inlet on the top sides of the hangars - if they are ventilated the condensation should go. DP said this is something to be looked into.

JH confirmed Peter Begley as Hangar manager should be consulted.

ZK questioned the power connection and if it was ok to potentially put a hole in the hangar to install the fan. JH confirmed this wouldn't be an issue.

DC thought it was either condensation or rain blowing in underneath the hangar doors and seconded ZK' comment regarding more ventilation as many members have been complaining about the condensation.

JH confirmed spray installation would work but cost far too much.

ZK said he will look into an extractor fan and get a price. ZS asked who owns the hangars and we need to discuss this proposal with them.

DP said the Hangar managers and ZK are to work together to see what they come up with

**Action: ZK to look into the price of an extractor fan.**

No more matters were raised and this section was closed.

## **7. Club administration (Secretary)**

### **a. New members**

<b>Flying</b>	<b>Hunter</b>	<b>Steve</b>
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<b>Flying</b>	<b>Myers</b>	<b>Tony</b>
<b>Flying</b>	<b>Ellingworth</b>	<b>Richard</b>
<b>Social</b>	<b>Edwards</b>	<b>Michael</b>
<b>Social</b>	<b>Coulson</b>	<b>Martin</b>
<b>Flying</b>	<b>Patten</b>	<b>Jason</b>
<b>Flying</b>	<b>Goodall</b>	<b>Andrew</b>

### **b. Work schedule items**

JH confirmed the Insurance policy is due end of August. The Treasurer or someone needs to look into this. We have been with the same company since 2017 and it's been going up around £10,00 each year. We need to obtain some quotes.

DC asked if it was specialised insurance to which JH confirmed it was.

BC asked if we used a Broker to which JH confirmed Forbes is the broker but over the years we have changed brokers to get better deals. Insurance is £14,000 this year.

BC confirmed for JH to send him the broker's details and BC will get in touch with them to see if they need to consult a wider market and look into other quotes.

**Action: JH to send BC the insurance brokers contact details and BC will connect with them.**

### **8. Finance (Treasurer)**

BC started by saying they can look over the PML but it looks the same story - the marginal surplus, although we haven't paid rent this year.

JH confirmed rent is paid on 31st so there is no rent noted paid to the landlords.

BC continued - at month 3 and our surplus year to date is £5,000 without rent. Rent is normally £50,000 a year which includes the rent of the hangars. This tallies in with the position we are in which was articulated at the AGM. We will run at a deficit of £35,000 this year.

DC asked why we are running at a deficit - BC confirmed this was due to spending money on airfield, utilities, insurance, fuel (discounted), no events income and no grants forecast this year which we had last year. We have £130,000 in the bank so we can do it but we can't keep doing it and if no action is taken we will go into next year at £100,000 facing a £35,000 deficit that we can't make up, as we can't make up a £35,000 deficit this year in terms of the things we want to do.

BC expressed his view - we need to look at membership costs and landing fees to slow down the deficit.

DC said we shouldn't put up fuel by too much.

DC asked about the landing fees income. BC confirmed they get £4,000 for landing fees each quarter.

DC asked what we would put it up to. BC confirmed they would double it, go to £10.

DC asked how that compares with others. BC confirmed £10 is the least you pay

RS stated he would rather put landing fees up then membership fees as it won't affect members directly.

BC stated the membership fee has been static for years and they need to increase incrementally each year, even if it's only by a few pounds. Over time it will make a difference and we can't afford not to.

BC said he will come back to the next mtg, assuming we don't need membership approval to do it with a schedule of price rises at different levels and we can vote on them.

RS said you will have more chance of getting reciprocals if you increase your landing fee.  
SB said he thinks the landing fee should be £15 and reduced to £10 if they spend £5 in the restaurant or on fuel. DP said that sounded sensible.  
DP brought up prices of hangarage - at the moment it's £1,000 for an old hangar and £1,500 for a new hangar - half of what everyone else is charging.  
BC confirmed we can't double the hangarage overnight but by 20/30% over time, then it might be a 5 year plan to get to that.  
Hangar fees haven't gone up in at least 10 years.  
DC said we shouldn't increase any more than current inflation until we make a decision on it.  
BC said he will bring pricing options back to the next meeting, including a current inflation rate option.  
BC will look at 5%, current inflation rate and 10% for the next 3 years.

RS said to increase footfall.

DP has been working on footfall by the means of Fly-ins, social media and the locals who come in for the cafe, but this doesn't help membership rates or the hangarage. DP questioned the type of footfall, as the club gets nothing from the locals having a cup of tea. BC said if the restaurant is open then the flying visitors will follow in turn.

DC said comments have been made about the restaurant not being open and this is an issue with pilots who visit, as they want a drink and a meal. If there are no social facilities people won't bother coming here.

RS thinks we should subsidise the odd tuesday but noted you won't be profitable every day. BC is not opposed to subsidising the restaurant but it then becomes our subsidised restaurant. BC went on to say either we subsidise the restaurant or not, but not only on the days it doesn't make money. The flying school and restaurant don't pay rent as part of their lease and they are looked after - i.e. furniture.

DC said Kerry Allen was a little upset by criticisms that the club wasn't open on certain days and the suggestion was, pay her to do the job. Have we looked at paying someone to do the job rather than her taking profits from her business.

BC said if Kerry wanted to surrender her licence then we grant a licence to a business on a different basis - whereby we are the ones stating opening hours, menu changes and prices and for this we are willing to pay X amount per annum. The contract would be set by us. DC asked about costs to do this. BC said he will have a chat with Kerry to discuss this option of changing the licence.

CA stated most airfields facilitate the making of a cup of tea / have an honesty box as it does not encourage people to come in Tuesday and Wednesdays if they can't get a drink. It must be affecting our revenue from the landing fees.

JH confirmed we have a fridge, plates, sandwiches etc.

DP has spoken to Kerry and she has a coffee machine she plans to bring in.

DP asked if finance was covered - to which everyone agreed.

**Action: BC to bring to the next mtg a schedule of price rises at different levels to be voted on.**

**Action: BC to discuss the possible change of the restaurant licence with Kerry Allen.**

## **9. Fuel (Fuel manager)**

JH stated the good news - we sold 14000 litres of fuel in June. Year to date fuel sales are up 20%.

The bad news is we can't subsidise members at 40p a litre. This month it has cost us over £3,000.

The £4,000 grant has gone. Suggestion of putting markups back to the normal rate.

DC asked for the current price we sell to members.

JH - in terms of markup - Non members mark ups have always been 48p a litre. We don't want to change this as no one seems to complain. Our prices are a bit higher than average. BC said an important thing to note is that people know we are always open for fuel whether the airfield is open or not.

JH continued - re members, we used to make 32p a litre and in covid times dropped it to 18p and the committee agreed to keep it at this. It is now a lot lower markup for members than it used to be. We need to go back to that 18p mark up, we can't afford to pay members 40p a litre to take fuel.

DC asked for the current price for members. JH confirmed the current price for members is £1.98 and the proposal is to go up another 40/50p a litre. DC is conscious this is a massive increase. BC said we cant be selling fuel below cost. JH said they pay/buy it for £1.78 +VAT per litre.

BC said we have protected members, but we should have been clearer that this wasn't to stay post Covid. DC said the members voted on the Flying school and the members rates and as members we have to appreciate we have to pay more than Fenland flying school. JH confirmed the proposal is to reset the markups back up to 48p for non members and 18p for members and 8p for the flying school. DP said we can't do it for less than the usual mark ups, we said it would be for as long as the Covid grant lasted and we have gone past that.

Everyone agreed back to normal markups.

## **10. Safety matters**

These were mostly covered in the safety briefing at the beginning.

BC did the Investigation around Ray getting upset and what followed. BC and Dave are currently finessing the report. A bit of time will be needed on the next agenda for the safety items that have come up that need to be addressed.

No one else had anything to add.

## **11. Airfield general (Airside/non-airside manager)**

On Monday we had the caution for work in progress for numbers being painted. Someone complained on the radio of aircrafts landing on the newly painted runway markings.

JH confirmed we can't close the airfield for the day. Gary was doing the painting and Gary is an ROC operator.

DP - airfield numbers have been painted. We need to look at 0826 chalk markings with the possibility they need to be re-chalked or scraped down. This will be something for the airfield manager to look at. DC asked about the weed sprayer and the outcome from the discussion on the last committee. JH said one that goes on the back of a vehicle would cost less than £100. DC confirmed he is happy to do it if we get the equipment and GK said he didn't mind helping. JH confirmed he will send details to DC and GK.

ZK questioned the need for a licence to use the sprayer. JH confirmed technically one is needed and we could send the person performing the duty on a course. DC said he doesn't mind going on the course. DC asked if DP's preferred option was to spray it or do what we did on 1836? DP confirmed it needs a bit of both. We need to turn it up with a rake and keep it clear of weeds in the future.

DC will take a look and take it to the next committee and make a decision if a work party is needed.

DP asked if there were any more airfield general comments to which he proceeded to discuss the fencing. There is just the gate to go across the end of the clubhouse and the repairs to the current fence i.e. the nail sticking through the gate by the flying school and the split fence. BC said this was for the non airside manager to look at. CA stated that Rodger repaired the fence by the flying school

but there is lots of work to do on snagging. CA will write down a snagging list this week and will get this to RS.

**Action: Airfield manager to look at 0826 chalk markings to see if they need to be re-chalked / scraped down.**

**Action: JH to send details of the weed sprayer / equipment to DC and GK. DC will take it to the next committee and make a decision if a work party is needed.**

**Action: CA to compile a snagging list and pass this on to RS.**

## **12. IER/RFFS (IER manager)**

JH got a call from Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue who want to do an Audit on 12th Sept. JH is confirmed he is not sure what that means and he will chat with Simon about this.

BC suggested we ask Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue if we can do some hot fire training with them, good opportunity for the IER crew to do something with the professionals.

JH confirmed he will ask them.

**Action: JH to contact Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue re hot fire training for the IER crew.**

## **13. Hangars (Hangar manager)**

RS confirmed there are 2 gyro spaces in the old hangar still.

DP said we still need to move the stuff out of the old hangar - a working party event needs to be set up.

**Action: Look at moving the contents out of the hold hangar - set up a working party to get this done.**

## **14. Events (Events manager)**

DP confirmed there is nothing planned. The Auster and Bulldogs were not well attended - ended up with 4 Bulldogs and 5 Austers. We need something different as fly-ins and outs are not proving popular.

RS suggested a general fly in without a theme. DC suggested a regular event such as the Daffodil event, rather than a one off. BC asked if there is a fly in for PA28s / or 172s. DP confirmed it was worth a go. DP was at the Sleafly fly-in and this was well attended and the guys who ran this will help us this year or next year and help us with the airshow if we decide to put it on. DP has looked into a military vehicle day or evening to increase footfall. DC asked SB if he gets many people enquiring when we have our themed events, SB confirmed not many.

DP suggested the club could do a lot better for itself with better advertising. It was discussed at the last committee to do some flyers to go out to the local press. DC suggested we decide on a budget for advertising. DP encouraged an all round club advert that includes learn to fly and trial lessons and the restaurant. DP confirmed he does a lot of advertising with the Harvard and the Chipmunk and they are busy days. They use social media and specialist aeroplane magazines for advertising. DC asked who will look at advertising. SB confirmed he delegates his advertising campaigns to Lisa and is worthwhile to do. DP suggested a sub committee on advertising and he is happy to work on it too. BC confirmed he will do the artwork.

RS referred back to footfall and accommodation on site. RS remembered the last committee meeting or a few before, there were a few chaps who flew in and pitched their tents up outside which was good to see. DP said we can encourage camping and pitch a tent if flying in. BC said we need to think about



that more carefully from a health and safety point of view. We would need to be clear where we designate is safe to pitch up and how to safely get to and from the tents.

**Action: Get some flyers produced advertising the club and school to go out to the local press.**

**Action: DP to look at setting up a sub committee for advertising**

**Action: BC to do the artwork for the advertising materials.**

## **15. Fenland Flying School**

SB handed out copies of an official complaint made regarding Mrs Wright at the last AGM. The complaint was read out.

JH confirmed this can go with the solicitor letter.

DP expressed these were fair points made.

SB moved on and mentioned that when members join to get the fuel discount, they should only be allowed one fuel card each.

SB mentioned the barrier pin - it disappeared between last Wednesday evening and Thursday morning, someone with a key has removed it as the padlock was moved. SB locked the barrier Wednesday evening. He mentioned seeing a loitering club member who looked suspicious. SB wanted this noted in the minutes.

Private owners are not using the movements book. SB suggested an email needs to go out to remind them of their legal obligation to do this.

DC spoke up and said he agreed with SB's comment on one fuel card per person. JH confirmed we know who has fuel cards but there is no auditing of the fuel cards. BC suggested we reissue and number new cards to all the members and cancel all old cards. DC said security on it needs tidying up and referenced to a member having three cards. BC said to still limit one card per member. JH will bring a quote back to the meeting regarding reissuing new cards.

**Action: JH to bring a quote for the reissue of new fuel cards to the next meeting.**

DP confirmed nothing else for the flying school.

## **16. Runways Restaurant (Kerry Allen)**

Kerry wasn't available to comment as was not at the meeting.

DP did raise that another broken chair was found. BC suggested he will go back to the supplier.

DP confirmed there was nothing to raise from anyone else as it has been spoken about already.

**Action: BC to go back to the supplier of the chairs in the restaurant.**

## **17. Questions from attendees**

No

## **18. AOB**

CA brought up the Wright complaint and questioned what action was being taken to which DP and DC confirmed it will be included in the solicitors letter which will go to the committee for review re format, points raised and for a decision to be made if it's going to be sent. This will be decided on in the next committee meeting.

CA expressed his concern about Mrs Wright causing upset at the AGMs. The time has come that we say to them to keep away from the airfield and let us run it. DP said that would have to go under the

2.9 disciplinary rule if we wanted to go down that route along with the solicitors letter. DC and BC will investigate the complaint and determine what action needs to be taken.

BC spoke - he has drafted a code of conduct for members. Hard copies were shared around the room. BC proposes to email the code of conduct round to committee members for comments and table it at the next meeting for adoption as a formal code of conduct for members. Whilst we have rules of the club we don't have anything regarding behaviour of members. This will help address any issues and is a good point of reference.

DP asked JH if everyone will get an email address at Fenland airfield for the committee. JH will take an action to sort his out

DP told everyone to get familiar with section 6 of the rules please and to stay within the boundaries of the rules.

**Action: DC and BC to investigate the complaint against Mrs Wright and determine what action needs to be taken around her attendance at future meetings.**

**Action: JH to ensure everyone gets a Fenland airfield email address for the committee.**

AOB closed.

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 16th August.**

Meeting closed.