

## **FENLAND AERO CLUB Committee**

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

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### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB COMMITTEE Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023 18.00**

<b>Present:</b>	Braden Connolly (BC), Jeff Helm (JH), Dave Capon (DC), Graham Kiddy (GK), Kerry Goundry, Ziggy Krasa (ZK), Rynardt Spies (SP)
<b>Remote:</b>	David Petters (DP), Colin Albone (CA), Oliver Wheeldon (OW)
<b>Others in attendance:</b>	Michelle Parrett (MP), minute taker (remote)

### **AGENDA OF THE SAFETY MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023**

#### **1) Shooting party on the runway**

DP opened the meeting referring to a recent incident when a shooting party encroached on runway 08. DP had no knowledge of the incident other than the WhatsApp messages reported by Steve on the morning of the event about game shooters on the runway. WhatsApp messages inferred that the shooting group, currently unknown persons, although could have been part of a party organised by landowners with adjoining land, were seen on the runway. However conflicting reports indicate that they might have only been on the verge rather than the runway itself, which did change the situation drastically. BC confirmed Steve had told him he had seen them at the end of the runway on the verge when driving past. GK felt it was unfortunate that Steve was not present to clarify the situation as there seemed to be different recollections. GK indicated Steve was going to speak to Robert Lamming who he thought was involved but was unsure if this had taken place. It was noted that the weather on this particular day was poor, so no real incident occurred.

However, this clearly raised safety issues, with people getting on the runway, using the land without permission, and this needed to be addressed. There is a need to identify the group, and ask them not to trespass, and even if they were on the verge, make them aware of the dangers of low flying aircraft and threshold of the runway. There was an indication that the same party might encroach tomorrow morning. GK, BC and JH were all around in the morning, so if they are seen they will have a chat and make the party aware of the dangers.

DP also pointed out that the way information was disseminated within the group needed to be considered.

**Action: BC/JH/GK to speak with shooting party to make them aware of dangers. Update to be provided at next safety meeting.**

Separately, following the last meeting there had been a further fall on slippery wood between the portacabin and the caravan. DP asks if ZK and RP could pressure wash or add additional grips.

BC felt that the airfield needed a regular inspection around the estate to check condition and make sure nothing is either going to fall off, or someone fall over, a general safety walk around.

**Action: ZK and RS to have a safety walk around the airfield and take any appropriate action to prevent trips and falls.**

## **AGENDA OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE FENLAND AREO CLUB THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023**

### **2) Apologies**

Phil Parsons  
Peter Begley  
Robin Hoile  
Steve Brown

### **3) Minutes of previous meeting**

Signed off as a true and accurate record.

### **4) Matters arising**

#### **a) Anglian Water Reinspection**

JH advised the club had failed the initial water inspection for a few things. Following reinspection it was failed again due to an issue with the gentlemen's toilets. A sensor is required to ensure that urinal only flush when a person is detected. They will revisit in a month's time (at no charge) by which time it needs to be fixed.

ZK has had a plumber inspect the system and to adjust the system there will be a cost of £270 inclusive of VAT. He will also sort the issues with the plastic pipes and ZK has already replaced a rubber seal on the leaking toilet. The Committee confirmed they were happy to support this quote.

JH confirmed that the next inspection was on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023 so work needed to take place before this date. ZK confirmed that now the Committee had given authorisation it would be fixed within the next week.

**Action: ZK to engage plumber to action outstanding areas ready for Anglian Water reinspection on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

## **5) Club administration (Secretary)**

### **a) New Members**

JH confirms four new flying members.

### **b) Work schedule items**

JH confirmed a gas safety check was still needed for the kitchen in relation to the LPG gas bottles for the cooker. ZK usual price for this and issuing of certificates is £80.

**Action: ZK to sort safety check and certification for gas bottles within the kitchen.**

### **c) Corporate memberships**

JH advised that in the past we have had Corporate membership with Cranwell. They wanted to have a Corporate Membership for this year at the cost of £65, which would be from April. JH questioned whether the Committee wished this to continue, he was unsure of the number of members that would benefit from this membership. DP said that question was key, would they be better as associates to us financially or would the corporate membership cover our needs. BC felt that the club would probably benefit from it, otherwise they would go elsewhere.

DP reflected on section 22 which indicated corporate membership is available to a company or organisation who wish to regularly use the aerodrome facilities. Membership provides free landing fees and social membership, but not fuel discounts, hangarage or any club AGM, EGM or voting rights. The rate will be set by the Committee in line of the membership and the type of scale of the organisation. DP requested JH find out how many people there are and then look to set an appropriate membership level. BC stated he would look through the logbook to see if there was anything in there that provided the necessary information and would look at an appropriate price.

**Action: JH to enquire from Cranwell how many pilots' visitors were expected and pass to BC to calculate a price.**

## **6) Finance (Treasurer)**

BC confirmed for the first time in a long time there is no number in brackets for the previous month (indicating a loss), with last month showing a net profit of £4480, if that was achieved every month the club would break even, however it was worth noting it was not a rent month (rent was due on a quarterly basis). Things are starting to look slightly better, however BC stated it was worth noting, with expenditure items to come, the balance sheet needs looking at closely, with around £60,000 and there is not enough left to replace the

fuel system where it required at the moment. BC stated he was not completely comfortable in terms of reserves, but a corner has been turned, and that should improve further in January with hanger fees. BC stated landing fees stood at £316 for the previous month and were not material enough to make a difference. £7,000 avgas sold in December, but none was purchased.

DP noted it sounded promising and hoped that price rises would assist in balancing the books.

## **7) Fuel (Fuel Manager)**

JH confirmed sufficient stock was still in place, although would need to do an order at some point. No order had been made since November, so prices were unknown, but we are now well into existing stock. DP questioned whether jet fuel had not been ordered since September and JH confirmed this to be correct. DP further queried whether there was a limit on storing jet fuel. JH confirmed the CAA withdrew their document, so we are currently working to JIG 4 recommendations which is non explicit but recommends a top up or testing if it has been static for six months.

DP felt it was worth pursuing at some point a jet fuel advertising push that had been discussed a few months back to see if we could entice more trade through. Only 2 ½ thousand litres had been sold since September which was a very small amount. BC advised there were two things that affect our ability to sell JET A1 when helicopters come in, the restaurant is closed leaving people milling around (now resolved), and the second is whether we can say if we are open for fuelling. BC stated just putting a contactless card machine down there or a QR code and we could give people keys or a code for regular users to get into it. There are ways to increase the usability. Fuel is there and if we can find a way to make it open for the pilots that transit via Fenland regularly, income would definitely increase.

DP something to take forward, the Committee need to investigate ways of advertising it and opening it up.

**Action: Committee members to look at ways to enhance advertising and increasing fuel sales.**

## **8) Safety matters**

GK confirmed most safety matters already covered, however he is looking at putting a sign on the corner of 26/08 and 18/36 to stop backtracking/runway incursion on 26 following the incident last autumn. There is a need to agree what sort of sign and how to word it. DP confirmed there was a sign on Bravo which was probably a little too wordy and small for some pilots and there was a need for something clearer and obvious. OW confirmed the need to ensure regulations were adhered to in relation to font, size and colouring etc. DP confirmed it made sense to rationalise what was in place and keep it simple. DP would consult CAP 168 and see what can be done to consolidate the signage and information

better into one. DP also advised it might be worth updating the AIP. BC queried if it was worth having a copy of the AIP by the signing in book. OW concurred highlighting the need to be consistent across the documentation therefore fulfilling duty of care.

**Action: JH to print a A3 copy of the AIP to display with the signing in book. DP will work with GZ and BC to rationalise signage.**

## **9) Airfield general (Airside/non airside Manager)**

### **Airside**

DC updated that we need to sort out spraying of the runway. Next Monday the floor of the fuel shed will be concreted. Can do the spraying on a flying day with the permission of the CFI prior to work commencing, however DC was concerned about the effect of the spray in winter but will go with that as GK believed it would work. Discussion as to whether to use emulsion paint/chalk, but decision to continue with weed killer at this point. Will review next time. DC raises concerns about the time intensive involvement. DP queries if DC wants something included in the newsletter going out for a regular working day on a Monday to ease the pressure. DP requests that DC inform the Committee when planning to do things and then assistance can be provided through the Committee or members. DP extends thanks to DC and GK (also Roger Balcomb) for the work on the floor of the fuel shed. DP does not expect DC and GK to do everything, happy to put together a schedule and get others to come in and help.

### **a) North Moor reciprocal request**

DC received a phone call from Bethany from Northmore Airfield (Scunthorpe) and she was inquiring about reciprocal landings. There are about 16 flying members, so not particularly big, they have only just purchased it and aim to develop it with hangers and a canteen. Whilst there are not huge benefits for our members there is good promotional opportunity and good to be supportive of a new family business. DP pointed out it might also attract more fuel sales from their membership. The Committee agreed to the reciprocal request.

**Action: JH will email Bethany to inform her of the Committee agreement.**

JH has been contacted from the Flyer magazine with two requests. Firstly, they wanted to know if we do an annual free landing fee in February. They also have a live stream every week on YouTube and have requested a representative of the airfield to go online and talk about the airfield. February would be a good month as it would work out cheaper during a quieter period, no negatives and good promotion. Discussion as to the best time of year and agreed February would work. DP was nominated for the live stream/pre-recorded item.

**Action: JH would confirm and pass on DP's contact details.**

## **Non airside**

ZK discussed ongoing issues with potholes at the entrance. Discussion as to the best method to stop this being an ongoing issue, with something that binds rather than moves and use of a bulldozer.

**Action: ZK, DC and GK to look at temporary filling and longer-term solutions going forward.**

## **10) Accountable Manager**

OW advised there were outstanding bits and pieces from the audit raised last year. OW confirmed he would work with JH to top and tail outstanding issues on a form 50/60 and get back to them and didn't see the need to involve the wider Committee.

Issue remains around the main finding, which was in relation to time response IER, as this will not be dropped. JH confirmed that this had not taken place. Whilst there were a lot of volunteers on the rota there were only five people on the IER, but there remained no time responses. No IER available at weekends, which is probably a separate issue. OW raised the question that without active IER volunteers can we open as a licenced airfield. JH did not know the answer to the question but anticipated it would affect the licence in the long run. OW asked if he was being notified when there was insufficient cover and JH confirmed he was. The position is not ideal and there is a need to drive more member engagement with IER. Lots of people on WhatsApp group but difficult to engage, JH would work on enticing more engagement. OW noted and requested an agenda item for the next meeting to see if this has been progressed further. Noted it would always be more difficult in the winter months.

**Action: Agenda item for next meeting to see if IER engagement has been increased.**

Signage was a further issue that was picked up, albeit not a major one. DP confirmed he had attended a RyanAir course to look at signage and had identified what was required and match them as a CAP 168. DP confirmed it was now a case of getting a sign company to produce them and identify the costs to the club. DP would chat with BC and obtain a quote in the next couple of weeks to progress forward.

**Action: DP to speak to BC about required signage and obtain quote to progress.**

A further issue identified by the audit was the question of there not being enough space at the side of the taxiway, and OW advised he expected this to be raised again. DP advised there was very little that could be done about this because of geographical restrictions. They will either accept it or they will not. It may impact the licence. DP confirmed we must be licenced for the lease.

## **11) IER/RFFS (IER Manager)**

JH the issue with the fire truck exhaust remains outstanding. BC stated that instead of relying on good will to resolve the issue this needed to be sorted out. BC would identify a local garage to recover it, do the work and bring it back, as he saw this as fundamental repairs that are just not being done which is aggravating to members.

**Action: BC to action work required on fire engine exhaust and clutch with local garage.**

BC stated in terms of a timed run, JH and BC could do a couple of timed runs. DP suggested thinking of looking at the Cambridge flying group system of a group pilot, once every number of weeks you are nominated, and you are the duty pilot for the weekend based on the membership. Unless volunteers do IER there is a risk of losing the licence, therefore members might have to step up if they want the airfield to continue.

BC suggested displaying a poster with the benefits of being a volunteer firefighter, including free social membership, and restaurant discount, free meals whilst on duty etc. Discussion also around approaching local fire brigades seeing if there is any interest. BC stated he would approach a contact who works in youth engagement within the fire service to ask him.

**Action: BC to produce benefits of IER to display and BC to approach local fire services for any engagement**

## **12) Hangers**

### **a) New hangers**

A quote of £1600 to update the lighting in the old hangars to LED to save money long term on energy costs, was discussed. It was felt there were other priorities at the moment. DP advised this was something he would consider subsidising as there was personal benefit to him.

**Action: DP and BC to present a plan to the Committee for lighting of their own aircraft.**

JH confirmed there are spaces in new hangers that need to be filled. Request from Robin in Bay 8, who wishes to rent out a container. DP confirmed discussion have taken place with Mr Wright, they wish for us to rent it, which we did not want, but it will not be removed, it remains a circular discussion. DP believes the best course is to rent it out to Robin and pay a percentage back for the rights of use of it. BC suggests asking the landlord how much he's willing to rent his shipping container for, we are going to ask the pilot how much he's willing to rent space in the shipping container for and if the two figures match the container will be rented if they don't it won't progress.

## **13) Events (Event Manager)**

### **a) Spalding Flower Festival**

Is due to take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and they have requested we run an event as we have in the past by coaching people to and from the flower festival. If there was no cost or risk the Committee was mostly comfortable. JH would speak to the organiser and come back with more details.

### **b) Wings and wheels**

CA had been looking at a bank holiday weekend but things such as St John's Ambulance were now booked up. Discussion around cost of such an event given the situation with the club's funds. BC stated that the club could not afford to take any risk and there was a need to ensure any event put on would cover costs. It had already been acknowledged during the course of the meeting that there were too few people already volunteering for the existing work/roles required. It was not possible to add to the already burdening workload of those who already volunteered and an event such as this was a huge amount of work with relatively little return.

The Committee decided not to go forward with a large event such as wings and wheels and instead to focus on smaller events, such as military vehicles and classic car events, which could be set up relatively easily within a month/six weeks' notice without the fear of losing funds. BC pointed out that whilst revenue for paid events is good, the long-term interest had to be in growing the membership, and that there was neither the money to risk on a big event, nor the capacity within the Committee.

### **c) Family Fun Day**

Kerry would like to hold a Family fun day over the summer bank holiday weekend, with bouncy castle, fun fair rides etc, but questioned about the position with insurance. JH would liaise with the Insurance company. The club would be happy to offer flights and allow children supervised access to the chipmunk. DP endorsed this idea and was happy to work together to take it forward.

**Action: CA to work with Kerry to progress this idea. JH to check position with insurance.**

### **d) Aerobatics questionnaire**

BC has drafted a survey to go to members in relation to Aerobatics. BC read the contents of this survey to Committee members. The result of this survey would then allow the Committee to assess and vote on the way forward for Aerobatics and Display Flying. There



were a wide range of views on this subject, ranging from none should take place at all due to nuisance/safety issues, through to them being good for the vibrancy of the club generating much needed revenue. Questions proposed will help get a consensus of member views to inform Committee decisions.

DP noted that the Fenland Trophies had already been advertised on British Aerobatics so they will be expecting to come this year. DC highlighted Steve's views that members views were required before any further Aerobatics took place. DP believed that some concerns raised could be alleviated with better management and high-quality briefings. DP indicated that he didn't think at this stage any pre booked events should be cancelled, but once members views had been obtained and assessed the necessary action could be taken then. DP did not believe any event should be cancelled prior to obtaining membership views. Concerns completely relying on membership views were raised and that it would create a dangerous precedent and it was a delicate balance between views and raising much needed revenue for the Club.

Future events would be assessed following the results of the survey.

**Action: JH to issue survey and results to be addressed at future meeting.**

#### **14) Fenland Flying School (Steve Brown)**

Nothing to report.

#### **15) Runways Restaurant**

Kerry reported she was very happy with how things are going. A Valentine event is planned along with the ideas for the family fun day as previously outlined. Signs were on order for the front of the restaurant. A few more members of the public had been frequenting and feedback had been mostly positive, with work going on to address any negatives. DP concurred indicating he had seen positive feedback online.

One area that required improvement was with the chairs which were falling apart. The previous chairs had been a bad investment, and whilst cheap at £1600 for 32, they had not lasted. They had been domestic, rather than commercial, so going down the route of manufacturing complaints was not an option. BC believed there was a need to budget twice that amount to replace them and was a necessary expenditure. BC confirmed £4000 would be allocated to allow Kerry to purchase 40 chairs.

Redecorating would also take place, and Kerry advised they would do the best they could from a financial point of view. The boards would be removed for this purpose and put into safe storage. BC offered to create a digital display which could display the names and other useful information that had not been kept up to date on the boards. Discussion around arranging a working party to assist with the decorating.

Discussion also took place in relation to advertising for forthcoming events as not everyone used Facebook. It was agreed leaflets should be produced to help assist with advertising and BC was happy to look at this.

**Action: BC to produce leaflets for advertising and provide a restaurant display.**

**Action: JH to send a note out to all members asking for a working party to assist with the decoration, with free refreshments provided. Also to be included in the newsletter.**

**Action: Kerry provided with a budget of £4000 to purchase 40 new chairs.**

DP extended his thanks to Kerry and Steve for their hard work and dedication to date.

## **16) Questions from attendees**

None.

## **17) AOB**

DP advised that Mr Wright was in hospital following a fall, but no further update was available. John Chatsland had also had a stroke. The Committee wished them both well.

## **18) Date of next meeting**

W/c 21<sup>st</sup> February to be confirmed.