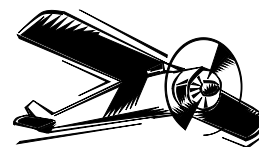


FENLAND AERO CLUB – Committee

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

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB COMMITTEE

Present:	Braden Connolly (BC), Josh Brown (JB), Rynardt Spies (RS), Colin Albone (CA), Steve Brown (SB), Rex Ford (RF),
Remote:	Pete Begley (PB), Oliver Wheeldon (OW)

Wednesday, 22 November 2023 18:30

AGENDA OF THE SAFETY MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB

1. Safety matters

SB presented a safety report concerning a recent incident where a member of the club joined the circuit in a dangerous manner. SB had prepared notes on safe joining procedures to be distributed to members.

SB noted that the member failed to fill in the movement book after flying back from another airfield, which is a legal requirement. BC admitted that it is a common oversight and suggested it is a habit that requires attention. RS mentioned that the upcoming Aerops system would simplify the process by allowing remote sign-in. BC confirmed he would take the necessary actions as the safety officer.

SB had not yet spoken to the member but intends to do so. BC and SB discussed the likelihood of the incident reoccurring and the severe consequences it could have, particularly around the model club area.

SB's immediate actions included the prepared notes and a plan to speak with the member. BC agreed to complete the report, scan it for logging, and ensure the notes are circulated.

AGENDA OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB

1. Apologies

BC noted apologies from Pete Suckow who is now representing IER, and noted the lack of any representation from Runways.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes from the previous meeting could not be presented as JB has been unwell and had other commitments. It was proposed that JB will circulate the minutes via email, and members will review and approve them through email correspondence. All present agreed to this proposal, with RF expressing that this was a reasonable solution.

3. Matters arising

a. Catering License

JB reported on negotiations with Karolina concerning the license agreement for the Runways Restaurant. Despite not reaching a final agreement, several points had been pursued and were in discussion: among which were the electricity costs, and contributions towards heating oil. The importance of considering the financial impact of the proposed terms was discussed, particularly regarding electricity costs while also emphasising the need for the restaurant to contribute to heating costs.

CA expressed strong reservations about offering any free electricity but conceded it might be necessary to progress negotiations. A compromise where the club could offer a three-month grace period for the new venture was suggested and discussed, BC recommended a 75% discounted rate may be preferable to avoid over-usage in winter months.

The method of contribution towards heating costs was also discussed and a simpler flat percentage-based contribution was suggested and generally agreed as a favourable option. Instead of the previously proposed rate based on number of radiators, due to the complexities of a base level requirement to heat the building and thermostat control.

Use of the clubhouse for private events was also discussed. RS confirmed that the intention was a cost to be passed onto the hirer. JB confirmed that was the intention, however there was push back on this regardless. BC noted that private hire of the clubhouse had not been in any previous license agreement and could continue to be dealt with separately with the license holder confirming events in conjunction with the club.

The committee discussed various aspects of the contract and insurance requirements. CA raised concerns about the status of insurance coverage for the restaurant's staff and suggested the need for a right of inspection. BC confirmed we already have this right to perform an inspection.

SB proposed including a term in the contract for a review of all terms and conditions every six months. BC noted that while the proposed deal is not ideal, the club's risk is limited to six months, and further negotiations could be conducted, if necessary once actual electricity costs are known.

Outcome and Actions

The committee agreed to support the following terms for negotiation with the Runways Restaurant:

- Three months of free electricity for the restaurant, followed by a 75% discount on electricity costs in subsequent years.
- A percentage-based contribution toward heating oil costs of at least 10%.
- In exchange for the grace period, the club would receive free refreshments and crew meals for IER and tower staff on weekends and refreshments for committee meetings.

JB took the action to continue and complete negotiations with Karolina to finalise an agreement that could be proposed to the landlords and our members.

CA requested to see the current insurance policy to ensure coverage is in place. BC agreed to undertake this action.

b. Complaint regarding behaviour and conduct of a member

BC shared an update on a complaint made regarding the behaviour and conduct of a club member that could be considered detrimental to the club. BC and JB had investigated the complaint, reviewed any information available, and compiled a report for the committee to decide the appropriate course of action. Specifically, as to whether the committee felt it necessary to follow the disciplinary procedures outlined under rule 2.9.

RF expressed his concern, stating that he had sought legal advice and believed the committee was overstepping its jurisdiction. He cited the Sexual Offences Act of 2003 and the Common Assault Act, suggesting that if the claims were factual, the police should handle the matter, not the committee. He recommended the committee should focus on whether the conduct in question was acceptable to the club.

BC clarified that the committee was not investigating a crime for prosecution, and that even if a crime had been committed, the club would still want to consider conducting a disciplinary process. He urged the committee to make decisions based on facts both parties agree upon.

Several discussions ensued about the details of the incident, the investigation conducted, and the possible outcomes. There was a consensus that the issue could potentially be resolved without a full disciplinary hearing, with some committee members suggesting a warning would suffice.

Ultimately, the committee agreed to offer the accused the option to accept a warning in lieu of a disciplinary hearing. If the accused did not accept this warning, the

committee would reconvene to consider the next steps. RF suggested that a committee member should deliver a warning to the member regarding the complaint, recommending RS due to his ability to handle the matter independently and firmly. BC agreed to arrange this and tasked the secretary to send a note to the member to accept a warning in lieu of a disciplinary process.

SB recommended that for future complaints, the committee should be made aware of the nature of the complaint and the parties involved, to advise appropriately on the investigation method and avoid conflicts of interest. BC acknowledged this and noted the need for balance in protecting the anonymity of the involved parties, suggesting that the club's complaint handling procedures might need updating to better align with modern standards.

c. Complaint regarding potential commercial operation of an aircraft based at Fenland

JB shared a response from the owner/operator of an aircraft following a request for information after a complaint had been raised against them regarding their potential commercial operation at Fenland.

RF raised concerns about the validity of the insurance documentation presented by the owner/operator of the aircraft, suggesting that it may not be properly insured for activities beyond personal use. The group-operated agreement was acknowledged as now being in place. RF also highlighted discrepancies in the ownership structure of the aircraft, with the primary owner still being the primary shareholder and only director, despite claims of group ownership. This led to a discussion on whether the aircraft was operating as a commercial entity or within the club rules as an equity share operation.

RF reported on the annual return from company's house, noting two other shareholders, and stressed the importance of verifying their membership status. RF and BC debated the nature of the shares and control over the company's assets, with RF emphasising the distinction between commercial and non-commercial operations. OW contributed by referencing the ownership requirements for ex-military jets, which was met with clarification from BC that the previously mandated 5% ownership rule is no longer in effect.

RS suggested amending the club rules to require each member flying the aircraft to have at least 5% equity, which led to a broader discussion on the implications of such a change. BC proposed drafting a rule change to address the issues raised and the committee debated whether this would be a minor rule change that could be implemented swiftly or if it would require an AGM. The committee agreed to draft and submit a proposal for a rule change regarding the ownership structure, aiming to resolve the issue at the next AGM.

BC proposed that the rule change proposal would be the best way forward, and the committee concurred, resolving to inform the complainant of their decision and

proceed with proposing a rule change at the next AGM.

4. Club administration

JB reviewed the status of overdue tasks, noting that the filling station's electrical inspection has not yet been completed, but a qualified inspector had been found and booked in to conduct the inspection.

The aerodrome survey is still pending, with JB responsible for getting the paperwork over to the safety manager for signing, as the club's environmental monitoring procedures are now in place to facilitate this action.

JB also mentioned that the Unitel contract has not been progressed and that BC has received a voicemail regarding this.

The kitchen extractor ducting deep clean status is unclear; BC will confirm with Steve and Kerry.

BC has purchased Jet A1 testing capsules and needs to expense them. JB has scanned the associated documentation.

The electric meter installation for the restaurant is scheduled for December 4th.

The only upcoming item for the year is the certificate agreement application, which requires an EORI number application, along with other answering other queries from the authorities regarding fuel and border-related issues.

5. Memberships

SB reported that the club has welcomed seven new flying members, with three joining the flying school and four being aircraft owners. Additionally, two social members have joined. RS acknowledged the positive development. BC highlighted the steady increase in memberships, noting it as a source of recurring revenue that is rising. He also mentioned that the growth is evident from the increasing number of voting members receiving polls, especially in relation to the air race polls.

6. Finance

RS provided an update on the club's finances, noting that the quarterly rent payment had been made. Electricity costs for the past three months were also covered, with the bill being described as quite high. The insurance payment was another significant expense, which was higher than anticipated. Consequently, the club is currently at a loss for the year. RF inquired about the club's reserves, and RS confirmed that there are sufficient funds in savings and enough fuel in the tanks to manage cashflow effectively. BC stressed the importance of knowing the fuel levels as it impacts cash requirements.

RS reported that the club does not have any debt, which is a positive indication of financial health. He also mentioned that there would be no electricity payments due for another three months. RS and BC discussed the high energy usage, with RS estimating about 40,000 kilowatt-hours based on new figures. BC noted that a new deal had been made to reduce the unit price of electricity to around 32p per kilowatt-hour. RF contributed to the discussion by pointing out that increased activities in the kitchen could lead to higher electricity consumption. RS suggested investigating the power usage of computers, which could be significant when added up.

BC commented that the metering that would soon be fitted to the kitchen and clubhouse would get us a better understanding of the power usage. He offered to use an owl meter, which could be used in different areas to monitor and potentially reduce energy expenses.

JB added to the financial matters by discussing the new prepaid account setup for the club, which allows for card payments. He communicated his plans to give Mel access to the account for bookkeeping purposes. This would enable the club to streamline payments for services like Starlink and potentially simplify the process for other expenses through the use of virtual and physical prepaid cards.

7. Fuel

Fuel Sales and Costs

BC provided an update on the fuel sales, indicating that 4,747 litres of fuel were sold up to the 21st of November, compared to 11,100 litres sold in October. The current stock includes 14,000 litres of 100LL and 4,000 litres of UL91, which is expected to last a few months before additional purchases are necessary. The income from these sales is projected to replenish funds. BC noted he did not have information on Jet A1 stock as the computer system does not provide it and would require a manual check.

JB pointed out the importance of monitoring Jet A1 stock levels due to increased activity from National Grid. BC agreed to check the stock by the end of the month and mentioned the potential for increased sales and profit once Aerops is sorted out.

RS mentioned that fuel prices at the pumps have increased. BC confirmed the increase, emphasising that the margins required for the forecast were being met and that they might increase margins when fuel costs go down. The intention is not to reduce fuel prices immediately in response to lower costs, except for necessary adjustments for the flying school as per contractual obligations.

Fuel Electrical Inspection

BC raised an urgent matter regarding the overdue periodic inspection for the electrical safety of the fuel system. He communicated the difficulty in finding a qualified inspector and finally securing one from Hull for the following week. The challenges in finding someone with hazardous environment accreditation were discussed, and BC's efforts to resolve the issue were acknowledged.

8. Safety matters

SB reported runway 26 surface markers being invisible. SB expressed ongoing concerns about the visibility of the markers, noting the importance of maintaining them for safety and good practice. A discussion ensued about organising a working party to address the most pressing safety issues, including edge markers and filling significant cracks on runway 08, which have not closed up over the year. It was decided that a

working party would be arranged to address the runway 26 markers, weed killing, and filling cracks. OW suggested approaching Lee, who had previously dealt with similar tasks, to assist with the work.

9. Airfield general

SB reported that the gate latch is broken on the gate from the viewing area to the airfield side, preventing it from closing properly. RF volunteered to inspect the problem and remarked that it is a simple fix, likely requiring a new bolt, which would be a quick job. BC suggested the IER team could also be asked to assist with miscellaneous tasks like this.

Further discussions revealed an unsightly area under the kitchen window due to discoloured gravel from air conditioning water drainage. RF and RS highlighted the need for sealing the top of the chamber and possibly a fat trap replacement. BC proposed temporarily covering the area with fresh gravel from a bag near the hangar, to be managed by the IER team.

SB brought up the issue of potholes at the car park entrance, with RF suggesting a mixture of cement to bind the material. BC asked SB to coordinate with Tim about filling the holes with concrete.

SB noted that the southernmost PAPI light was not functioning, and RS speculated that water intrusion might be the cause, suggesting the use of contact grease and potentially using the heat gun for repairs. RF confirmed that LD has access to the hangar for such tasks and is authorised to retrieve necessary materials.

BC reported that the leaky tower windows need adding to the maintenance list, as they were allowing water to enter during windy and rainy conditions facing the front of the tower.

10. Accountable manager

MOR from Wings and Wheels

OW then updated the meeting on an ongoing breach of ANO investigation following the MOR at Wings and Wheels where an aircraft did a low fly pass over runway 18 which was NOTAM'd as closed for use as a parking area. The investigation is now involving several club members and the need for formal interviews. He emphasised the seriousness of the case, which might result in a court hearing.

CAA Taxiway Issue

OW also discussed challenges with delineating the taxiway and runway strips due to difficulties in contacting the surveyor, Jazz, and mentioned potential changes in surveyor personnel.

11. IER/RFFS

JB shared an update from Peter Suckow, who sent apologies for his absence. The IER team currently consists of 13 members, with only three flying members and seven fully trained. A first aid course was conducted for those with expired certificates, with one

member pending training. Peter Suckow has been reviewing training requirements, indicating the need for hot fire training for all team members and has provided the cost for replacement foam concentrate. Additionally, the IER team is facing challenges with providing full coverage every weekend and retaining interest during low activity periods. Team members have expressed willingness to perform maintenance tasks, including cleaning, painting, and gardening, using their own tools if the club supplies necessary materials.

Furthermore, JB reported on Rynardt and Robin's updates to the runway lighting, involving the use of connectors for easier unit replacement.

A suggestion was made for the IER crew to check and replace faulty runway lights during inspections. A special mention was given to Tim Deighton for his repairs on the truck's exhaust and a fire extinguisher box.

RF mentioned the availability of a steam cleaner for cleaning the clubhouse and other buildings. BC proposed that the IER team be provided with a list of jobs and materials needed for maintenance tasks, with committee members facilitating the purchase of required materials.

SB suggested hosting a club-funded Christmas event for the IER and tower crews to show appreciation, boost morale, and highlight the importance of acknowledging volunteers, including those from the Wings and Wheels event, and offered to contribute to the event.

The committee agreed to provide the IER team with a list of maintenance jobs and to purchase necessary materials for these tasks.

An event will be organised to appreciate the IER and tower crews, as well as Wings and Wheels volunteers

12. Hangars

PB had to leave the meeting just prior to this topic, however left a note for JB to read out. JB reported on the hangar activities for the month, including the addition of two new members and the transition of their aircraft, acknowledging LB for her efforts in arranging keys and fuel cards. A commendable job by Mel was mentioned for identifying members with overdue payments; although some have settled their dues, others still need follow-up. Unfortunately, some members have vacated without notice. PB is tasked with filling these vacancies and aims to reach full capacity in the hangars in the coming weeks.

RF inquired about the outstanding payments, to which JB reassured that Mel is working on setting up a more automated system for invoice reminders. RF referenced the club rules regarding standing orders and the procedure for handling outstanding payments, suggesting a physical deterrent such as a chain around the propeller for those overdue beyond 30 days. However, BC clarified that currently only one person is in arrears, and

some of the perceived outstanding amounts were due to accounting misalignments, as in the case of a payment misfiled under membership rather than hangar fees.

13. Events

Air Race Poll Results

The results of the air race poll were discussed. The poll received 99 votes with 73 in favour (75.26%) and 24 against (24.74%), and two abstentions. SB suggested that for future polls, if there is a difference in opinion within the committee, both sides should provide a short article or paragraph explaining their positions. BC acknowledged the suggestion and stated that he had sent the proposed poll to the committee for comments but only received a minor correction from SB. BC concluded that he would seek a date for the event in 2025 and asked SB to inform him the best dates to avoid clashes.

Aerobatic Weekends Schedule

The dates for the aerobatic weekends were proposed as April 27th and May 18th, but BC suggested June 10th as an alternative, noting SB's absence on that date would make it the least disrupting towards flying school operations. Discussion ensued about the suitability of the April 27th date due to a higher likelihood of poor weather, which could minimise the impact on flying activities. The June 10th date was clarified to be a Monday, and the committee considered asking the aerobatics team to switch to that date. JB noted that the aerobatics team was scheduled for competition on that date. The committee decided to attempt to secure the June 8th date, and if not possible, to go with the initially requested dates of April 27th and May 18th. JB agreed to follow up and confirm the dates with the aerobatics team.

14. Fenland Flying School

SB reported a notable achievement at the flying school, highlighting that a 16-year-old student has passed his skills test, marking him as one of the youngest Private Pilot License (PPL) passes ever. The student completed his flying training in the minimum required 45 hours. However, he cannot apply for his license until his seventeenth birthday.

15. Questions from attendees and AOB

CA raised concerns about the club's financial matters related to the exit of the previous catering licensees. RF clarified that this issue was not on the current meeting's agenda and would be addressed in a separate session. BC confirmed that RS was handling the valuation and that the club had decided to contra the money owed rather than make direct payment. RF questioned whether the £3,700 owed was for expenses that should have been entirely covered by the other party, as initially agreed upon to be their sole responsibility.

BC explained that the £3,700 represented the costs incurred for refurbishing the toilets, lighting, and other electrical work which the club did not initially want to undertake. Ricky's bills were divided between what was the club's responsibility and what the other party had requested. Instead of paying directly, the club opted to accept a coffee machine as part of the payment and reduce the restaurant bill accordingly.

RF and RS discussed the coffee machine, with RF reporting that Karolina did not want the machine. BC tasked JB with confirming this with Karolina and to identify if there was another asset they might want instead. CA expressed confusion over the financial settlement, and BC clarified that the club was owed £3,700, with £1,200 to be deducted for what the club owed, resulting in a net payment of £2,500. RS agreed to check the assets in the kitchen to determine ownership and facilitate a proper handover of items upon the restaurant's departure. BC stated that there was an inventory from when the license was taken and upon checkout to help with this process.

16. Date of next meeting

BC proposed, and the committee agreed to a vote in a poll on WhatsApp to determine a suitable date for the next main meeting.

17. Closure of meeting

The meeting closed at 20:50