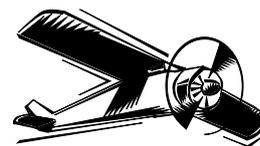


FENLAND AERO CLUB – Committee

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), Steve Brown (SB)
Remote:	Colin Albone (CA), Oliver Wheeldon (OW), Pete Begley (PB)

Tuesday, 19 December 2023 18:30

AGENDA OF THE SAFETY MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB

1. Safety matters

SB raised an issue about the need for weed control on the airfield. BC shared that he had applied weed killer last weekend in hope of creating a visible differentiation in colour, which would assist in identifying the areas to be chalked for further maintenance. BC expressed that due to the condition of the weeds, chalking would be necessary again. SB agreed that the weed killer would help as a temporary measure to mark the affected areas.

AGENDA OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE FENLAND AERO CLUB

1. Apologies

BC shared that Karolina had shared their apologies.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meeting were discussed. JB had circulated the minutes prior to the meeting. BC had sent some minor corrections related to missing words, which had been corrected. SB pointed out a couple of minor corrections. JB agreed to amend the errors. SB also inquired about a date for the party, to which BC replied that it would likely be in the new year. BC concluded that he would sign the minutes with corrections noted.

3. Matters arising

a. Complaint regarding committee constitution

The committee addressed a complaint sent in from a member concerning whether Rex Ford should have been appointed as an ex officio member of the committee. BC elaborated that ex officio members are typically included to contribute to matters

related to their business or role. The complaint contested RF's appointment as the engineer ex officio member, arguing that RF's engineering operations were not based on the airfield leased by the club, and there was no license agreement with any engineering company at the airfield that would justify his ex officio status.

The committee discussed the complaint, recognising that whilst on balance RF has made some major contributions to the club, the lack of formal license agreement with the engineering business, and the engineering activity not being conducted on land leased to the club was a critical concern. It was also noted that there is another engineer who has a historical agreement with the club could have also been considered for the role.

PB proposed to reconsider RF's position as an ex officio member, with RS seconding, and JB voting in favour. CA and BC abstained.

CA then proposed to recognise RF as the engineer, however the proposal was not seconded, effectively leading to the recognition of RF as engineer and ex officio member being revoked.

BC took the action to inform RF of the decision and share appreciation to RF for his contributions to the club to date. It was also noted that a future path for re-appointment would likely require a license agreement with formal approval from the members.

b. Concerns regarding insurance

CA raised issues pertaining to the insurance coverage for committee members and the cleaning of the extractors. BC clarified that an invoice from Links Gas Services indicated cleaning of the duct work was done in June 2023 and was seeking the TR19 report from the service provider. Although BC could not find the specific requirement in the insurance documents, it is believed that annual cleaning of the extractors is required by the insurance, with the possibility that the club's license agreement calls for a six-monthly cleaning.

CA inquired about the implications of the committee's actions in situations where members could potentially sue the committee, asking who would be liable to pay in the event of a successful lawsuit. BC explained that there is public and professional liability insurance, but due to an exclusion from a specific member-to-member claim, the insurance does not currently cover such claims. BC emphasized the importance of following club rules and legal guidelines to minimize litigation risks.

c. Concerns regarding pursuit of Runways electricity costs

The committee discussed whether to pursue the prior catering license holders for electricity costs incurred between November 8th and November 30th.

BC explained that he chose not to pursue the electricity costs to facilitate a smooth exit for the prior license holders who left blinds and refrigerators for the club.

CA proposed to draw a line under the matter and not pursue any costs, which RS seconded and carried by the committee with four members in favour and one abstention.

4. Club Administration

JB reported on the status of the club administration, specifically addressing the certificate of agreement. He expressed concerns that the deadline might be missed, which could result in the inability to handle international flights at the club. BC acknowledged the seriousness of the situation and the need for the EORI number for the certificate of agreement. RS interjected with questions about the impact on pilots, leading to a brief discussion on how the unavailability of the club as a port would be communicated to them. BC suggested that flight plans would reflect this information. BC committed to assisting JB in resolving the issue, emphasizing it as a top priority.

The next items were the Unitel telephone contract and ADR survey. JB noted that the Unitel contract was due for renewal, and the prices were expected to increase. BC mentioned the possibility of entering a new contract to save costs, despite it being a two-year commitment. RS suggested considering a VoIP solution, but BC raised concerns about compatibility with the fuel system.

Lastly, JB mentioned progress on the Equals Money system, which would facilitate payments for services such as Starlink using card payments. BC thanked JB for the update.

5. Memberships

SB provided an update on membership, reporting two new social members and one new flying member. BC inquired about whether the social members were introduced by someone, given that incentives are typically offered. It was noted that it wasn't always tracked who introduced the member. The overall sentiment was positive, with membership numbers continuing to rise.

6. Finance

RS reported positive financial news for November, stating that the club had an income of £19,983, with £11,000 coming from avgas alone. Expenses amounted to just over £10,000, resulting in a net profit of £9,700 for the month. However, he cautioned that poor weather conditions and a log runway could affect fuel sales and overall financial performance. RS mentioned that from March, the club would start receiving electricity payments, enabling more accurate financial forecasting. BC and RS discussed the new electricity metering, clarifying that the clubhouse, toilets, restaurant, and kitchen were now being metered, while the foyer was excluded due to minimal energy use and logistical reasons. The main energy consumption was confirmed to be from the kitchen and restaurant areas.

7. Fuel

BC noted that the fuel sales from October 28th to December 16th were higher than expected, with 5,000 litres of 100LL, 750 litres of UL91, and 3,300 litres of Jet A1 sold. The current inventory leaves approximately two-thirds of a tank of UL91, half a tank of 100LL, and 2,700 litres of Jet A1 remaining. BC suggested that while the Jet A1 levels had not reached the reorder point, considering the sales volume, it might be prudent to reorder, especially if the capability to process payments for Jet A1 is established.

RS noted that the Jet A1 tank has a capacity of 20,000 litres. BC agreed that they might not want to completely fill the tank but should consider adding 10,000 litres if Aerops is sorted out, to avoid running low. RS mentioned that the current quantity equals only about five air ambulance fill-ups.

BC committed to obtaining quotes for Jet A1 as an action item. The discussion concluded with BC expressing concern over the potential for fuel shortage after realizing the recent high sales volume and RS adding that this might be due to the November fuel sales.

8. Safety matters

The topic of potentially issuing a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) due to the state of the runway was discussed. SB noted that there has not been much demand for runway use due to poor weather conditions. PB inquired about the condition of other runways, questioning if the issue was waterlogging or just mud. SB emphasized the need for precaution and that any users of the runways must receive a briefing. BC suggested that they could issue a NOTAM requiring a call to the school for a briefing. JB confirmed that he would coordinate with Lisa to get this done. PB proposed sending communications to members to inform them of the need for a briefing before flying and to check NOTAMs. SB recommended that the NOTAM remain in effect until the middle of March, with the possibility of cancellation if conditions improve.

9. Airfield general

JB shared the issue tracker, highlighting ongoing problems such as a leaky roof and potholes, which have not seen progress.

SB spoke with Tim about filling the potholes with concrete but was informed that a short-term fix was not feasible due to the weather and a complete resurfacing was needed. BC and SB discussed the possibility of getting quotes for the necessary work if Tim's company couldn't undertake the task.

BC also reported he had addressed the weed problem in the car park, but noted the fat trap outside had failed and was becoming a potential health issue. SB suggested using gravel temporarily for the potholes, but BC was concerned about its effectiveness and longevity.

BC shared that the suggestion box in the foyer was now labelled.

JB mentioned the presence of mold in the cabin, adding it to the list of issues to be addressed.

RS raised that he had been made aware of continued issues with the runway lighting. SB confirmed that the issues were the same as discussed at the previous meeting, with the southern marker lights needing attention.

BC mentioned that he had applied weed killer to the markers, but they would require chalking as they were barely visible. RS proposed, following a suggestion from Lee, to potentially use large pieces of white AstroTurf for the markers, ensuring they would be pegged down securely. After some discussion, BC proposed giving RS a budget of £500 to source the AstroTurf for a trial on some markers, which was seconded by JB and voted on in favour by all the committee.

10. Accountable manager

OW raised a concern about the need for permanent markings on the taxiway and

runway to guide the mowing of grass and ensure safety. OW offered to forward a PowerPoint detailing potential locations for edge markings. The need for a solution that passes the "red face test" during audits was emphasized. BC suggested the use of weed killer to delineate areas temporarily, and the possible use of frangible plastic markers was discussed. SB noted the need to consult the CAA for recommendations, but OW pointed out that the CAA does not provide specific guidance. The discussion concluded with a short-term plan to use weed killer for clear visual marking and to explore the option of plastic markers.

OW also brought up the necessity to engage with the landowners at the end of runway one-eight to agree on maximum crop heights. SB identified the landowners and volunteered to communicate with them to establish the maximum height for crops planted near the airfield. The importance of documenting this agreement in writing to satisfy CAA requirements was stressed. BC suggested simply obtaining written confirmation of the crop heights from the landowners, which could be sufficient for CAA compliance. SB mentioned the frequent planting of maize, which could present an issue, and BC recalled that it was referred to as "dwarf maize." OW expressed willingness to meet the landowner, if necessary, but indicated a preference for someone with a better relationship to handle the conversation. BC confirmed that SB would initially undertake the task, with OW as a backup if needed.

11. IER/RFFS

The committee noted that Peter Suckow was unable to attend the meeting, citing a lack of awareness due to not yet being added to the Whatsapp. BC took an action to add him to the group chat.

OW raised a concern about fire cover obligations, clarifying that while they are not required to have radio, fire cover is mandatory whenever the airfield is open. He expressed concern that there is often no fire cover or no information on fire cover status, and emphasized the need for documentation if the airfield has a license only for weekends, as discussed previously with the CAA. BC agreed to locate the documentation and consult with Jeff for confirmation.

OW and BC discussed the necessity for having fire cover during weekends and the need for clear processes and named individuals responsible for maintaining training records and ensuring compliance with CAA requirements. BC suggested using existing logs to track fire cover presence and mentioned upcoming live fire training scheduled for January 21st. The importance of having multiple trained personnel available at the airfield to cover for breaks and absences was also discussed, with BC noting that additional staff could potentially be trained to assist with fire cover.

JB noted the reasonableness of having catering staff first aid trained, as the fire crew already receives such training, which could be beneficial for runway staff. BC concluded that he would discuss the matter with Pete to ensure proper fire cover and compliance with CAA regulations.

12. Hangars

PB reported on the hangar occupancy, noting that there is currently one space available. He mentioned that there has been recent interest, and he is optimistic that the hangar will be fully occupied by January. However, PB highlighted the absence of a

waiting list for hangar space, which is an unusual situation in general aviation (GA) and could potentially result in a gap in occupancy, thus affecting cash flow. This is a deviation from previous years where a waiting list always existed. Other than that, there were no complaints or feedback from current occupants, and if the interested party commits in January, the hangar will return to full capacity.

13. Events

a. Aerobatics

JB informed the committee that the aerobatics organisers could not accommodate the June date but confirmed availability for the 18th and 19th of May. They are also seeking a second date in late June or July, excluding the 7th to the 14th of July for a different type of event, and mentioned the possibility of official training camps and a member's day for demo flights or training. BC highlighted that member feedback supported two aerobatics events per year, suggesting agreement to the May date and one of the proposed additional activities.

OW raised the necessity for an aerobatic box at local airfields to aid display pilot training, referencing a shortage in the UK. Despite member preferences for limited aerobatic events, BC noted survey results showing support for display flying at Fenland four times a year. OW and SB discussed the implications of such an initiative, including circuit interruption and potential nuisance to neighbours. OW proposed restricting the use of the display box to members only, which could generate revenue.

SB expressed concerns about the disturbance to neighbours and the frequency of usage, while OW counterargued that minimal daily interruption would be manageable. Questions about CAA requirements for an aerobatic box arose, with OW explaining the need for a supervising officer and proper application. PB suggested charging fees for the use of the box as a revenue source, and RS proposed compensating for any business disruption during display practices.

In conclusion, BC agreed that the proposal required further development and called for volunteers to work with OW to draft a comprehensive proposal. The need for such an aerobatic box was framed as a national concern and an opportunity for Fenland to support the future of display flying and air shows.

14. Fenland Flying School

SB reported three new first solo flights at the Fenland Flying School.

15. Questions from attendees and AOB

SB inquired about the last newsletter sent to members. BC acknowledged the need to distribute a new newsletter to members. The upcoming newsletter is to include several updates: notice about safe joins, a call for briefings before using wet runways, information about Karolina, and a thank you event for members. BC proposed drafting a preliminary version for review and editing by the committee, with the intent to send it within the next couple of weeks.

16. Date of next meeting

BC suggested using a WhatsApp poll to determine the date for the next meeting and asked SB for the start dates of the ground schools to avoid scheduling conflicts. SB indicated that the dates for the ground schools were not yet set.

17. Closure of meeting

The meeting closed at 20:00