

WYCOMBE AIR PARK JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON
27th June 2022**

PRESENT

Mr M Harris	Chairman
Mr A Anderson- Brown	Director, AAA
Mr R Sowden	General Manager, WAP
Mr R Russell	Frieth Village Society
Mr J Brydon	Sands Residents' Association
Ms J Moore	Booker Gliding Club
Mr B Tranter	Booker Common & Woods Protection Society
Mr C Goss	Claymoor Park Residents' Association
Mr A Mann	WAPAG
Mr J Jackson	Hambleden Parish Council
Mr B Coakley	Buckinghamshire Council

(2 members of the public in attendance)

1. The Chairman, M Harris welcomed all to the June meeting of the JCC.
2. **Duration of Meeting**
M Harris advised that the item would be removed from the agenda going forward as the meeting would take as long as was necessary in order to fully conclude its business. He added that he would be happy for anyone to speak at any time, providing it was relevant to the meeting.
3. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies had been received from S Brown; D Barnes; T Hill; N Phillips; A Young and R Rendall.
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 28th February 2022**
The minutes of 28th February 2022 were tabled and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
5. **Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising.
6. **Update from the Working Group**
As R Wetenhall was not present to provide a summary, R Sowden did so. He advised that the group had considered the noise complaint statistics, which had been appended to the back of the printed agenda distributed this evening. In the last 4 months, there had still been a predominance of helicopter complaints. These had not been manifested on all days but when the circuits had been used heavily. There had also been a significant number of random helicopter complaints that were not attributable to the air park as they had not been based here. Whilst pilots could fly through the air park's zone R Sowden advised that pilots should also be fully aware of the noise abatement procedures but that was one of the

challenges as if pilots were not from here and not coming here, they did not necessarily read the air park's instructions. R Sowden advised that when flying circuits, pilots were very conscious to maintain the correct circuit. There was one particular complainant who had made up a number (23) of the 58 complaints. Communication with this individual remained broadly positive and the air park in turn continued its work in terms of tracking aircraft. In terms of overall flying, R Sowden advised that broadly speaking flying was compliant and complaints were lower than in the previous year.

Turning to complaints from fixed wing aircraft, R Russell tracked same and therefore the air park received high quality information that could be tracked and action taken if required. The takeaway from this had been that not all the complaints were viewed as a negative from the air park's perspective. R Sowden advised that in broad terms the reality was that when a breach had occurred, it would be investigated. However, the air park continued to face staff resourcing challenges and therefore there remained room for improvement in getting back to people and this area had been discussed with the Chairman in terms of how this would be taken forward and would be shared later in the agenda. Responses/turnaround times generally had been taking around a week, however, during the last three week period both he and A Brown had not been available and the remaining operational staff simply had not had the capacity to respond to complainants.

R Sowden referred to the movement statistics that had been discussed. The quarter January-March 2022 had seen 1131 helicopter movements which was only slightly higher than the equivalent period in 2020 and significantly below 2018 and 2019. In terms of fixed wing movements these were getting close to 2020 levels but were significantly less than 2018 and 2019 levels.

A Mann, who had also been present at the Working Group meeting, added that discussion had taken place around Claymoor Park and Studio 5, which was not relevant to discussion at this meeting and the fact that there had been no gliding activity from the air park for over 12 months. He also wished to place on record that the creation of the Working Group had improved relationships enormously and together with the appointment of a new Chairman had improved the local trust in the airfield and all were encouraged that this would continue.

M Harris advised that Cllr D Barnes, when offering his apologies for non-attendance due to illness, had advised that meaningful discussions had been taking place in respect of a positive outcome being achieved in respect of the gliding operations returning to the air park. He had been unable to provide any detail or indicative timescale. A Brown echoed those comments, with the caveat that the air park had requested that a number of conditions be met, which he considered to be proportionate, and if these could be adhered to, gliding activity could return.

7. Use of Respite Days

The Chairman advised that the air park had suggested that this be included within the agenda again. He explained that a respite day could be requested if there was a local event, such as a cricket match, village fete etc that would be disturbed by flying overhead. He therefore just wanted to ensure that the JCC members were aware of this facility and he encouraged them to share this within their local communities. A Brown explained how he progressed any requests, which involved a letter and meeting with all stakeholders, who in turn contacted their customers; contact with all based owners of aircraft at the air park and an official notification that the air field was closed. The site remained staffed in case of any emergencies, which could happen, for example, in the case of a redirection caused by weather conditions. Local communities could request up to 5 such respite days per year.

Turning to a specific request that had been made for Saturday 16th July in respect of the 10th Anniversary of the Lady Ryder Memorial Garden, A Brown enquired whether this needed to be an entire closure, both fixed wing and helicopter or just one of the operations. The organiser R Rendall was not present and was asked to clarify his requirements as soon as possible. R Russell advised that there might be a possibility of a date late August in respect of the village fete. However, upon further consideration, it was considered that over flying in any case would not disrupt the event. Sands Residents' Association did not have any dates

currently and thanked the air park for providing this option.

Action – R Rendall

8. Constitution

The Chairman advised that the current constitution of the JCC had been reviewed and considered not fit for purpose in its current form. Both the existing and proposed changes had been included within the meeting papers. M Harris also advised that the Working Group had spent some time scrutinising same. It had also been highlighted that Claymoor Park Residents' Association had been omitted from the representative page and Frieth Village Society's entry duplicated. Additionally, M Harris advised that there had been one major procedural change relating to the JCC meetings consisting of two sections – one for public comments and questions and the second session for the formal JCC discussion relating to matters appearing on the agenda. He had proposed that the public be allowed to participate in any agenda item at the discretion of the Chairman. B Tranter enquired as to the meaning of paragraph 10 of the ToR. M Harris advised that the additional sentence had been included in order to avoid a new Chairman simply being imposed on the JCC. The wording now reflected the fact that any new Chairman needed the approval of both the air park and JCC. It was also suggested that a sentence be added to paragraph 15 to ensure that it was clear that members of the public were not allowed to vote. Finally, the additional wording to paragraph 14 be amended to read "and that is the Chairman's only vote".

Discussion took place as to the best way to be able to ratify this matter. It was agreed that S Fryer would create a clean copy including the above comments; circulate to all JCC members asking for any further comments within 14 days of the date of circulation. If none had been received the constitution would be deemed as agreed.

Action – S Fryer

9. Community Matters

A Brown advised that he was currently working with a local NHS fund raising charity on an outdoor cinema event for the public, to be held on the evening of Saturday 17th September 2022. It was in its inception stage and he hoped to be able to show Maverick, the sequel to Top Gun, and also encourage aviators to fly in, park, watch the film, stay overnight and fly out the following day. He reiterated that this event was currently in its infancy stage and he would have further information available for the next JCC meeting, which it was noted, was only 5 days before the proposed event. A Brown agreed to send information in advance to JCC members and Parish Councils once arrangements had been finalised in an attempt to boost ticket sales. Proceeds would go towards a specific piece of equipment for Wycombe Hospital.

P Rose, on behalf of Lane End Parish Council, wished to record thanks to the air park for their generous raffle prize donation, which had been greatly appreciated.

C Goss enquired whether the air park had received any contact/representation from residents at Clayhill, which was in fact a bigger group of houses than Claymoor Park. A Brown advised in the negative but would welcome any contact. B Coakley agreed to make some enquiries to ascertain if the council had any details of a local committee.

Action – B Coakley

10. AOB

J Brydon, representing Sands Residents' Association, advised that there had been a big improvement in terms of overflying and noise. There were still a few rogue incidents. He had reported same and disappointingly received a late response. There were a couple of twin engine aircraft that overflew and were loud. However, his general comment was that adherence had been improving. A Brown advised that if he was able to provide a registration number or even a time in respect of the twin aircraft overhead, he may be able to investigate further. He was pleased to note that overflying was now an occasional irritation.

J Brydon also enquired on behalf of N Phillips, whether the air park still took student pilots from Bucks New University (BNU). A Brown advised that the air park no longer had a

contract with BNU at the current time but there was an intention in the future to resume taking students from BNU. They did however work with the University of West London (UWL) and this contract was live. In the past they had taken circa 90 students which had resulted in circa 60 committing to the course. However, this number had now been capped to 30, certainly for the time being.

P Rose stated that he had regularly asked about information to pilots flying circuits which was currently poor and it had been agreed that this would be made clearer and simpler. He had thought that at the last meeting there had been some pressure to complete that work quickly. He had raised this matter in the context of an event which had taken place on 13th May when there had been a lot of visiting pilots whose circuit discipline had been appalling. He had called the air park and had been advised that visiting pilots had all signed a document containing information but clearly this had not worked. He believed some of what he had witnessed had bordered on dangerous flying. He therefore wondered if there had been any progress in this matter. A Brown advised that a pack had been sent out in advance of this event, which contained up-to-date information and diagrams that had been discussed in this forum. This included a link which required pilots to answer certain questions and sign off on. If this had not been signed, those pilots were contacted and advised that if they did not do so they would be turned away. He considered that next year information would need to go out with a warning at the offset. He agreed that there were approximately 5 unacceptable instances which had been seen by ATC. Pilots were contacted and had since apologised. Apart from those 5 pilots to which he had referred, A Brown advised that the majority had adhered to the noise abatement procedures and the event had been safe and well managed. He did not consider that any additional information could have been provided. The document had been long because it had contained information relating to both fixed wing and helicopters as that was the only way to manage this. The diagrams had been clear; there had been textual descriptions and physical pictures of the circuit as well as Google Earth images. He therefore considered that the air park had done as much as it could. This information would now in turn go into the air park's manual and would be published within the next month. Following this, A Brown confirmed that he would then focus on improving the resources on the website.

A Brown advised the meeting that he had recruited a new Deputy Air Field Manager, Jason Bonham. He would be joining R Sowden and himself as an additional managerial resource. A Brown advised that he had been away from the business for personal reasons in the last month and that had been a big contributing factor in respect of the lack of response to complainants. J Bonham's background was general aviation having been a commercial helicopter and fixed wing pilot. He also had experience of managing estates/regulated sites. He would attend the next meeting of the JCC.

Finally, A Brown advised that a general noise complaint had been received yesterday and the complainant specifically asked that it be raised at today's meeting. This related to Little Marlow, which was outside of the air park's ATC. He advised that the best course of action in such instances would be to provide a registration number and if the pilot was known to the air park, they would endeavour to make polite contact. He reiterated that this area was outside of their jurisdiction.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next JCC would be 12th September, 2022 at 6.30 pm at the air park.

Further dates had been agreed as:

12th December at 6.30 pm at the air park

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.