

WYCOMBE AIR PARK JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON
3rd October 2022**

PRESENT

Mr M Harris	Chairman
Mr A Anderson- Brown	Director, AAA
Mr J Bonham	General Manager, WAP
Councillor D Barnes	Buckinghamshire Council
Councillor N Dunn	Great Marlow Parish Council
Councillor M Detsiny	Lane End Parish Council
Councillor A Hill	Marlow Bottom Parish Council
Mr A Mann	WAPAG
Mr N Phillips	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 Young	HeliAir
Mr B Coakley	Buckinghamshire Council

(1 members of the public in attendance)

- 1.** The Chairman, M Harris welcomed all to the October meeting of the JCC. Whilst introductions were not now considered necessary, Jason Bonham made himself known to those present and vice versa. He was the Airfield Deputy Manager and had taken a lead role in dealing with noise complaints received by the air park. He had an aviation background and was an ex long haul airline pilot with over 20,000 hours flying. He had also been a north sea helicopter pilot.
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
Apologies had been received from S Brown and R Russell.
- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2022**
The minutes of 27th June 2022 were tabled and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 4. Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising.
- 5. Update from the Working Group**
This had been held a few weeks ago. The Terms of Reference & Constitution had been reviewed and A Brown had presented some statistics on noise complaints, together with some metrics and new processes. In future J Bonham would be responsible for this but to enable him to bed into his role, A Brown had presented same.

A Brown advised that there remained significantly less movements than before Covid-19 and although there were similar numbers to 2021, the air park was still recovering. In the last few weeks, Booker Gliding Club had returned to the air field and for this set of statistics, gliding activity had not been split out from fixed wing (which he considered would likely remain) and he pointed out that there had been no complaints which related to gliding. Generally, the statistics were in line with trends previously reported; down slightly on 2021 levels but much lower than pre-covid levels. M Detsiny enquired whether the gliding club had been happy to be back. J Moore confirmed that the club was happy to be back after the long absence which had not in any case been their choice. N Phillips raised the issue of the second runway. A Brown advised that this had been a suggested alternative but had not been the reason why the gliding club could not operate. He did not intend to go into the detail and advised that the gliders had returned and were operating to the procedures that they had always had and remained on the south side of the runway.

N Phillips enquired if the runway usage statistics could be produced. A Brown confirmed that he would be able to produce same going forward.

Action – A Brown/J Bonham

A Brown also advised that improvements to the system for responding to noise complaints had been made. Whilst complainants would still receive the automated email, he now had a more robust system in place whereby one of the team would respond to all noise complaints. In August, 68% of all complaints had been closed within 5 days having been concluded as a breach or not and the complainant advised, and in September this had risen to 71%. In terms of numbers, 41 complaints had been received in August and 28 in September. The breakdown of same was roughly 80% helicopter related versus 20% fixed wing. Arising from the Working Group meeting, a statistic that had been requested had been the number of complaints validated versus those that had not been. He had not been able to provide this for August as the system had not been set up at that time but this had been done for the whole of September. 46% had not been valid versus 52% that had. Additionally, at least 2 complaints in September had been concluded as valid, i.e. a breach had occurred, however these were due to situations outside of the air park's control. He did in fact recall one of the instances whereby an aircraft followed a pipeline along the boundary of the airfield and flew over Clinkard Place. This occurred every other week and they were allowed to breach the circuit height as they had dispensation to do so by the Government and HeliAir had other similar contracts all with the same legal dispensations to do so. In terms of the non-valid complaints, A Brown reported that one individual made 7 complaints in one evening for events that potentially had occurred 2-3 days prior. Of the 7 complaints lodged, there was no record at all in relation to 6 of them in the area at that time either via flight radar, ABS tracker nor on the airpark's log. There was one helicopter that arguably could have been within those timings and it was therefore noted as valid. Therefore, if the air park could not conclusively mark a complaint as invalid it was recorded as valid. For reference, in August 61% of all complaints came from 2 individuals and in September 81% came from 2 individuals. A Brown advised that sometimes there were valid complaints from these people. Whilst this information had not been included within the hand out provided at this meeting, it would be incorporated going forward.

N Phillips enquired if the air park would be aware if any of the complaints related to the Police helicopter. A Brown advised that the air park would be able to see this information even if this happened at night. A Mann was pleased to note that there had been a great improvement in terms of complaint processing and feedback. He did however wonder if the air park had spoken with the 2 individuals responsible for the majority of complaints. A Brown advised that this had taken place on a number of occasions. They had often disbelieved the explanation that had been provided. A Mann wondered how this might be overcome. A Brown advised that he intended to continue his path of gathering data and responding and he hoped that there might be a natural regulation as originally there had been a set of 5 vociferous complainants, which had now dropped to just the 2. A Mann suggested that someone independent helped him talk to these people and he suggested someone on the JCC might be well placed to do so. This would form part of the business at the next Working Group meeting.

Action – to be discussed at the next Working Group meeting

A Brown also advised that there was one individual who did not complete an on-line form but regularly emailed. That person's data was not reflected in the statistics provided. However, regular contact, including the offer of a flight, continued to take place. A Brown confirmed that he intended to do everything reasonable to help the neighbours of the air park. J Bonham was also working with A Young of HeliAir to find a tracker for the helicopters which trained from the air park, which he considered would help those complainants who still needed "proof". It would also provide data to talk to HeliAir pilots should this prove to be the case. Further discussion took place around these complainants and A Brown confirmed that the number of contacts had been reducing. D Barnes enquired if calls could be recorded. A Brown advised that telephone contact with ATC had this facility, other lines did not but the next software upgrade would ensure this facility was extended.

The Chairman advised that he was pleased to see the statistics. He did however wonder if people were not reporting through the website, how this could be recorded. A Brown advised that the team retrospectively put this onto the website and therefore all such complaints had been recorded and included in the data. N Phillips advised that he did have one outstanding complaint and J Bonham would investigate.

Action – J Bonham

P Rose referred to Flight Radar 24 and stated that he had not seen any helicopter squawking in the circuit. A Brown advised that this did happen but was dependent upon the coverage of the area and despite the fact that he did have an antenna on the tower, the signal was difficult to pick up and relied also on the quality of the transponder on board. Therefore, if a noise complaint was received, and we had a movement logged in the tower that corresponded with that but there was no track record, for the purposes of this data, it would be logged as a valid complaint. Over the course of the next few years, he advised that the CAA considered it would be mandatory to have an ABSB compliant transponder. A Brown also advised that he had not given up on the software he was progressing which would ping helicopters independently, however, the person involved in its preparation had been incredibly busy with other bigger projects.

6. Terms of Reference & Constitution

The Chairman advised that upon reflection he wished to propose a slight amendment to clause 11 and the recruitment process. He suggested that under Phase 2, which stated that "WAP management would interview all candidates who were put forward", there should be a caveat in case of huge numbers, that read "having shortlisted if necessary". He doubted that the air park would be inundated with candidates but one never knew. He also suggested that under Phase 1 the phrase "any JCC member can put forward candidates" should read "*willing* candidates". He reiterated that Phase 4 effectively gave the JCC a veto if the candidate put forward by the air park was considered unsuitable. B Tranter suggested circulating the list of applicants to the JCC prior to any interview. Discussion took place around this point and it was considered there could be potential for a data breach around the distribution of sensitive personal data. It was therefore agreed to leave the wording at Phase 4 as set out. With the one minor amendment detailed above, the ToR & Constitution was unanimously agreed. The adopted version of the ToR & Constitution would be distributed with the minutes.

Action – S Fryer

7. Community Matters

A Brown advised that the outdoor cinema event had not taken place as the Maverick film did so well in cinemas its viewing was extended and the licence was revoked. There may be an opportunity to reschedule this for May next year to coincide with the Elite event held at the air park as the organisers of that event wanted to attract more pilots to fly in and camp overnight and this would be something to do in the evening. A Brown advised that this was therefore only tentative at the moment. He was trying to facilitate other charity events and was looking at holding a fun run around the air field, when it was closed, ideally supporting causes in some way related to aviation, such as air ambulance. He stated that he would be open to assisting any charity related causes and the air park had in the past provided vouchers for raffles etc. He stated he would also be open to hosting such events and invited all to pass on his or J Bonham's details as they would love to help.

8. AOB

N Phillips enquired whether the air park still ran courses in conjunction with Bucks New University (BNU). A Brown advised that the air park was no longer the preferred supplier to BNU although it remained a recognised supplier and continued to partner. The contract was still live and following a trial day 9 students had already signed up and he expected that the final numbers would be around 15-20. Last year the air park had 17 students, which was a good number and suited the air park operationally. Additionally, for the next two years the number of students would be capped at 35 maximum and he advised that the air park would not take the number of students seen previously as that no longer fitted with their business model. A Brown also advised that whilst there would be circuit activity around March/April from the students, numbers in the circuit would be limited.

A Mann enquired whether the reintroduction of the gliding club had had any effect on the dispute with the council in terms of runways and redevelopment. A Brown advised that the north/south runway had ceased to be in existence and the air park only had the east/west runway in use. Additionally, the air park had withdrawn its objections to Studio 50.

P Rose stated that several meetings ago there had been discussion around realigning the helicopter circuits away from the heavily populated area in Lane End where he lived and he wondered if this had been possible and/or any progress made. A Brown advised that the aerodrome manual had been updated with the published circuit pattern which had not been available previously. All visiting and based pilots now had access to this. Additionally, the air park was reviewing where the track might be moved from and to but wherever it was moved to would mean overflying someone's property and therefore at the moment there was a leaning to keep pilots on the same track. This had therefore been reviewed and the air park would be doing its utmost to keep pilots on track. P Rose stated that this was disappointing as the noise was often excessive.

N Phillips enquired if there had been any progress in terms of the southern circuit. A Brown advised that had been connected with the movement of the gliding to the north side which was not now happening.

9. Date of Next Meeting

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

The Chairman hoped that dates for 2023 could be advised at the December meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm.

Post Meeting note

The dates for 2023 were proposed as:

27th February 2023

26th June 2023

11th September 2023

11th December 2023