

**Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee**  
**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

**Present:** Jamie Freeman – Chairman  
Brian Bristow – Smarden Parish Council  
Geraldine Dyer – Ashford Borough Council  
Christine Dier – Maidstone Borough Council  
John Perry – Staplehurst Parish Council & Maidstone Borough Council  
Lester Gosbee – Frittenden Parish Council  
Lyn Selby – Headcorn Parish Council  
Martin Round – Maidstone Borough Council  
Elliot Styles – Aero Legends  
David Parker – Headcorn Parachute Club and Skydive Headcorn  
Gerald Hodges – Thurston Helicopters  
James Tuke – Thurston Helicopters  
Sue Line - Secretary

**Apologies for absence:** Alan Marsh – Ashford Borough Council

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were signed and accepted.

**Matters Arising from the Minutes**

**Planning and Events**

Although it was intended to invite Keith Perkins to attend unfortunately at the last moment he was not able to get to Headcorn in time for the meeting.

JPAF turned to issue of events being held on the site. He said that the CAA had not made decisions yet. Risk assessments were being updated., The Flight Display Director had to be accredited to the CAA, and more restrictions were coming up. At Headcorn this year he would be running things slightly differently: The BBMF would be here for Combined Ops., there would be a full display of the Red Arrows (day to be decided) and the de Havilland Dove, which was very close to being added to the Weald Air Services AOC (Air Operators Certificate) and a new Chief Pilot of Aero Legends were about to be approved.

JPA distributed the yearly Events Calendar. "AL" represented dates when Aero Legends were expecting to fly their customers, either in the Spitfire, or alongside the Spitfire using the de Havilland Dove. The exact detail still to be decided. However, the Dove was an excellent aircraft to fly alongside the Spitfire as it can travel at 160 or 170 knots which is very acceptable to the speed of the Spitfire.

It was expected that by October Aero Legends would be in a position to offer flights in their own 2 seat Spitfire. JPAF made it clear that that the local community would not be disrupted with the Fly Alongside events as the aircraft would not be taking off together or landing together unless the aerodrome was exceptionally quiet, and would not interfere with the running either Thurstons or Headcorn Parachute Club.

Referring to the Event calendar, JPAF said that although previously the aerodrome had not been going to host the Hunt or the Tractor Run they were now back on the schedule. He would recheck the Hobbs Parker date.

There was a new event with the BMF (British Motorcycle Federation) Bike Show. It would not be like the VW show. It was a mature group of motorbike enthusiasts and was in fact well connected with the Weald Air Services previous Ops Manager, Mary Pearson, who was very involved with it. Clearly the aerodrome would not be able to have the Vulcan again. Brian Bristow asked if flights would include the Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane and JPAF confirmed that they were although he was unable to confirm on which days.

JPAF asked Elliot Styles when Parky would be coming with the BBMF for repositioning but Elliot could not confirm these. Last year, 2015, was the first time the BBMF had positioned here since the war. Brian Bristow asked that when the specific flight days were identified could JPAF put something either on the website or just to circulation generally. JPAF confirmed he could send out a Round Robin to the Committee.

Elliot Styles explained the White Cliffs experience whereby passengers would fly in the de Havilland Devon Dove for about 40 minutes, including along the White Cliffs and Hellfire Corner. The Committee asked what the cost would be and it was of the order of £789 per person. They also hoped to do trips to Leeds Castle.

John Perry asked if were they were linking in with other promotions in Kent. Christine Dier said that was where she came in with linking everybody in. She especially felt that this sort of enterprise was just right for the American market. Lyn Selby asked what aircraft Aero Legends had, and Elliot Styles confirmed that they have 3 Tiger Moths, a Harvard T6, 2 Spitfires - TD314 and NH341- which was the two-seater soon to come on line, and a Jackaroo. They were not necessarily resident at Headcorn. Brian Bristow said that Aero Legends recently did a fly-past for a memorial for someone he knew in Smarden and it was very much appreciated.

JPAF said that plans for the future would be to resolve issues with the historical/heritage element of the site and aircraft and possible future plans to put up another hangar, enabling the Spitfires currently at Duxford to remain here in the future as a lot of the work would be going on here in Kent. He was working towards that and with a view to increasing tourism.

Martin Round enquired whether JPAF had gone into any level of planning yet and the answer was No. There were several alternatives including using the Engineering hangar, because of its age, to become a historic hangar and putting the Engineering facility elsewhere. However, the Dove has a wide wingspan. The question was asked by Martin Round whether there was any conservation status on the existing hangar and there followed discussion about the existing Museum and a Heritage Museum. Martin Round offered guidance/support on the planning front. Christine Dier was also very supportive concerning grant applications and funding options. JPAF noted their kind offers of support and guidance on that front. There was a discussion about funding windows and the length of time these things could take, 6 to 8 months being a guideline. JPAF thought he might undertake things in two stages but nothing had been formalized yet. The heavy workload on Local Planning Officers was also noted during the course of the discussion.

Martin Round felt it was a perfect funding opportunity: there was already heritage here and he felt that the aerodrome should capitalize on it.

## **Correspondence**

The aerodrome had received no correspondence.

Martin Round had been approached on the subject of aerodrome activity. On investigation he found that little of this was attributable to the aerodrome per se. The helicopters along the railway line were identified by James Tuke of Thurston Helicopters as likely to be the Coastguard doing NVG training. Gerald Hodges said that as some of the issues were raised by residents in Waterman Quarter and at the top of Sutton Valence hill they had assumed that the activity emanated from the aerodrome. The Coastguard is based at Lydd and James Tuke felt that they would be very understanding if people were to ring them up and speak to them direct. JPAF said that if any training manoeuvres were to be undertaken then the safety of the aerodrome was a good place to work. James Tuke said that you could go on to [FlightRadar24.com](http://FlightRadar24.com) to identify the registration number. JPAF said that sometimes the military did undertake crew changes on the aerodrome. James Tuke said that the coastguard was based at Lydd and would be very receptive to a phone call. JPAF said they can go somewhere else and if they are doing night familiarization and they use the nav aids here. Gerald Hodges said Bristows had the new contract and would be trialing for emergencies and generally familiarising themselves with the local area. People do tend to think all traffic comes from the aerodrome. JPAF said sometimes they do a crew change beyond operating hours so we are not controlling them. At night an aerodrome is a safe area to land.

Christine Dier did express a view that we would all look to these pilots if we had our own emergency.

## **Complaints**

The aerodrome had nothing to report – until 2 complaints were received on this very day. Headcorn Parachute Club were doing a low level 700ft drop of parcels (a box drop). They had been contracted to drop parcels to test the viability of using them for aid and the boxes had been manufactured to a certain specification and needed to be tested. It was a humanitarian cause and had been approved by the CAA. David Parker thought it was only the second time they had undertaken anything like this.

Brian Bristow asked where they did this practice and David Parker said it was carried out over the drop zone. However, the complainants were thought to be very close to the aerodrome. The height flown was to be at 700ft and it was felt that the aircraft was at that height but was a bigger aircraft than people were used to and that this could have been deceptive.

Martin Round mentioned that once he had access to a noise meter and the noisiest thing in Headcorn was in fact big lorries travelling over the railway bridge.

## **Any Other Business**

It was agreed by the Committee that the Minutes of the HACC, once approved, could be placed on the aerodrome's own website, [www.headcornaerodrome.co.uk](http://www.headcornaerodrome.co.uk)

Christine Dier was pleased to have a copy of the aerodrome Events Calendar which she would circulate. They were still promoting everything in the Borough, talking with South East trains and trying to link attractions and then get other things for people to do, ride bicycles, visit cafes, restaurants or pubs, and do walks or cycle routes, whereabouts of Farm Shops, self catering etc. Trying to get some information points out in Maidstone, Staplehurst, Headcorn and Lenham. This would take the form of information racks, wifi points, cafes, and generally in places with long opening hours so people can get to access all the time.

Lyn Selby would follow up on the Product & Marketing audit which had been sent out.

Gerald Hodges asked where does all this information go. Christine Dier said that it is all on Visit Maidstone. She confirmed they would take press releases, social media, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. So if anybody is staying locally they may want to do something else while they are here.

Lyn Selby asked if JPAF knew of the Department for Transport AEF communication which she had received today and not yet had the chance to read. At this point JPAF confirmed he had not been sent anything direct.

It was agreed that the Committee would like to meet Keith Perkins and he should be invited to the next meeting if at all possible. It was difficult to get a space in his diary as he was often abroad.

**Date of next meeting**

7<sup>th</sup> June at 2.30 pm in the Briefing Room.