

# Essex Gliding Club

Minutes of the Committee meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024, held via WhatsApp video conferencing, commencing 7.30pm.

Committee members present: John Whitwell, Dave Hertzberg, Tony Brook, Callum Hitchins, Vince Earl, Will Burry, Rob Brown

Apologies nil: all committee members present.

Agenda items.

1) Minutes of the November 2024 club AGM.

Discussed and agreed with a minor amendment to the CFIs remarks re the forthcoming SPL regime and an amendment to the recorded estimated cost of the Pawnee engine rebuild. This had been recorded as £60,000-70,000, now amended to £60,000-70,000 plus VAT as per Matt Clements comments at the AGM. With these amendments the minutes were agreed and approved to be a true and fair record of the recent club AGM. The approved minutes are now to be published on the club gliding app and on the club website, it was acknowledged that this is duplication but it will ensure the widest possible circulation to all club members.

**ACTION** Rob to forward the approved minutes to Callum for loading on the club website and the club gliding app.

2) Committee members Duties.

John advised that after due consideration he had requested Callum take on the additional duty of Technical officer in addition to that of Junior Representative and that Vince should take on the duty of Safety officer. Both Vince and Cullum agreed to take on these duties.

Additionally it was noted that the October committee meeting minutes had incorrectly recorded that Vince was to take on the duty of *Health and Safety Officer* rather than 'just' Safety officer. This is clarified and corrected here to avoid any future confusion.

3) Club visit to another gliding site.

Rob opined that this would be a 'good news' item to offer to members in the midst of price rises, concerns about the tug and the Wormingford closure. Long Mynd was initially suggested, however apparently it already has limited or no availability. Dave then advised that instructor availability would be a limiting factor as most club members would need the support of an instructor. Therefore, in order to reduce the potential instructor workload he suggested the Scottish Gliding centre (SGC) at Portmoak as an alternative. He advised it was an easier ridge to fly and so more club members would be able fly it solo. This would then reduce instructor workload and so allow longer flights by any members who do need instructor support. It was acknowledged that SGC was approximately 500 miles away (a 1000 mile round trip) so a visit of at least a week or so would be needed to make it 'worthwhile'. Callum and Rob then volunteered to tow gliders to the SGC site. SGC was then agreed as the location for a potential 2025 club 'trip'. The optimal time to go to SGC was suggested as being September and it was agreed it may be helpful to explore the option of a joint visit to SGC with Wattisham (AGC), but before contacting SGC or AGC it was agreed we 1<sup>ST</sup> need to establish the level of EGC member interest.

**ACTION** Dave to email the EGC membership to establish number of members potentially interested in going to SGC in September 2025.

4) Members using EGC gliders at other sites.

This arose from Callum and Gary Shepherd enquiring as to the availability of EGC gliders for transportation to and use at Dunstable (LGC). John opined that we needed an overarching club policy on this as in the event of members wishing to take club assets a significant distance e.g. to Aboyne in Aberdeenshire then wear and tear on the trailer would be more of a concern and needed to be factored into any cost structure agreed. After a wide ranging discussion it was agreed that each application for the use of club assets at a site other than at Ridgewell would be charged according to the exact circumstances appertaining. But for the proposed use at LGC then the charge would be at the newly agreed 2025 standard club rates i.e. 50 pence per minute for a two seater (with any launch fees incurred payable direct to LGC at their rates). On this occasion there would be no extra charge for wear and tear on the trailers as LGC was relatively local.

5) Pawnee tug issues.

A concern was the present flooding of Husband Bosworth (HB) airfield and whether this may interfere with our plans to fly the tug there for maintenance and an inspection which is essential for compliance with an AD. Callum explained that the tug needs to be at HB by 15/12/2024 latest otherwise it will not be airworthy and it would then require ground movement there (to be avoided). Callum also advised we need to get a K13 (HVW) and a PW6 to Wattisham for the winter flying program but in order to prolong flying at Ridgewell this needs to be done as late on in the year as possible (but before the 15<sup>th</sup> if we are going to aerotow the aforementioned gliders there). A further factor is that Matt Clements has stated he would wish to fly the Pawnee to HB by the 9/12/2024, (the reason for this desire was not clear). John asked how the Pawnees refuelling was paid for when it was refuelled other than at Ridgewell. Tony replied that Matt Clements sends him the bills which are then paid and it this worked satisfactorily with no issues.

**ACTION** Callum to monitor and action as necessary with support as required.

6) Arranging the end of the 2024 flying season at Ridgewell

Dave proposed we fly at Ridgewell on Wednesday 27/11/2024 and on one day at the weekend of 30/11-1/12/2024 and then we close the field the following weekend of 7-8/12/2024 then and shut Ridgewell for the winter. All the above to be dependent upon co-operative weather. This program was agreed amongst expressions of considerable satisfaction that this year we had flown in November and possibly December at Ridgewell after the two previous years when we had been obliged to shut in September one year and October the other.

**ACTION** Dave to make the necessary arrangements to terminate flying for 2024 as described above at Ridgewell, he will also advise the membership accordingly.

7) AGC Wattisham.

John opined that the helpful and co-operative spirit between the two clubs looked set to continue to everyone's benefit. Dave advised that we need to make sure we have an EGC instructor at Wattisham on days when EGC members attend. He suggested that in order to manage the resulting workload on our limited instructor cohort we only offer the option of attending Wattisham on one day a weekend over

the winter. This was agreed to be a sensible solution and the day to be offered each weekend will be opened on the EGC gliding app as a flying day so members can see in advance what is available and plan their gliding accordingly.

It was agreed that EGC members will be charged EGC rates for flying at Wattisham and it was further agreed that Callum would enquire of Paul Field (AGC Treasurer) if this was possible. (Note, in the interval between this meeting and publication of these minutes we have had the MOU from John Lean (AGC chairman) which means that it will not be possible). Callum undertook to ensure that any moneys owed to EGC as a result of flying at AGC come to the club and he will liaise with the AGC treasurer to ensure this occurs.

Tony raised a concern as to whether it was equitable for EGC to be charged hangarage fees for the Pawnee when based at AGC. This was because AGC benefit from it being there i.e. their members take tug launches, the fees for which do not cover the costs of said launch. After a wide ranging discussion it was agreed that the benefits to EGC by this arrangement are nicely balanced by this charge and our tug subsidy, therefore the charge would not be challenged. In coming to this decision it was noted that the Pawnee is hangered in a vastly superior hanger at AGC which is both water and weatherproof. Also the Pawnee engine gains greatly from being used during the winter which may assist in postponing the oft discussed future tug engine rebuild, which is most definitely to our advantage. It was however agreed that there were additional costs to EGC on basing the tug at AGC and Callum therefore suggested an additional £5 supplementary launch fee be levied on all members of either club each time they use the tug for a launch at AGC over the winter. This would cover the majority, if not all of the additional costs including tyre wear and would be equitable as it would be charged to all members of both clubs who use this asset.

**ACTION** Dave to advise the membership via email of how to take advantage of the opportunity provided by AGC i.e. a member wishing to fly at Wattisham should book in on the EGC flying app for the relevant days flying. Also to advise the membership of the supplementary tug launch fee and the rationale.

**ACTION** Callum to liaise with the AGC treasurer to ensure payment arrangements are in hand and to advise him of the £5 additional fee for all winter tug launches from AGC by the Pawnee.

8) Other potential winter flying opportunities for EGC members.

Rattleden (RGC) is an option. Dave advised that he would generally be going there on Wednesdays during the winter and could therefore assist by instructing any EGC member who attended and needed this assistance, providing numbers attending remained small. However he also advised that if we also wished to attend in significant numbers during the winter weekends then we would need a booking system and our own instructors to support our members. Additionally it was by no means clear that the limited capacity RGC have could support such a scheme. After some discussion it was therefore agreed that the option of EGC supported weekend flying at RGC was not viable this winter and this option would not be taken further. However for the avoidance of doubt, this does not stop any EGC member taking advantage of the reciprocal agreement between our two clubs and making their own arrangements.

#### 9) Wormingford (E&SGC) Closure

John advised that he continues to meet with the E&SGC chairman on a regular basis and contrary to popular belief they have considerable confidence that an alternative site will be found and that E&SGC will continue to exist. However it is clear that with less than 2 years until the wormingford site closes it will be difficult (probably impossible) to obtain the necessary permits, permissions and authorities required if to turn any suitable new venue found into an operating airfield. In this scenario it is likely that E&SGC would look to us to permit the basing of some of their members (likely to be approximately 10) at Ridgewell on a temporary basis to allow them to continue to fly and keep their skills current until their new field is operational.

#### Fleet issues

Callum advised that he had been in contact with Les Clark at Swindon who is completing the ARC and annual on KRU. Les had advised that he had uncovered some evidence of structural damage to KRU similar to that found previously on KRX. It would require some further investigation but was not thought to be a major concern at this time. Its probable effect would only be to slightly delay completion of the KRU ARC and annual and this delay would then have a cascading impact on the schedule for the succeeding pieces of work Les is due to complete for EGC. Les will keep us advised.

Mention was also made of a potential project to build a Cabio K13 EGC material presently in storage at Swindon. Dave opined that were we to obtain such a craft it would be a major selling point with members of the public considering an experience flight with EGC.

**ACTION** John agreed to speak with Les Clark regarding our options for the construction of a cabio K13 from material belonging to EGC already in storage at Swindon

#### 10) Airfield issues

Callum requested permission to add deconstruction and removal of the sim caravan to the winter programme of work for the site team. He advised that every effort would be made to re-use or store for future re-use any useful material generated, mainly wood. He noted that the sim also includes some 5 projectors. It was agreed that at least one of these would be kept for general club use and efforts made to sell or otherwise dispose of the remainder. Additionally it was agreed that the fuselage of glider EOF which is presently stored in the caravan would also be kept as a useful source of spare parts of the EGC K13 fleet. Permission to remove the caravan was given.

**ACTION** Callum, the site team and other club members who are available to remove the sim caravan over the winter 2024/2025

#### 11) Junior 'AGM'

It was suggested that consideration be given to holding a Juniors 'AGM'. Callum advised he was more willing to hold a juniors meeting rather than a full AGM type meeting for this group, but he was slightly unsure that it was really wanted or required. However after some discussion it was agreed that a meeting possibly at or near the beginning of the 2025 season for the junior membership may be of some use in helping with engagement, although it was noted that several juniors had attended the recent club AGM. No specific date was set.

**ACTION** Callum to arrange meeting with the junior membership (not urgent)

12) Junior flying weekend

Tony suggested a flying weekend for the junior membership. Callum noted that an event of this nature had been carried out at Tibenham and had been a success. However he also opined that he was unsure how many of our juniors would want to be involved if we organised one. It was agreed that it would be also useful to establish AGCs attitude to such a project. Tony therefore volunteered to contact the junior membership and AGC to gauge the level of interest. With the same objective in mind Tony also agreed to contact Tony Benson at E&SGC who is organising a Junior Aerobatic weekend at LGC .It was agreed that once we know the answers to these questions we can decide the next step.

**ACTION** Tony to contact AGC re a potential junior weekend at EGC

**ACTION** Tony to contact Tony Benson at E&SGC

**ACTION** Tony to contact the EGC junior membership to establish their level of interest in this notion.

13) EGC Open day

Rob asked about an Open day and opined that when and if we were in a position to apply for any grants such an event would be useful to demonstrate our community links and roots. Vince advised that a previous open day had generated at least 80 visitors which had been an uncomfortably large number to manage. He also pointed out that this sort of event required organisation and staffing, for example marshals or stewards would be required for the visitor's and their cars and therefore the full support of the membership would be needed to fulfil these roles. John advised that this present project had arisen because he had been contacted by a local farmer who asked us to arrange an open day to raise funds for a church roof appeal. He also suggested that this time we limit advertising to local villages (last time we held one we advertised much wider afield). He further suggested we limit the number of tickets sold to say 40 and if they were purchased by locals then this would have the additional benefit of ensuring there would be fewer complaints about any additional traffic generated and it would help with our efforts to ensure and deepen community acceptance of our club. All the above suggestions for the potential structure of the open day were agreed as being the basis on which we would proceed and John then volunteered to go back to the farmer and establish when he would like the event held and agreed that until we know the date we can't make any further arrangements

**ACTION** John to contact the local farmer and establish when he would ideally like the Open day held.

No other issues or concerns were raised, meeting closed 9pm.

Minutes taken by Rob Brown.