



# Essex Gliding Club

## Committee Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022 (Clubhouse).

Those present: John Whitwell, Allen Cherry, Vince Earl, Dave Hertzberg, Callum Hitchings, Will Burry.  
Apologies received from: Steve Jessup, Paul and Anne Regeli.

Meeting Opened at 10:00am.

Minutes of previous meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021 agreed.

Proposer: A Cherry, Seconded: D Hertzberg.

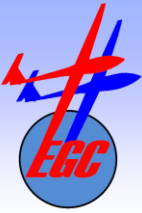
During the opening remarks, John Whitwell advised that all Committee members are also Directors of the Essex Gliding Club Limited Company. Chris Reed is completing the work of notifying Companies House of the Committee members so appointed.

The condition of the club glider seat cushions was mentioned and it was agreed that we should investigate replacement of the current cushions as the energy absorbing properties appeared to have degraded significantly. **To be investigated further and reported back to the committee.**

### Strategy Review:

The results of the club strategy review were discussed and thanks were made to Gary Shepherd for leading the review with members and providing a report of the findings. Each finding in the report was discussed by the committee and the following details summarise the discussions of the committee.

- The report accurately reflects the sentiments raised by members during the review meetings.
- **Communication:** It was agreed that some committee meeting minutes and some decisions that were made via email consultation between committee members, had not been adequately recorded on the club web site. The distribution of the details of committee deliberations to members was also discussed. It was agreed that the distribution of the committee meeting minutes to members by email and by publishing them on the web site was sufficient. Some members are sent the minutes individually, as they have been unable to receive emails sent to large distribution lists. The committee welcomes any suggestions from members about other communication channels that they would like to be used to improve communication.
  - **Actions:**
  - **Publish any remaining committee meeting minutes and decisions to the member's area of the club web site and ensure that the files can easily be navigated to and accessed by club members.**
  - **Club members to review the Junk Email folder if they do not receive emails or meeting minutes from the Chairman.**
- **Airfield Operation Manual:** This is being prepared by Dave Hertzberg. It will however be a large document and not something that we would want to provide to new members on their first day with us. There is also a lot of information that is relevant and published in other documents such as Laws & Rules (BGA). Vincent Earl has volunteered to assist in the preparation of this document.
- **Support Activities:** It was decided that while this document is a good idea, the scope needs to be defined before any detailed work on the document itself is started.
  - **Actions:**



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- **Will Burry to prepare a list of support activities that are to be included in the Support Activities document.**
- **External Environment:**
  - A recent visit by the leader of Braintree District Council was very well received and showed the club in a very favorable light with the council. Sadly the local parish council has not invited us back to any of their meetings after previously saying that they would invite us if they needed our input. Tony Brook has previously made contact with key local residents during the setting up of the Section 106 Agreement that now allows us to use the entire field for aviation activities. John has met and is in regular email conversations with Ashen Parish Chair and recent email conversations with other local Parish's. He is in communication on a monthly basis with the Neighborhood Watch Organiser and has frequent communication with BDC Amenities.
  - There was also a discussion about investigating additional revenue streams but the Committee was not able to assign anyone with sufficient time or expertise to progress this. **Volunteers to pick up this task should make themselves known to the committee so that it can be progressed.**
  - The rent collection from Orchard Farm is currently in arrears but the tenant is paying the majority of the fees and the arrears are being managed.
- **Fleet Review:** Essex Gliding Club has an extensive fleet of gliders for the number of members currently at the club. There are four 2 seaters available for training and a single seater that is vastly under-utilized.
  - The recent Airworthiness Directive from Schleicher (EASA AD 2021-0230) does not alter the flight envelope or the Type Certificate Data Sheet for the K13, despite the original Proposed AD suggesting that spinning and aerobatics should not be performed. This glider can therefore be used for the full training syllabus and is very useful for visitor flying. **The CFI's decision should be sought before resuming spinning or aerobatics in this glider.** We do need to be mindful that if it does ever fail its glue inspection or its 3 year structural inspection, it may well be beyond economic repair.
  - The PW-6 gliders are no longer life limited to 3000hrs and can be extended for 1000hrs at a time up to 5000hrs, so we can get a good number of years out of them provided we don't break them.
  - The Astir is a good first single seater for newly solo pilots and we have 5 new solo pilots that we need to convert to it. This glider is also capable of flying Gold Distance on the right day.
  - Allen Cherry kindly allows us to utilise the Marianne for visitor flights and is also available for more advanced flying and cross-country training. It is less suitable for ab-initio pilot training. We must always remember that this is a privately owned glider and is only available through the generosity of its owner.
  - A review of the cost effectiveness of each club glider is due to be prepared,
- **Disaster Recovery:** The committee has ring-fenced the sum of £70,000 for disaster recovery. This is for the resolution of un-insured losses (Clubhouse or other buildings/containers) or for the replacement of any capital equipment such as the winch or the aircraft owned by the club.
- **Pilot Aspirations:** It was discussed that Pilot Aspirations are important and need to be addressed to ensure continued progression within the gliding movement and the club. It was suggested that a board of aspirations be put up in the launch point caravan so that instructors and students can both see what each pilot is aiming for. It was also suggested that instructors should discuss a pilot's aspirations for the coming season during the annual checks, when we



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resume flying at Ridgewell. **It should be emphasized that all instructors can be approached at any time to discuss a pilot's aspirations and how to achieve them.**

- **Capital Expenditure:** Really significant expenditure will be discussed with the wider membership as the occasion demands. The recent purchase of the ground roller was a direct response to a previous member survey request to make the field flatter and less prone to water logging, so that it can be used for more of each year, rather than moving to Wattisham or Rattlesden. It was also discussed in detail at the recent AGM.
- **Strategic Plan:** The Chairman, John Whitwell, is preparing a strategic 5 year plan using the findings from the membership survey and the Strategic Review meetings report. It is not yet complete but will be made available to members once it is ready.
- **Membership Secretary:** This is probably the wrong title but the committee understands the intent. It is probably not appropriate to put this task onto a single person to look after every new (or existing) member but more appropriate to provide new members with a Mentor to whom they can go to for anything they are not comfortable about. These mentors must be familiar enough with the workings of the club and the processes we follow to run the field as well as any supporting activities. The Airfield Operation and Support manuals proposed earlier will support this mentoring activity but we need to be careful to select suitable mentors that are willing to take on the role and have time to perform it effectively. As a welcoming and inclusive club, the instructors of all levels are always happy to discuss any gliding query that any member may have. **Anyone wishing to act as a mentor to new or less experienced members should make themselves known to the CFI or any member of the committee.** Committee members are listed on the club's web site.

## Fleet and Tug Status

The tug is undergoing an extensive strip down of the wings and fuselage as well as rectification for some corrosion of the framework. The ARC/Annual is also being performed as part of this activity and the maintenance organisation has allowed a significant discount on this necessary work by doing it all at the same time. It will return as one of the best examples of its type in the country when the work is finished and will serve the club well for many years to come. The tug is seen as a crucial asset to the club.

The glider fleet is undergoing ARC/Annual Inspections at the moment.

- K13 is de-rigged and ready for transport to the inspector once the inspector is able to accommodate it on its open trailer. As soon as the glider can be accommodated we will need a team of members to load the glider onto the open trailer on a day when the weather is good, so that we can load it and transport it to Swindon on the same day. **Vincent will request assistance from members once we know that the trailer can be housed in the inspector's barn away from the elements.**
- The 2 PW-6 gliders have both been inspected and are ready for next season. One of them just needs to be rigged.
- The Astir is now with the inspector and we expect it to be ready for collection by 8<sup>th</sup> January.
- The Marianne is ready to be taken to the inspector. It will be taken to Swindon on the same trip as the one to retrieve the Astir (if the K13 cannot then be hosted in the Inspector's barn).

## Financial Report

Several large items have caused the cash flow for the club to be somewhat strained recently. Some money is being transferred from the Redwood Deposit Account to the NatWest Current Account to allow



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us to pay the completion of the Pawnee work. Other recent large bills were the grass tyres for the tractor, the Aerator for treating the field as well as higher insurance costs and the insurance excess.

The K13 cabriolet activity needs to progress and the inspector will be asked to quote to complete the work started by club members (Allen Cherry to arrange for the quote). This work is part funded by a grant, so we cannot now decide not to proceed.

A review of the total operating costs of the tug since 2013 was presented and showed that the tug can never pay for itself. It will continue to require cross subsidies from other activities of the club, such as winch launches. The tug is a key asset for the club and the committee is firmly in favor of keeping it and making the launches as affordable as possible, so that more aerotows are performed. To this end the committee has decided that the cost of member's aerotows will remain unchanged for the coming season at £25.00 to 2000ft and £35 to 3000ft.

To summarise, the club's financial position is still healthy and the additional expenditure recently required will set the club and its equipment on a firm basis for the coming seasons.

## **Enrolment and Training**

Following the acceptance of the new Enrolment Policy at the AGM, where training places are allocated according to the capacity of instructors to deliver training, it was decided that the policy wording is satisfactory and can be added to the member's area of the club web site. **Callum to upload the Policy document.**

It was further decided that 3 additional documents are to be prepared by John Whitwell and Callum Hitchings to cover the 3 joining scenarios in more user friendly terms than the Policy document. The 3 scenarios are a) New Ab-Initio student with no experience, b) New pre-solo pilot joining the club and c) new member that is already a solo glider pilot. Those with previous experience (Option B above) will be assessed by the CFI or a nominated instructor and their previous training records reviewed before being offered a training slot.

The CFI will maintain a list of training members to ensure that we know how many training slots are available if we receive new membership applications.

The Membership Secretary will continue to charge new members in the same way as currently, so no change to this process.

The **Fixed Price to Solo** Scheme is to be renamed to be the "Initial Training Package" and will be modified from the existing scheme. This has become necessary following the results of analysing the cost of the scheme to date. Effectively, the scheme in its present form is not cost effective for the club.

The new scheme details are still under discussion by the committee and will be published as soon as they are finalised. The draft details of the scheme will include:

- A fixed duration of 12 months, including club membership.
- Unlimited simulator time.
- Unlimited winch launches.
- Up to a total of 8 aerotows to 2000ft.

The cost of the package is expected to be £1350 for full training members and £1000 for those qualifying as junior members. Full details of the scheme will be presented to prospective members prior to joining the club (these will be the scenario based documents mentioned earlier in this section).



# *Essex Gliding Club*

Meeting closed at 13:30.

Minutes by Vincent Earl.