**ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING**

**REDHILL AERODROME CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 15TH JULY 2024 AT 7.30 P.M.**

**NUTFIELD VILLAGE HALL**

**63 Mid Street, South Nutfield, Surrey RH1 4JJ** (doors open from 7.00 p.m.)

**AGENDA**

**1. Introduction by Terry Pollard, Chairman of the Consultative Committee**

**2. To note the minutes of the previous public meeting held on the 2nd October 2023** (page 2)

**3. Speakers on behalf of the Aerodrome’s management team**

Nick Stagg (Chairman of Redhill Aerodrome Ventures Limited)

David Burke (Chief Executive of Redhill Aerodrome)

**4. Speaker on behalf of an Aerodrome user**

Sergeant Paul Cole (Base Manager, National Police Air Service)

**5. Speaker on behalf of** **Nutfield Parish Council**

Councillor Duncan Mallison

**6. Questions from the public**

* *questions will need to be submitted to the secretary by noon on 10.07.24*
* *a time limit of two minutes for reading out each question will be applied*
* *one supplementary question will also be allowed.*

*The Chairman will retain an element of discretion over proceedings, including the avoidance of repeat questions being put to the meeting.*

**7. Close**

Vince Sharp

Secretary to Redhill Aerodrome Consultative Committee

c/o Tandridge District Council, Council Offices, Station Road East Oxted RH8 0BT

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REDHILL AERODROME CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the public meeting held on the 2nd October 2023 at 7.30 p.m.**

**in Salfords Village Hall**

**PRESENT** *(based on the signed attendance sheets)*

**Chairman**

Terry Pollard (Chairman)

**Aerodrome management**

David Burke (Chief Executive)

Nick Stagg (Chairman of Redhill Aerodrome Ventures Limited)

Philip Wright (Aerodrome Manager)

**Community Representatives**

Bob Barnes (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council)

Catherine Baart (Surrey County Council)

Michael Blacker (Reigate & Banstead Borough Council)

Jim Blackmore (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council)

Karen Dukes (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council)

Jonathan Essex (Surrey County Council)

Liam Hammond (Tandridge District Council)

Duncan Mallison (Nutfield Parish Council)

Rigel Mowatt (Nutfield Parish Council)

Paul Murray (Keep Redhill Airfield Green)

Stephen Rolph (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council)

**Others**

Richard Blain, Graeme Brookes, Don Butler, Liz Butler, B.W. Cass, Lorraine Cundey,

Martin Cundey, Rudy Dugne, Daviele Gaillard, John Gaillard, David Grantham,

Richard Hocking, Clive Pierce, Phil Petitt, E.R.Stonard, James Tester, Rob Wendes,

Mark Wagner

**Apologies for absence**

Wayne Clark (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council)

Paul Cole (National Police Air Service)

Chris Hoskins (Nutfield Conservation Society)

Nikki Taplin (Cubair)

Mark Wooller (Outwood Parish Council)

1. **INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and invited the Aerodrome representatives and main speakers to introduce themselves. He also thanked Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council for hosting the meeting and Vince Sharp for his secretarial support to the consultative committee.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON 28TH JULY 2022**

These minutes were noted.

**3. SPEECH BY NICK STAGG**

Nick was pleased to confirm that the Aerodrome was now making a modest financial surplus, despite the significant cost pressures of escalating energy prices and business rates. He thanked David Burke and his team for helping to make the business solvent by securing new tenants (from the aviation and technology sectors) amidst the challenging economic climate. Non-aviation use of for the site was also flourishing, with the aerodrome serving as a base for approximately 150 community nurses. The estate was now close to full occupancy, but Nick emphasised the importance of maintaining the site and improving working conditions to ensure ongoing rental income to offset the losses from airside activities.

The Aerodrome hoped to provide a new lunch time café service from Hanger 9 in the new year, although significant investment was needed to make the facility fit for purpose. Nick explained that the whole site was subject to a rigorous regulatory safety regime and, as such, should not be considered a public visitor attraction. Parking facilities were also being improved to serve the needs of tenants.

David Burke added that considerable efforts had gone into attracting new commercial tenants and that he wanted them all to stay and be part of the Aerodrome estate’s long-term future.

**4. SPEECH BY JAMES TESTER (REDHILL AVIATION)**

James explained the three core components of the company, namely:

* Aircraft maintenance / engineering, which employs about 7 people. The team services the company’s own fleet but, as the only fixed-wing maintenance organisation at the Aerodrome, has the capacity to work on other aircraft. Maintenance checks are required every 75 hours of flying time or 6 months, whichever occurs sooner. The fleet has a much higher utilisation than private owners’ aircraft and, therefore, most checks are undertaken via the flying time trigger. Aircraft rebuilds or refurbishments to higher specifications are also undertaken.
* Aircraft leasing – the company owns approximately 30 light aircraft, around half of which are leased to flying schools based elsewhere, although all are serviced by the maintenance team.
* 2 flying schools, operating from Redhill and Shoreham (employing 4 full time operations staff and around 40 instructors) with approvals to teach a range of courses, e.g. for:
* the basic Private Pilots Licence (PPL)
* other licenses all the way up to that required to be a commercial pilot
* multi-engine instrument rating (required for airline pilots)
* flight instructors and examiners

Most students are aged between 18 and 40 embarking on professional careers in aviation. There is also strong demand from others requiring PPLs to undertake flying as a hobby. As well as training students, the flying schools also serve the general public by selling trial lessons and aerobatic flights as one-off experiences.

James explained that the Shoreham base was opened in 2021 to alleviate pressure at Redhill caused by the movement cap imposed by the Section 106 Agreement\* (restricting the use of the hard runway during winter months when the grass runways are unusable). He identified the recruitment of instructors as the company’s main challenge, given the post-covid surge in demand from airlines. Consequently, the company does less flying from Redhill and generates less revenue for itself and the Aerodrome.

He concluded by thanking residents who lived close to the Aerodrome for their support for the local flying school.

*\* The ‘Section 106 Agreement arose from the planning permission for the retention of the widened hard standing on taxiway C/D, granted by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council’s Planning Committee on 17th March 2021 – “no more than an average total of 85 daily fixed wing aircraft movements will be permitted to occur from Runway 07/25 assessed on a rolling seven-day average basis, and where each take-off and landing is considered to be a single movement (so touch and goes are counted as two movements). The methodology for calculating the seven-day average for any day will be the aggregate of that day's total movements together with the total movements occurring on the preceding six calendar days, divided by seven”.*

**5. PRESENTATION BY SALFORS & SIDLOW PARISH COUNCIL**

This was preceded with a speech from Jim Blackmore. He surmised that most residents wanted the Aerodrome to be successful without creating undue disturbance to residents. He appealed for more Aerodrome users to attend RACC meetings and referred to the Committee’s constitution which provided six committee seats for ‘Aerodrome users‘ and one for a ‘private operator’. He believed that these positions should be nominated by the Aerodrome and would be happy for non-aviation tenants to be represented on the RACC too.

Jim identified noise disturbance for the primary school as the main aerodrome related issue affecting the Parish. He believed that effective public engagement by the Aerodrome was an essential component in dealing with this and other adverse community impacts. He reflected that the loss of the Pilots’ Hub was unfortunate but acknowledged that need for safety considerations to take priority. Finally, he questioned whether rumours about the installation of a solar array at the site had any substance.

Jim introduced his fellow Parish Councillor Paul Edwards who gave a presentation about local area flight data analysis complied using aircraft tracking technology. The analysis sought to, *“provide visibility and insight into local flight movements to facilitate an informed discussion of the areas of interest*” and focused on:

* flights passing over Salfords Primary School
* aircraft using the taxiway
* helicopters flying repeated low-level circuits above housing.

The analysis comprised flight path mapping and other associated information, including longitude, latitude, height, speed and unique aircraft identifiers.

**6. QUESTIONS**

Question from Richard Blain (1)

*“The DfT’s Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees state that Committees are encouraged to open all their meetings to the public, unless there is a legitimate reason why it is inappropriate to do so.  Most airfields do this, especially those such as Redhill that have a legislative requirement to have a committee, and they allow the public the opportunity to participate in each meeting for a set period, for instance to ask questions.  Given that most of the RACC’s meetings are hybrid, is there any legitimate reason why this committee will not allow the public to attend every meeting?”*

The Chairman responded that it was pleasing to see the public attending this evening and that the question of extending public participation arrangements may prompt discussion at the next committee meeting.

Richard considered that, in view of the guidelines, RACC should be encouraged to extend public participation rights to ordinary committee meetings.

Question from Richard Blain (2)

*“The Redhill Aerodrome Consultative Committee exists to fulfil a mandatory legislative requirement under Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act. To what extent does the committee feel it falls short in terms of ensuring public accessibility, transparency, fairness, and independence in accordance with The DfT’s Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees and, in the same context, that committee members should be free to say what they think on issues without fear of recourse from the aerodrome?”*

Nick Stagg responded by stating that, during his time on the RACC, nobody had been told not to say their piece and that he would encourage each member to express their concerns. Where concerns are directed to the Aerodrome, the management team would endeavour to deal with them where possible.

Nick referred to Paul Edwards’ presentation and was pleased to see the mapping of flight circuits which demonstrated the routes which pilots were compelled to fly. This illustrated the fact that the school is in line with the flight path from the grass runways, although aircraft taking off from the taxiway depart over the Salfords Gap without impacting on the school. Nick reiterated advice from previous meetings that the Civil Aviation Authority would not authorise a flight path change whereby take-offs from the grass runways could divert into the Salfords Gap (not least due to the proximity with Gatwick controlled airspace). He regretted that the taxiway wasn’t licensed but stated that the Aerodrome was obliged to operate within the Section 106 planning constraints.

Nick added that Phillip Wright investigates all flying complaints and speaks to the respective pilots. He explained that helicopters are equipped with more advanced navigation technology to enable pilots to keep within pre-programmed flight paths but that pilots of fixed wing aircraft had to ‘fly by eye’.

Richard Blain followed up his question by asserting that the DfT guidelines expected committee members to be independent from the aerodrome. He asked what to what extent do RACC members feel they can speak freely at meetings without fear of retribution.

Nick Stagg declined to comment.

Jim Blackmore responded that he had never felt restricted in airing his views at RACC meetings and had a high level of confidence in the independence of the current Chairman.

Statement from Clive Pierce

Clive explained that he had launched the petition (in October 2022) to ‘save the Pilots’ Hub. He described how family visits to the Pilots’ Hub had inspired his son to take an Aerospace Engineering degree. He believed that the facility should not have been removed without due consideration of other options and that its closure was a great shame.

Nick Stagg responded by saying that the matter had already been addressed earlier in the meeting, but clarified that advanced discussions were taking place with another operator and that the facility will be reopening. He confirmed that there would be some public access, subject to certain restrictions. While the pubic would not be prevented from visiting the new café, access would need to be controlled for health & safety reasons.

Statement from Liz Butler

Liz regretted that South Nutfield residents appeared to be unaware of the meeting. She proceeded to express concerns about pilots overflying Nutfield Park when approaching the Aerodrome from the east (impacting on the care home and livestock farm) especially when aircraft engines ‘cut out’ when trainees practice emergency landings. Phillip Wright acknowledged that he had received a complaint but explained the limitations in flying the relevant circuit and that fact that trainees need to undertake such exercises. He confirmed that he would take up Liz Butler’s concerns with the relevant flying club.

Question from Paul Murray

Paul asked if the Aerodrome had any development plans.

Nick Stagg responded that he couldn’t comment until the current Local Plan process had concluded. He clarified that the Aerodrome hadn’t investigated the possibility of a solar farm as a viable option and that this scenario had only arisen via speculation about the use of solar power to provide hydrogen as a ‘next generation’ alternative to aviation fuel, coupled with the possibility of a solar farm at Redhill serving Gatwick. Nick also confirmed that the Aerodrome’s association with Thakeham Homes was still live.

Question from a private operator

The Aerodrome representatives were asked why some flying from the taxiway was cancelled last winter when the ’movement cap’ didn’t seem to have been breached?

Phillip Wright stated that he hoped the situation would improve during the coming winter, but explained the challenges associated with the movement cap and the need to avoid incurring the significant financial penalties which would be triggered by any breaches. He appreciated the cooperation of those flying schools who allowed private pilots to utilise surplus slots.

Question from Jim Blackmore

Jim asked whether leases for business units at the Aerodrome were restricted to 5 years.

Nick Stagg confirmed that requests for longer lease periods (e.g. 10 years) would be considered.

The meeting closed at 8.31 p.m.