



Newsletter – April 2011

An update now that winter is finally behind us.

Flying activity

You will all be aware that another extended arctic spell through the winter months significantly reduced the number of flying days. Income and activity when we could fly increased, but equally our running costs continue to rise remorselessly. Rates, insurance and particularly fuel costs have all risen significantly as you will have experienced. Notwithstanding this the Treasurer advises that we are broadly in line with last year's net financial position, which is reassuring. Without the increase in flying fees effective at the end of last year, we would be well short of that goal.

Open weekend

The Open Weekend will be on 28th and 29th May. Cheryl has bravely taken on the lead role in organising this and has already tackled many of the arrangements. She will need support and has posted notices in the clubhouse accordingly. This can make a big contribution to club funds so please offer whatever assistance you can provide. Contact details are on the notices.

Membership

Current flying membership is circa 124 which is little changed from last year and the retained membership level is good compared with many clubs. We need to continue to recruit and keep new members. I believe that we are increasing the activity level of our existing core membership which is good. Time will tell whether this proves to be correct and can be sustained. That said we often seem to have many members on site but the launch point sparsely populated and struggling to operate. We can only run and exist if everyone pulls their weight!

Club accounting system.

Peter Field and Robert Lee have now transferred our accounts to Sage from Microsoft Money. This has been achieved at little cost and provides greater efficiency and better reporting. We are fortunate to have their expertise and dedication. Jonathan Stoneman has joined our Treasurer's team, and with Jonathan on board we will have some contingency within that essential function. We hope Don Jones will continue as a valued member of the team and that he will soon return to good health and I am sure you join me in wishing him well.

Club room

Peter Field successfully bid on behalf of the club for 35 matching dining room chairs at Dunkeswell Auction on 30 March and Peter Harmer collected them. A huge and long overdue improvement, thanks to both Peters for sorting this.

Catering

I have reminded our caterers of the times we need to have a service available. It does need to be commercially viable for them if we are to continue enjoying this facility, so do please make use of the catering. In future the catering staff will telephone the launch point in advance of leaving so as to ensure that all those in need have the opportunity to be sustained before catering closes.

Morning briefings

I am aware that this is proving controversial, and whilst we must address safety and operational issues, it has caused delays and frustration, both of which impact on enjoyment and income. It is possible that this will evolve into two separate briefings, one short briefing covering essential safety and operational matters directed at training flights (and which may be conducted at the launch point) and a second in depth briefing for those intending to venture further, which will deal with NOTAMS, Met etc. The CFI has this in hand.

You will notice that an additional column has been added to the flying list to cover objectives for the day. The intention is that you enter very briefly what you wish to achieve on the day, e.g. "Red card check"; "Spinning"; "Aerotow training" etc etc. The Duty Instructor can then identify and allocate resources accordingly and other instructors will have the information available, as of course will the afternoon instructor. This also eliminates the need to "go round the room", which is time consuming, and very demanding upon the DI and DLM's memories!

Ad-hoc flying

The committee have decided that we should have a protocol to permit flying on “non-flying” days when conditions are irresistible. The underlying intention is to increase use of club assets and equipment whilst encouraging flying when conditions are potentially at their best. The CFI has been asked to consider the arrangements which would apply in order to address the various responsibilities devolved upon us. His provisional advice is as follows, pending final confirmation:

“I have been asked what authorisations I would give for flying on days that are not ‘normal’ Club flying days, i.e. generally Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays on non-course weeks.

I suggest the following:

1. Current blue card (i.e. self briefing) pilots may fly private gliders from aerotow, without any restriction. There does not need to be an instructor within the group, although there probably will be. The group will nominate a responsible person to ensure that the normal house-keeping jobs done by the duty instructor are completed. These tasks include Met and Notams checked, liaise with Exeter ATC and Dunkeswell parachute club, security of Clubhouse and premises, flying logs completed and that everyone is accounted for at day’s end.
A yellow card pilot may fly a private glider provided that he/she is briefed for the flight by an instructor. A yellow card pilot may not launch unless there is an instructor on the ground.
2. If any flying is to involve Club gliders, training or the winch, the day will be considered to be a normal Club flying day and must be treated as such. There must always be an instructor on the ground, or easily contactable in the air. If all instructors are in the air, a nominated responsible person will look after ground activities for the instructor (something akin to the DLM).
3. If such a flying day is planned I, or either of my deputies (Simon Leeson or Ian Mitchell), must be informed and authority obtained, by personal phone call or e-mail. Don’t just assume that we have read the plans for the day on the DSGC Google Group.”

Hire of club gliders

The committee have revisited the protocol for hire of club gliders by members for club or private expeditions, and have determined how this will be managed in future. The explanatory document follows. The aim is to charge a fair sum to reflect the capital cost and running expenses for the glider whilst balancing this against maintaining availability for the wider club membership who have supported the purchase and continue to contribute towards the ongoing costs.

Club management structure

Mike Sloggett ably assisted by Jonathan Stoneman are continuing work on the Club management and organisation structure, more of which will appear shortly. It has proved to be a considerable task but one which we hope will ensure future continuity and full coverage of all the diverse responsibilities and tasks essential to the smooth running of the club.

Website

Work continues by several club members on the update of the club website, which is proving to be technically challenging and very time consuming and we await with bated breath the new version. Preview of where it is now is very impressive and once again we are fortunate to have this expertise within the club.

Tug and aerotow rope retractor winch

The tug has been through the CoA and a subsequent problem with the suspension has been repaired. The opportunity was taken to renew the suspension bungee cords and shock absorbers. Thanks as always to Ian M for his work on this and to Pete W and Nick H for their labours.

This from the CFI:

As a safety feature the Pawnee has been fitted with an aerotow rope retractor winch, the only visible change is a different fitting above the tail-wheel. Operationally there are significant differences to past procedures, so please read this carefully.



New aerotow rope attachment on the Pawnee (tail-wheel is turned sideways)

The new fitting has two options, one is using the retractor winch, the black funnel and red lever on the left, and the other a conventional aerotow hook on the right (although different from the one previously fitted to the Pawnee). They cannot both be used without swapping the release cable from one lever to the other. This is the tug pilot's responsibility.

The red lever should not be operated, as this operates the guillotine to cut the rope.

At the launch point, the Pawnee will taxi to the front of the aerotow line, after an OK signal from the tug pilot the launch crew should pull the rings from within the funnel and take them to the glider. Do not pull out more rope than is needed, pulling excess rope from the reel may result in knotting of the tow rope and subsequent inability to retract the rope.

Attach the rope to the glider as normal, when requested. On 'take up slack' the Pawnee will move forward slowly paying out more rope, when the full length of rope is deployed the glider will start to move forward. Only then should the 'all out' signal be given, do not preempt the glider moving, thus ensuring that the stop on the rope is not subject to excessive loading."

Improvements to club premises

Whilst I would like to see more progress on improvements and preventive maintenance our declared intention is to rebuild the club's financial reserves so action on this has to be postponed, I hope only temporarily.

Future plans for the airfield and premises

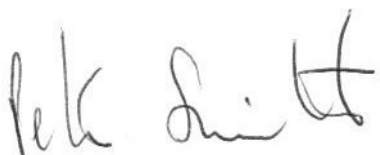
I believe that we should have a clearer idea of how we might see the club and premises evolve and develop in the future. The present buildings serve the club well and the work undertaken recently has gone some way towards protecting and extending the life of the old hangar and facilities that it provides. The clubhouse is in the twilight of the lifespan the original manufacturers envisaged and whilst at present replacement is unaffordable, I believe we should have an aspiration and intention of how we would react were we put in a position of having to contemplate replacement.

I have also been asked about the possibility of undercover storage for private gliders. This could be a way of adding another facility without drawing on club funds, and could evolve into an income stream in the future. That needs to be considered carefully so as not to impact or impinge upon our prime asset and activity. Little niceties like planning permission on a hilltop site in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty also have to be borne in mind.

The committee have agreed that this work should proceed and I will keep you fully informed. In the meantime, I will be interested to hear from any owners who may be interested in covered storage for rigged gliders.

And finally

I sincerely hope that the weather settles into kinder and more benevolent conditions and we all enjoy a long summer of soaring flights

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Peter Smith".

11th April 2011



Date 6/4/11

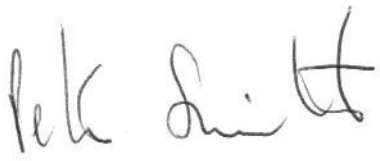
Expeditions using DSGC Aircraft

The Committee is keen to promote and encourage expeditions to other BGA Clubs to increase member experience and enjoyment of the sport. In so doing it is mindful of its responsibilities to safeguard the club's assets, finances, and the enjoyment of all its members.

The Committee has agreed the following requirements which will apply from 7th April 2011.

- 1. No club glider may be taken from the club premises to be flown elsewhere without advance approval for the expedition as set out below.**
2. There will be two types of expedition
 - a. Club Expedition
 - b. Private Expedition
3. Before advertising or promoting an expedition an Organiser who will take full responsibility for the expedition, the clubs assets to be transported, and the payment of fees and charges, will seek the written permission of the CFI (or in his/her absence or unavailability the deputy CFI) providing clarity on the type of expedition together with details of all P1 and P2 pilots who may fly in the glider during the expedition. The CFI will determine whether the glider and organiser are appropriate for the planned expedition and define any restrictions on the expedition or individual members which will be included in the written permission.
4. The CFI (or in his absence, or should he/she not be available, the deputy CFI) will then refer the application to the Club Chair (or in their absence or unavailability the Vice-Chair) who, if in agreement having regard to club flying commitments, operations, and the need to ensure that all the membership have the opportunity to benefit equally from club gliders, will seek approval from two committee members. Upon receipt of written approval from both committee members the Chair/Vice Chair will advise the organiser accordingly.
5. A Private Expedition will be charged at £45 per day for single seat gliders or £70 per day for 2 seat gliders for every day or part day from the time that the glider is derigged until it is back at North Hill rigged and available for flying, other than travelling on days when DSGC has no planned flying (including courses).

6. A Club Expedition will be charged on the basis of actual time flown per aircraft. The Organiser of a Club Expedition will agree with the CFI when the gliders shall be de-rigged and rigged before and after the Expedition.
7. The Organiser will take responsibility for arranging the rigging and derigging. An unauthorised delay in returning or rigging gliders will incur the normal daily hire charge to the Organiser.
8. Organisers will be responsible for maintaining a Flying Log for each aircraft and immediately upon completion of the expedition supplying a copy of same to the Chair and CFI.
9. Organisers will be responsible for inspecting gliders and trailers before embarking on an expedition and on its return and report any defects or damage.
10. Organisers of both Club and Private Expeditions will be billed on their personal flying accounts for all costs and charges for the Expedition.
11. The organiser's flying account must be in credit before the commencement of the hire.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and 'S'.

6th April 2011