

## **REDHILL AERODROME CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Redhill Aerodrome Consultative Committee held on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 10.00am via Zoom.

### **PRESENT:**

Terry Pollard (Chairman)  
Catherine Baart (Surrey County Council)  
Richard Blain (Aerospace Resources Ltd)  
Wayne Clark (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council – deputy)  
Leigh Curtis (KSS Air Ambulance)  
Jonathon Essex (Reigate & Banstead Borough Council - deputy)  
Chris Farr (Godstone Parish Council)  
Pat Glenn (Bletchingley Parish Council)  
Chris Hoskins (Nutfield Conservation Society)  
Rigel Mowatt (Nutfield Parish Council)  
Paul Murray (KRAG)  
Vince Sharp (Secretary)  
Nick Stagg (Chairman, Redhill Aerodrome Ventures Limited)  
Nikki Taplin (Cubair)  
James Tester (Redhill Aviation)  
Philip Wright (Aerodrome Manager)

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Michael Blacker (Reigate & Banstead Borough Council)  
Jim Blackmore (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council)  
David Burke (Chief Executive, Redhill Aerodrome)  
Paul Cole (National Police Air Service)

### **1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022**

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

### **2. UPDATE ON BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AT THE AERODROME**

Nick Stagg (NS) reflected upon the difficulties of the last two years. He confirmed that the adverse economic impact of Arena Aviation's departure had been partly eased by the arrival of new tenants. However, significant challenges remained in terms of having to implement new safety standards required by the Civil Aviation Authority amidst infrastructure constraints and soaring operating costs (which were also having to be borne by tenants). Despite these pressures, he considered that the business was evolving into an efficient, well-run entity, with over 350 people now working on the site across a range of activities. He hoped it could continue to grow and become profitable.

Controlled access to the site had been tightened to ensure tenants were able to park and maintain their privacy, with fewer spaces for casual visitors. To help illustrate the need for this, NS referred to previous incidents of holiday makers abandoning their cars on the site en-route to Gatwick airport.

NS explained why the Aerodrome was taking back control of Hanger 9 which was currently used (in part) for the Pilots' Hub café (item 3 below also refers). The current lease would be terminated via the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 break clause, notice of which had been given to Richard Blain (lessee) on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The objective was to reconfigure and refurbish the premises, to be run by a new provider and realign its operation to the catering needs of the business park. In response to a question from the Chair, he acknowledged that a petition had been launched to 'save the Pilot's Hub' but reiterated that the venue would continue to host a café, albeit with a re-focused primary objective of serving users of the site, with a secondary function to serve members of the public. It was too early to speculate about likely opening hours.

Regarding parking facilities, NS confirmed that planning permission had been granted approximately 18 months ago for another car park at the northern end of the site. However, the original objective for this was to provide for Arena Aviation and the location was no longer appropriate for current needs. Therefore, the planning permission had not been implemented. NS also explained that the capacity to provide additional parking spaces close to the main buildings was limited by a lack of available land.

The issue of the Pilots' Hub prompted Jonathan Essex (JE) to enquire whether an aerodrome tenants' association existed. Phillip Wright responded that an aerodrome users' committee represented 'airside operations' but there was no equivalent forum for 'landside tenants'. He suggested that such arrangements could be reviewed as the aerodrome expanded, although administrative requirements would have to be proportionate to available resources.

In response to a question from JE about sustainable transport policies, NS confirmed that users of the site were encouraged to minimise unnecessary car journeys and to car share when possible. While the use of electric cars was also advocated, the aerodrome lacked the required resources to implement more substantive measures.

Paul Murray asked NS to clarify RAVL's relationship with Thakeham Homes. NS stated that, at the present time, RAVL's primary focus was to manage the site as per its current use and seek to make it sustainable. However, consideration of other options could not be ruled out in the longer term if viable alternatives emerged.

### **3. ITEM REQUESTED BY RICHARD BLAIN - HANGER 9 / THE PILOTS' HUB**

Richard Blain conveyed several grievances regarding the non-renewal of his lease and the new plans for the Pilot's Hub (3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph of item 2 refers) including the fact that he wasn't given the opportunity to be involved in the new concept. In doing so, he spoke about the petition referred to in item 2 above and the support from various quarters to retain the Pilot's Hub in its present form. Nick Stagg defended the management's decision to make alternative arrangements for the use of Hanger 9 on commercial grounds and considered it inappropriate to enter into a debate about a landlord / tenant dispute. The Chair concluded that he had allowed sufficient time for both sides to express their views, but that such matters were not the main purpose of the committee and ruled that the matter be not further debated.

#### 4. FLIGHT MONITORING

Phillip Wright presented flight monitoring data for the period April to October 2022. He referred to the re-designation of runways (i.e. grass runways now 07L/25R and 07R/25L and the unlicensed runway now 06/24) and explained that movements on 06/24 were not reported until November. It was agreed that, for greater transparency, column headings in future reports would clearly distinguish 'grass' from 'hard' runways. It was also suggested that monitoring reports be accompanied by a diagram of the aerodrome to show the alignment of the respective runways.

#### 5. QUESTIONS FROM SALFORDS & SIDLOW PARISH COUNCIL

Three sets of questions had been submitted. These were presented by Wayne Clark, beginning with those dated 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022 as follows:

- (i) *The nuisance which has suddenly happened over the last few weeks is continuing and these aircraft are flying over us at the height of a tall tree. This is dangerous and unacceptable - main culprit has been a yellow helicopter but today a dark grey one flew over and also a light aircraft plane this afternoon wobbling quite dramatically over our back gardens. (Dated 16.09.22)*
- (ii) *The helicopters are actually flying over the houses as well as the gardens on the left hand side of New House Lane. This is the most populated area of the lane and therefore this is highly dangerous especially at the height of the flights, as if there was an aircraft failure there could be a serious accident. I understood that this sort of low flying is illegal over properties. The route of these helicopters has recently altered, as in the past they have flown to the side of residential lanes in this area? Residents would like to know what has suddenly changed or if this is outside the current regulations? (Dated 17.09.22)*

Phillip Wright (PW) emphasised the need for such complaints to include precise timings. Otherwise, it was impossible to expose flying breaches promptly and for issues to be raised with operators and pilots. He commented that the reflective markers on 75 Acre Field seemed to be working but acknowledged that re-educating pilots about flight paths would help.

The third set of questions (dated 26.09.22) were:

*Will the aerodrome consider using the new care home roof as a navigation aid using the two prominent white structures?*

*Has the aerodrome made any progress about visiting the school to gain an understanding on how overflying noise potentially damages learning in the classroom by its irregular and often unexpected intrusion into the classroom and to see what could be done about this?*

*Is the aerodrome proposing to phase out aviation fuels that have a lead additive?*

PW confirmed he would investigate the use of markers on the care home roof and James Tester offered to arrange for their effectiveness to be tested by pilots.

PW had e-mailed Salfords Primary School offering to visit next spring / summer when the grass runways (with which it aligned) would be back in use.

Nick Stagg advised that the provision of lead free (or lower lead) aviation fuel relied upon aircraft engines becoming compatible, including via legislation which the Civil Aviation Authority could influence. At present, aircraft operators could only use fuel types which were licensed for their planes. Phillip Wright stated that the onus for change rested with engine manufacturers.

## **7. QUESTION FROM PAUL MURRAY (Krag)**

Paul Murray presented the following question:

*“How does the Aerodrome management, the operators and the local community representatives feel the Section 106 agreement [key extract below \*] is operating as we come into the winter months?”*

*\*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 go's 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.*

Philip Wright spoke about the challenges associated with constraints of the 'rolling seven-day average'. However, he confirmed that the aerodrome was not coming close to breaching the cap yet and he had been speaking to operators about the scope for sharing aircraft movements. At the moment, the implementation of the S106 was still a work in progress.

Nick Stagg considered that two years of data was needed to evidence any potential representations to Reigate & Banstead BC for amending the S106 (e.g. to change the statistical basis of the cap to a rolling average over a longer period). Richard Blain challenged this view by presenting his own analysis which sought to demonstrate that the current cap was statistically flawed and subject to inadvertent breaches. He argued the case for a 90-day average which would smooth out the 'peaks & troughs'. James Tester advised that, while Redhill Aviation had no intention of withdrawing from the aerodrome, it had transferred some of its activities to Shoreham in view of the winter restrictions of the S106.

Richard Blain hoped to continue his association with the aerodrome, while Paul Murray considered that that the Committee would benefit from more involvement from aviation operators. Arising from this, Jonathan Essex requested that the Committee's constitution be circulated to all members.

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023**

This was scheduled for Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April at 10.00am (further information to be advised – item 9 (ii) below refers)

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **(i) Potential for solar roof panels on aerodrome buildings**

This matter was raised by Catherine Baart. Nick Stagg advised that, while this was plausible, it could be cost prohibitive due to the age of some of the buildings and the possible need for structural reinforcements. Nevertheless, the management team would keep this option under review for consideration when / if a roof needed replacing. He also identified the scenario of converting the whole site to a solar array, including the potential to generate hydrogen to supply Gatwick Airport. However, he considered that such an initiative would only become commercially viable when hydrogen technology had progressed to a sufficient level, which could take another decade to achieve. Nick Stagg also acknowledged that any development proposals would need to take account of the Green Belt where applicable.

### **(ii) Means of conducting future meetings (Zoom or 'in person')**

This matter was raised by Chris Hoskins who argued in favour of reverting to 'in person' RACC meetings. This was supported by Paul Murray.

Nick Stagg cautioned that the prospect of Covid outbreaks still posed a significant threat to the operational capacity of the aerodrome and reflected that most businesses now conducted meetings remotely. Nevertheless, while he did not want the aerodrome to host future RACCs, he confirmed his willingness to attend, if possible, at other venues. James Tester also warned that 'in person' meetings may not be as well attended.

Jonathan Essex requested that a schedule of future RACC meeting dates be prepared, including that for the 2023 public meeting which, he hoped, wouldn't fall in the school holidays.

Arising from the discussion, the Chairman asked Vince Sharp to review options for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 11.34 a.m.