

Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee

Tuesday 29th June 2021

2.30 Wings Bar

Present:

Jamie Freeman	Chairman
Brian Bristow	Vice Chairman + PC of Smarden Parish Council
Keith Perkins	Aero Legends
Martin Round	Maidstone Borough Council
David Parker	Headcorn Parachute Club/Skydive Headcorn
Chris Yates	Headcorn Special Events/pilot
Ken Mulholland	Ashford Borough Council
Lester Gosbee	Frittenden Parish Council
James Thomas	Chair Headcorn Parish Council
Linda Thorogood	Vice Chair Headcorn Parish Council
Terry Hodges	Insurance/Pilot
Gerald Hodges	Thurston Helicopters
Peter Sizer	Skydive Headcorn
Dave Evans	Safety Officer/Pilot
Sue Line	Secretary

1st Note from Secretary:

Taken from Google by HACC Secretary for information only.

An Asset of Community Value is defined as: A building or other land is an asset of community value if its main use has recently been or is presently used to further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community and could do so in the future.

2nd Note from Secretary:

Martin Round had to leave the meeting early so his contribution was dealt with as early as possible in the meeting. The usual Agenda was therefore slightly changed

1 Apologies for Absence

John Perry Maidstone Borough Council
James Tuke Thurston Helicopters
Richard Pickin The Wing Walk Company

2 Minutes of the previous meeting:

Minutes from the previous meeting were read, agreed and signed.
To be posted on the Headcorn Aerodrome website.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

4 Asset of Community Value

Martin Round requested to address the meeting. He had only a short time available and requested to be able to speak to the meeting at this point. He advised that he was proposing to make an application for a Community Asset on the aerodrome, and his advice was that this should take place as soon as possible. It would involve taking a modest inventory by the owners of the key elements of any assets. The grounds would be that the aerodrome was a cultural asset to the community, and once this was granted, it would be looked upon favorably by the Lottery Fund. Importantly it would protect the aerodrome in that nobody could come in and apply for planning permission to build houses on it as the Planning Committee would be aware of the position. If the aerodrome ever came on to the market the first people who would have a right to bid for it would be those responsible for the Community Asset application and his intention/aim would be that the most suitable group would be the Parish Council or a representation of HACC, or one could engage Smarden Parish Council and Frittenden Parish Council.

He assured the Committee that no funds would be required from the owners of the aerodrome and that no administration was required from them. Terry Hodges asked what the aerodrome had to do. Martin Round explained that once the application was in place if ever the aerodrome came on to the market or if anybody made an application to develop the site since it would have to be put before the Planning Department of Maidstone Borough Council. They would be aware of the fact that it was registered as a community asset and that they would not take a planning application decision on the site whilst it is designated as such. He also reminded the Committee that people can put in planning applications although they do not own all or even part of the land. Ken Mulholland said that he previously had experience of Assets of Community Value and felt that it was a really important thing to do. Martin Round agreed and said he would be glad to liaise with Ken Mulholland on this project.

Martin Round said he would of course liaise with Jamie Freeman in more detail. Keith Perkins felt that mainly people put such applications in on brown field sites. It was agreed that mainly housing estates were applied for in these circumstances and could be stopped, but that commercial/business estates may possibly be approved.

Jamie Freeman said that for the past two generations the purpose of the site was for farming and aviation purposes. Martin Round went on to explain a little more about an Asset of Community Value: A local community could get together to save

something in their community which they felt might be lost, for example a church, or a pub, something supporting social interaction. The object of the Community Asset would be something valued within the community, for heritage or cultural interest.

Jamie Freeman asked if the landowners were required to give their permission but no permission from the landowners was required.

Ken Mulholland felt that, bearing in mind the number of complaints from one particular resident, it would add to the argument about becoming a community asset because that would give the aerodrome an extra layer of protection similar to a neighbourhood plan.

Jamie Freeman said that the aerodrome was for aviation enthusiasts on a farm and he felt that had to be continued and cemented so that it was not possible to end up with a Council who subsequently changed their views.

Keith Perkins asked Martin Round whether landowners could object and Martin Round's response was that they could not object about the application for a Community Asset. It would be down to the Parish Council (or possibly Maidstone Borough Council) to determine. Jamie Freeman said we are all keen to protect what we have, going forward. Martin Round said that there would be lots of discussions to be held. Once a decision was made the Community Asset would only take a matter of weeks to be fully cemented. There was to be a full Council meeting in July which he will attend. Jamie Freeman indicated that he would have to look at exactly what would be involved. However, he pointed out that when he addressed the Council it would normally be simply to update them on what the aerodrome had been doing over the past few months and give guidance about the future.

2 Complaints

Martin Round then went on to discuss complaints and indicated that the usual complainant from Waterman Quarter had made a number of regulatory enquiries with Maidstone Borough Council in connection with the business of the aerodrome. Chris Yates asked if it was possible to issue a restraining order against this person but Martin Round indicated the Maidstone Borough Council were not going to follow that line. Jamie Freeman said that her complaints created a good deal of pressure on the Air Ground and Staff at the aerodrome.

There had been a further complaint from the same household and additionally there was a complaint from a lady who had moved into Bletchenden during lockdown. Keith Perkins had kindly written to her and given flight details. They were not flying over her house but there had been some interaction with Sky Demon maps which were not quite accurate. However he confirmed that the flight path does go past her house. It was felt that often complainants said they were being overflown when in fact the flight paths were not overhead but at an angle. Lester Gosbee said that he had one specific complainant in the Frittenden area but his research with other

parishioners did not support this person's complaints, therefore he felt that those complaints were not grounded. ATC had taken a phone call from a resident who complained about noisy aircraft in general but not that they were flying over his house in any way, just noisy. There had also been a complaint about a biplane making steep turns. A complaint about a Dakota and a subsequent runway change due to weather/wind resulted in a further telephone call to say 'Thank you'.

Chris Yates reminded the Committee that Headcorn Aerodrome is not the only aerodrome to fly Spitfires and that there are 6 at Biggin Hill in operation. Chris Yates also said he had a technician taking noise ratings locally and would produce a report next week, which would be sent to Jamie Freeman initially. Martin Round indicated that this could be issued to local Parish Councils and that MBC would appreciate a copy when available. Brian Bristow asked how far out readings would be taken and it was confirmed that positioning would be similar to the 2 Public Enquiries, which it was believed were Hadmans Place, Bletchenden and Lashenden.

Jamie Freeman, Brian Bristow and Lyn Selby, had been to visit the complaining parishioner at Waterman Quarter. She had demanded membership/attendance at the Consultative Committee. However, it was felt that elected Parish Councillors were representing the views of parishioners. Jamie Freeman and the Committee generally felt that the Consultative Committee should be run as it always had been. Evidently there were over 20,000 hits on the MBC website referencing Battle of Britain but the only communication that had been received was the resident in Waterman Quarter who was clearly showing some objection.

Martin Round then left the Committee Meeting.

4 **Events:**

Chris Yates reported on the Battle of Britain Air Show. He said that the Polish Defence Attache, and the American Defence Attache had attended and were very impressed. They both enjoyed the actual site as well as the flying, and noted the Café with the photographs of the American airmen. Their visit was effectively hosted by a local Squadron Leader from the RAF. They were looking forward to next year's show and there was talk of possible attendance by F-35 Lightning(s)

Jamie Freeman confirmed that the aerodrome would be holding the Armed Forces Day this weekend (Saturday 3rd July). There would be no more flying events this year (2021).

The other ground events were 14/15th August – Fire Engine Show. Organized by Chris Yates of Headcorn Special Events with additional input from James Wigley who was the service provider for fire fighting on the airfield. The aerodrome would be able to be at Level 2 Fire Cover.

Combined Ops 7th and 8th August – again organized by Chris Yates of Headcorn Special Events Ltd and the Invicta Military Preservation Society. It was confirmed that this would be a ground event with no flying input. This meant that the businesses on the aerodrome would continue with their own routines as they saw fit.

There would be no Model Flying Show during 2021, but this would be in the programme for 2022.

Hobbs Parker were still trying to organize a Farm Equipment Sale in September.

James Thomas said that the Parish Clerk had received a comment from a parishioner who had come to the Battle of Britain airshow, who was disabled, and was unhappy with the arrangements made for the disabled. This was a comment, not a complaint. An email may be sent.

Chris Yates said that they had hired both additional toilets and showers and spread them out more, so what has become the 'traditional' layout had changed. He and Keith Perkins would be meeting to discuss the site layout to see if it could be improved. They were always ready to listen to the views of those attending and this does help improve things. Keith Perkins said it can be difficult to judge things as much depends on what tickets they have bought, where they park, and obviously everybody wants to be close to the action. And many people claiming to be disabled. There were 2 or 3 acres for disabled parking, and wheelchairs could be organized if sufficient notice was given. However, Aero Legends had received some good supportive correspondence from people who had attended, despite the issues with the weather. The Red Arrows had circled the aerodrome in split formation with a view to ascertaining if it was at all possible to undertake their flying programme. Their support team had also arrived but displaying had not proved to be a possibility and they were cancelled. A good many people did decide to leave at the same time at that point and this meant that the carpark did take a while to clear. Brian Bristow felt that closing Shenley Road was a good idea

Chris Yates said that in the last set of Minutes there was a comment about Valerie Freeman working with the Big Cat Sanctuary. He raised this point as he was actively promoting working with them. They had set up accommodation at the Sanctuary and the aerodrome was working on cross promoting Spitfire flights by Aero Legends, with quality accommodation at Cat Sanctuary.

Jamie Freeman wished to express his personal thanks and thanks on behalf of Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee to Lyn Selby for her valued work on the Committee. This represented more than 30 years service both with himself and his father, Christopher Freeman, and Lyn Selby had finally decided to step down.

Next meeting. October Tuesday 12th October 2.30 Wings
Meeting finished at 3.30

HACC_Minutes29thJune2021.