

REDHILL AERODROME CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Redhill Aerodrome Consultative Committee Members, held on the 29th April 2024 at 11.30am, hosted via Teams

PRESENT VIA TEAMS:

David Burke (Chief Executive, Redhill Aerodrome)
Graeme Lafferty (Director of Operations and Safety, Redhill Aerodrome)
Jonathan Essex (Reigate & Banstead Borough Council)
Nick Stagg (Acting Chairman RACC; Chairman Redhill Aerodrome Ventures Limited)
Nikki Taplin (Cubair)
James Tester (Redhill Aviation)
Emi Verzani (Bletchingley Parish Council)
Philip Wright (Senior Air Traffic Controller, Redhill Aerodrome)
Mark Wooller (Outwood Parish Council)
Rigel Mowatt (Nutfield Parish Council)
Paul Murray (KRAG)
Richard Fowler (Tandridge District Council)
Patrick McIntosh (Outwood Parish Council)
Gareth Owen (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council)
Wayne Clark (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council)
Leigh Curtis (Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance)
Michael Blacker (Reigate & Banstead Borough Council)
Louise Barrett (Secretary; Redhill Aerodrome)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Catherine Baart (Surrey County Council)

1. INTRODUCTION

Nick Stagg (NS) opened the meeting by welcoming attendees. NS introduced the RAL management team, being David Burke (DB) Chief Executive, Philip Wright (PW) Aerodrome Manager/SATCO, Graeme Lafferty (GL) Director of Safety. NS also introduced Louise Barrett (LB) Secretary.

NS was interrupted, several times, by Wayne Clark (WC), who stated that the meeting could not take place, because it was (in his view) unconstitutional, WC stated that NS could not act as Chairman of the meeting, as he had not been appointed by the Committee.

NS stated that was acting as an interim Chairman, so that a committee meeting could take place, and that it was not his intention to remain as Chairman any longer than necessary. NS stated that he would like to identify a new permanent Chair as soon as possible, he stated his preference that a woman should be appointed to that role and that the next Chair would need the skills to reform the Consultative Committee Constitution, it being largely unchanged for ten years.

WC referred to an individual who he wanted appointed as Chairman of the Committee, NS said this would not be considered, at this meeting, but that the individual could apply for the post, along with any other candidates.

NS proposed that a sub-committee be initiated to oversee the search for the new permanent Chair, with the position being advertised. The sub-committee would comprise

of himself, the aerodrome CEO, and NS requested the participation of Catherine Baart and Jonathan Essex, to progress that objective. NS invited responses from both councillors to his request.

DB stated that he had prepared a report for the meeting, which he could either present, or bring the meeting to an end, as he had many other matters to attend to. He suggested that the meeting could proceed, not as a formal committee meeting, but as a discussion and, hence, no minutes would be produced.

2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

DB commented that during his five years as CEO, he had instigated and implemented many changes necessary to improve the business and that he had been greatly helped in those endeavours by the team of hard working professionals here today. DB said he knew the tenant community recognised and appreciated the management team's commitment. DB remarked that the management team and the tenants are the people who take all the risks; we and they make the aerodrome what it is.

DB referred to the impact of taxation on the business, and on all small businesses based at the aerodrome. This month the company must start paying the increased national insurance contributions, costing many thousands of pounds a year; money, that he had wanted to invest in other parts of our business.

DB referred to his comments, at previous meetings, about the astronomical increase in Business Rates, which our business, and our tenants, have had to endure. DB referred to the aerodrome estate paying around £700k in business rates, per annum, whilst getting nothing back in return.

DB referred to the aircraft movement statistics, detailed in Philip Wright's reports, issued in participants. DB explained that these are important revenue indicators for the aviation business. DB said it was self-evident that aircraft movements, last year, were below the aircraft movements achieved in 2023 and materially lower than those recorded in 2022. DB remarked that having experienced two years of under-performance, during which operating costs have increased, the aviation business really needs a much better year in 2025.

DB referred to the reasons for this reduced aviation activity. The burden of personal and corporate taxation was a factor. Also, DB referred to the impact of climate change on aviation activities; the number of flying days lost, when there is no prevailing VFR environment, is clearly on the increase. The aerodrome does not earn much revenue if aircraft cannot fly.

DB also referred to the reduced number of qualified flying instructors, being a key factor, in reducing movements. This is a "post pandemic" issue which has curtailed the flying schools' activities and that this is not going to be fixed in the short term.

DB remarked that when talking to young people, he always tries to promote the appeal of aviation, as a career. DB reported that this year, the aerodrome has recruited a trainee ATCO, a young woman, who is currently undergoing the full time, college training course, which the aerodrome is funding. Without our sponsorship she probably would not have found a way into the profession.

DB reported that the aerodrome restaurant is fully operational and proving to be very popular with the aerodrome tenants, and the public. DB said that members of the public have expressed their gratitude, to him and the management team; they appreciate the opportunity they have been given to enjoy a meal and watch the aircraft.

3. SATCO REPORT

Philip Wright (PW) reported that the flight monitoring data for the period from October 2024 to March 2025 had been circulated with the agenda.

PW referred to the fact that no noise complaints had been received during that period.

PW said that last year, the aerodrome had not been as busy as we would have hoped. He said the aircraft movement statistics were clear on that issue. PW said that more aircraft movement activity had been recorded, for Q1 of this year, mainly due to the recent period of settled dry weather.

PW referred to the Section 106 agreement data, which is published monthly on the aerodrome website. WC asked where the last six days of October's figures are included. Any movements during the last 7 days of October are included in the first 7 day rolling average for November.

4. SAFETY MANAGEMENT

DB introduced Graeme Lafferty (GL) to the meeting and stated that he had worked at the aerodrome for eight years and had, prior to that, served in the British Army for twenty two years.

GL reported that as Director of Operations and Safety, he oversees the safe, compliant functioning of all aerodrome operations, both airside and landside, in compliance with strict regulatory standards. GL reported that his role also includes ensuring the tenant community and aerodrome users can operate securely, without disruption.

GL reported that this year, the aerodrome has recorded nine safety incidents involving airside and landside operations, along with three serious runway incursions by members of the public, one of which forced a temporary airfield closure. In response, to these events, the aerodrome has strengthened the perimeter with additional fencing and barriers and is actively planning further security enhancements.

GL reported that the aerodrome has undergone several safety audits by external and regulatory bodies, in recent months, and has been found to be operating safely and effectively.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Paul Murray (PM) asked about the replacement of Tandridge District Council, acting as Secretary to the Committee. NS said that since Vince Sharp retired as Secretary and left a void that Alex Berry stepped in and filled until a permanent Secretary could take over. Louise Barrett (LB) is the current Secretary. The new chairperson, once elected, would decide on who should act as Secretary.

The meeting closed at 12:21 pm