

Wolverhampton Halfpenny Green Airport
Airport User Group Meeting
Wednesday 6th April, 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Alastair Mackinnon	AM	Wolverhampton Airport
David Morgan	DM	Private Owners
Bob Kirk	RK	Wolverhampton Flight Training
Tim Brannon	TB	Air Midwest
Andy Clarke	AC	The Flying School
Tony Rowlands	AR	Wolverhampton Airport
David Howell	DH	Private Owners
Peter Marsh	PM	Austin Aviation
Alan Austin	AA	Austin Aviation

1. Apologies for Absence

Dave English (PDG)

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 13th January 2016 were accepted without modification.

3. Matters Arising

AM reported that a light switch had been added to the Fuel Bay kiosk.

AM reported that the missing green reflectors on runway 34/16 had been replaced but RK felt they were still insufficient as they gave too little warning of the approaching end of the runway. AM and RK will meet before the start of the next night flying season to agree what additional reflectors would help.

AM said he could not see the problem with the steps at the fuel bay as he thought they were easy enough to move given that they had wheels on them. Others disagreed and suggested a small lightweight set of steps would be more appropriate for the more diminutive pilots. It was pointed out that some users had difficulty repositioning the steps between wings half way through fuelling, resulting in the pump timing out. Some felt that small steps would be sufficient as there was no need to look in the tanks but AM noted that some users did require to see inside the tank during filling if trying to fill to a particular point. It was clear that no single set of steps would satisfy everyone.

4. New Owners

AM gave an update on the new owners and their plans for the airport. He distributed a statement from the owners outlining what was intended. He noted that this statement was inevitably lacking in detail at present as no decisions have been taken

regarding exactly what development could be expected. Instead, MCR are working towards an Airport Master Plan for the site. This is in line with the wishes of the local planning authority. This plan may include a number of options and will be available for general consultation, so airport users will get an opportunity to give their views. All the options are expected to be aimed at a sustainable future for the site as a GA airport.

AM said that he will keep the Group advised of developments.

MCR's statement is attached to the end of these minutes.

5. WASIRs

AM reported that five WASIRs had been raised since the last meeting.

The first related to someone slipping on ice between the hangars.

The second related to visitors to Flightpath walking across the fuel bay.

The third concerned the use of a closed runway. AM reminded everyone that closed runways were not to be used other than in an emergency. He felt that genuine emergency take-offs were uncommon.

The fourth WASIR was a report of a member of the fire crew getting a foreign object in their eye when driving the truck with the windows open.

The final WASIR concerned a member of the public who was looking for their helicopter pleasure flight walking across the fuel bay and knocking on the window of a helicopter which was sitting with rotors turning. AM said that he had contacted the helicopter pleasure flying company and agreed changes to the wording on their briefing notes so that passengers should not attempt to enter this area. RK suggested that the company concerned should also pay for additional signs in the car park.

A long discussion ensued about the second and fifth WASIRs above and the long standing issue of members of the public using the adjacent gate. This gate had had a lock fitted to it many years ago but the then tenant of the flying school opposite had claimed a right of way through the gate and threatened legal action against the airport if the gate was locked. Although the school concerned had probably been correct in their view at the time, no right of way now existed and the option of locking this gate was available again. In view of the inconvenience of issuing cards for this gate and the fact that some access to Flightpath would be required, RK suggested a simple numerical keypad could be fitted and it was agreed that this would be effective at keeping unknown members of the public out of the area. AM will investigate the options with the aim of keeping this gate locked in the future.

6. AIRPROXs

AM distributed a copy of the report of the AIRPROX which had been mentioned at the last meeting. It was noted that the Airprox Board had determined that there had not been a risk of collision and AR pointed out that on each occasion the Cessna had reported that he could see the C42.

DM noted that the same set of reports had included a report of his AIRPROX with a drone over Cannock Chase; this had been classed as having a high risk of collision.

7. Security

No security reports had been raised since the last meeting.

8. Complaints

Three complaints had been received since the last meeting, One was from the complainant to the west of the airport pointing out that the airport was getting busier again. The frequent southerly wind had reduced the number of times this house would have been overflowed in the past few months which had made it difficult to analyse the problem but AM was looking into this. In the meantime, AM asked that people keep their circuit size as small as reasonable.

The second complaint was from west of Bridgnorth and concerned low flying by a microlight. It had not been possible to trace the aircraft and it was not thought to be Halfpenny Green based.

The third complaint concerned a military aircraft in the circuit.

9. AFPEX

AM reported that due to the prohibitively high charges being imposed by NATS for use of AFPEX by small ATS units the decision had been taken to withdraw the AFPEX terminal.

This meant that pilots of flights inbound from overseas should notify ATS by telephone of their expected arrival time so that alerting action could be taken in the event the flight is overdue. Incoming flight plans were not being received.

Outgoing pilots should activate their flight plan with London Information.

The situation will be kept under review; there are a number of other aerodromes in the same position. Alternative solutions are being sought and it was still hoped that NATS, who to date had made no effort to engage with or understand their customers, would review their pricing.

10. Runway Conditions

AM updated the Group on the position regarding the condition of the runways. Runway 34/16 remains in good condition. Runway 04/22 is out of use due to a relatively small area which is considered particularly hazardous. This will be repaired at the same time as other works are being carried out.

Runway 10/28, which has been deteriorating for many years, has taken a turn for the worse over the winter. While there are no individual areas preventing the use of the runway, there are a large number of poor areas requiring attention. AM did not think that the CAA would consider the runway condition acceptable at present and the

runway was therefore NOTAMed as 'not available to aircraft requiring a licensed aerodrome'. AM was reviewing the most cost effective means of bringing this runway back to the required standard and in the meantime those not wishing to use it should use 34/16.

11. Instrument Approaches

It is intended to start the Airspace Change Proposal process shortly.

12. Birmingham Airport Local Airspace Infringement Team

AM noted that Birmingham had put on a good presentation at the Safety Evening on the village hall. However, there had been no further meetings of the LAIT.

AA expressed interest in arranging visits to Birmingham ATC; AM will see what size of visit they can accept to see if visits should be organised by individual schools or by the airport.

13. Suggestion: Centralised Briefing Room

A resident aircraft operator had suggested that a dedicated briefing room for pilots would be a useful facility. AM agreed and said that the whole area of facilities for pilots was under review. He had long felt that a central hub was needed and he hoped that there would be positive news before too long.

14. Helicopters by 3E

AM had met with AA to discuss the positioning of helicopters relative to the eastern end of hangar three and felt that agreement had been reached which should significantly reduce the amount of downwash experienced within the hangar. It appeared that this had not been adequately communicated to a pilot who had raised the issue and he will correct this.

15. Pedestrians by 3E

This had been covered in the WASIR discussion.

16. Out of Hours Procedures

With the summer flying season approaching, AM asked the Group to review the published procedures to see whether there were any issues with them. The Group agreed that the existing procedures were satisfactory but felt that the requirement for overhead joins was unnecessary. AM will review the way this is worded and subject to a satisfactory Risk Assessment will adjust this requirement.

AM emphasised the importance of the procedures being followed and will ensure that they are widely distributed.

17. Any Other Business

TB asked whether other events would be organised following cancellation of the Wings and Wheels events; he felt that these events were popular and good for community relations. He offered to assist where he could.

AM agreed and confirmed that the cancellation of these specific events did not mean that other events would not be organised in the future. The decision to cancel the Wings and Wheels events had also had nothing to do with the recent purchase of the airport by MCR as had been suggested on social media.

AM said that he was already looking at what could be organised next year and he hoped to see some smaller events organised this year.

AA noted that he had seen a van going round the side of the exit barrier out of hours. This appeared to be a security issue and AM will look into this. TB noted that the Wombourne Police were taking an active interest in the site which was to be encouraged.

18. Dates of Future Meetings

7 th July 2016	5pm
5 th October 2016	5pm
11 th January 2017	4.30pm
5 th April 2017	5pm

MCR Property WA Introduction

MCR Property Group purchased Wolverhampton Airport in November 2015 excited by the opportunities it presents. Conscious of the long history and importance to the local community of the Airport a process of deep review is being undertaken. Whilst not fully complete an understanding of the Airport is developing which identifies key issues to be dealt with, the current offering provided and the tenants/customers using the Airport. All of this will shape the future plans. More detail on some of the key areas follows.

Management

A company structure has been established that satisfies the requirements of the Civil Aviation Authority and preserves the ability of the Airport to operate efficiently and safely. Confirmation that the current Operations Manager Alastair Mackinnon wishes to remain in position is greatly welcomed. His vast technical aviation experience coupled with an intimate knowledge of Wolverhampton Airport mean he can continue to deliver sound oversight of all Airport operations. To this end he is working closely with MCR to move forward on various projects.

Civil Aviation Authority

MCR Property has met with the CAA to discuss the change in ownership at the Airport. The meeting was positive with some very useful guidance offered both in terms of safety compliance and general aviation issues. The CAA is keen to see Halfpenny Green prosper and pointed to various other Airports nationally as examples of how this could be achieved.

Technology

The main ongoing project is the publication of Instrument Approach Procedures. Work is planned to continue on this which will require further consultation with the CAA and various local bodies.

Following the vacation of the Police helicopter there may be an opportunity to house some of the specialist weather equipment on the tower. This would vastly improve our current abilities in this regard.

Property

The Airport is made up of a huge variety of buildings occupied by a range of tenants. To aid management a process of formalising and standardising occupation arrangements will be undertaken where possible. This will ease complicated management and also bring certainty to tenants. Alongside this it's intended to rationalise the occupation of buildings by the Airport across the site.

The Future

Clearly the Airport has many strengths and advantages over its competitors; three runways, the systems installed or planned and strong support from pilots, businesses and the local community. It's important the future of the Airport is secured by building on these aspects and improving wherever possible as has been shown by other Airports across the country. To create a viable Airport for the future MCR Property will need to create a long term vision for Halfpenny Green. Combining the deep commercial experience of MCR Property with the team at Halfpenny Green it's hoped this can be achieved.

This vision is not yet fully formed however it's intended to progress this over the coming months now an understanding of the business has been developed. Input from all parties would be welcomed and encouraged as we take this forward. Key contact details have been provided to assist in this communication.

Key Contacts

Oliver Reeves – Asset Manager

0161 224 7111

oliver.reeves@mcrproperty.com

Alastair Mackinnon – Ops Manager

01384 220013

aam@wolverhamptonairport.co.uk