

PORTSMOUTH NAVAL GLIDING CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

23 Jul 2019 1900 – 2100 At SPECFABS Ltd, Heritage Business Park, Fareham

Attendees

David Durston (Chairman / Director)
Tony World (General Manager / Director)
Jamie Steel
Dave Howell (Air Engineering)
Richard Croker

Apologies

Siggi Ingason (Admin / Communications)
Alan Clark (Chief Flying Instructor)
Simon Gutman (Ground Equipment and vehicles)
Chris McCulloch (Treasurer / Director)

Richard Croker was welcomed, vice Neil Shaw.

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman stated that this meeting was the first since 10 April 2018. PNGC's future looked bright, as it faced a number of changes during the forthcoming months; roles, tasks and commitments would need to be reviewed and evolved to match in due course. This meeting was designed to inform Committee Members of the progress since closing operations at Daedalus 31 May 2018 and to outline the way ahead agreed by the Board of Directors and a meeting as recently as just the previous day to agree plans with external command authorities.

AIM

PNGC now plans to establish at Middle Wallop (EGVP near Andover for the bulk of its flying, which would be predominantly at weekends, supplemented for any weekday courses from Upavon and retaining storage and workshop facilities at HMS SULTAN, Gosport. An exhaustive list of potential sites had been revisited and reviewed since last year with the final list of three (Thorney Island, Barton Stacey and Middle Wallop) being subject also to senior staff officer scrutiny in the RN. The meeting was to focus on setting up an early trial agreed with the local EGVP command 14/15 Sep 19 (fallback 21/22 Sep 19), as a basis for getting all regulatory instruments and practical issues in place by 31 Mar 20. A review of current membership was essential to this aim, recognising that some existing members may decide to leave and others might welcome the merits of such a large and comprehensive facility under PNGC's own local operating charge, well located for PNGC's purposes.

BACKGROUND / CONTINUITY

The period since last meeting had been used intensely, with the flowing (non-exhaustive) list of key decision-making events:

30 Apr 18 BOTD
23 May 18 FBC
31 May 18 Tx LOS
24 Sep 18 DIO / Barton Stacey
6 Nov 18 FAAOA
23 Nov RNGSA – sought new 2-star
11 Feb 19 – met new 2-star in London. Reengaged TI (failed) / BS (pending).
27 Jun 19 7AAC as operators of EGVP and meeting with JHC agreement in principle.
15 Jul 19 BOTD approves way forward (MW) and roles to continue.
22 Jul 19 Meeting Cmdt MW; 7AAC; DIO. RN 2-star informed.

For clarity, including in relation to recent contrary, publicised information emerging from Fareham Borough Council, the facts behind the closure of PNGC operations at Daedalus were of unaffordability and unsustainability, due to an absolute bar on winch launching. The heavy restrictions in volume of flying being allowed there by airfield operators RCAM precluded a viable business model and that any return under such conditions was absolutely not possible for the foreseeable future. All dialogue to ease the restrictions had failed time and time again over 3 years.

Absolute clarity was needed by all that PNGC's position as a Service entity with clear focus on four tasks that were served by the Articles of Association.

- Adventure Training
- Sport and Recreation
- Community Engagement
- Recruitment

Only on this basis was the future at EGVP possible and within that a firm expectation that PNGC would be a cohesive, self-managed and disciple entity allowed to make use of Middle Wallop out of normal operating hours. Some powered flying was possible during the week (eg tugs, continuation flying, TMG etc) provided that all pilots operating from there had had a face-to-face operations briefing by flight ops staff and were familiar with the Defence Aerodrome Manual (DAM). A DAM chapter is needed for all PNGC operations to ensure a secure and Safe Operating Environment on the ground and in the air.

NEXT FOCUS

A draft Operations Order was needed from PNGC, to be submitted to 7 Regt AAC prior to the trial 14/15 Sep 18. This was all to be coordinated by Jamie Steel (subj to Sultan Command approval), who is authorised to act on behalf of PNGC in liaising with local Army command staff; principally at Warrant Officer and SO3 levels. As Project Manager for the trial, he would act as a single point of contact with the Army for coherence and efficiency.

The manner and style of this project, and of the descriptions was of trial and exploring feasibility ahead of a Go/No Go decision once results had been assessed by both the Army and PNGC Board. External communication and any associated media cover was to be jointly agreed by Middle Wallop staff and PNGC Directors.

Ground footprint aspects would be developed in parallel, including in relation to access, parking, hangars, storage, and buildings, but without commitment until the local command was content of a viable and safe working arrangement with sound governance and regulatory instructions.

OPERATIONS AND PLANS

Plans were being based on (no particular order)

- Self-control of site access to the airfield but not the barracks area, which would be separate.
- Total ATZ sanitisation by PNGC A/G radio operator and Duty Holder structure.
- The possibility of temporary hangars pending long-term establishment.
- The possibility of restoring a suitable MOD building for PNGC exclusive use including social.
- Specific separation by space and time between PNGC and other airfield users.
- Clearly defined separation of air and ground traffic, including pedestrian.
- As much self-help as practicable and self-funding.
- Site legislative compliance (H&S; fuel, pollution risks, security, etc)

NEAR TERM TASKS

Draft instruction for trials weekend (JS)

Start grant process for temp hangars (TW)

Review vehicles serviceability and fitness for purpose (SG)

Review membership (TW / SI / AC), individual practical contributions, qualifications and rosters

Review aircraft fleet assignment for the practical trial (DH/JS)

Website and email update for members (DD/SI)

DONM

Tuesday 3 Sep 2019. 1900 hrs. Spec Fabs, Heritage Business Park

(Apologies DD, DH)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Durston', with a large, stylized initial 'D'.

Captain David H Durston MA MBA FCMI FRAeS Royal Navy
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Att:
Financial Statement