

PNGC Members Safety Meeting – 8th February 2023 – Summary Notes

The meeting commenced at 19:30, with around 20 members in attendance via Zoom. It was NOT recorded, as we wanted Members to feel confident to speak freely, but notes follow.

Intro from NS:

- Gave brief overview of role:
 - Reports to Chairman, covers all aspects of club-activity.
 - Close liaison with CFI & DCFI on flying matters, and two-way with BGA.
- Stressed the vital importance of a safe incident-free operation to assure our future
- Aim of the meeting, to:
 - listen to Members
 - answer any safety-related questions
 - explain current initiatives
 - improve our safety profile
 - gather input that we may wish to take into a forthcoming BGA Regional Safety Review (mid-April)
 - ensure we are considering all matters pertinent to a flying restart, now scheduled for Saturday 18th February, after our winter maintenance break.
- Believed our launchpoint supervision was very good, even when compared to bigger clubs, but asked if any other comment or concerns.... None identified.
- Showed a reminder of 'Events' logged/seen in 2022 – as shared in December... however a pretty safe year overall.
- Highlighted list of all major Comms items cascaded last year, asked if frequency/content OK. (No strong feeling one way or the other, so must be OK!).

NS – Spoke on the recent “Flying Suitability” policy, the background, and nature of it. Said that we also needed to better ensure that parachutes worn by smaller/younger people (above the limit stated), are adjusted properly and fully, even if that takes longer. (PMN: Obviously applies to all wearing!).

TW – advised we were evaluating the benefits and affordability of procuring a smaller/junior parachute, which – as suggested in the new policy – may allow us to reconsider the new minimum height & weight numerics. NS is discussing with Softie.

JC - asked if the new policy is applicable to non-PNGC gliders. NS said the policy states it applies to all gliders launched under PNGC auspices.

JC - asked about a T21.... TW felt that given the side-by-side nature, and non-use of parachutes anyway, that this was an exception. MW stressed the importance in any case of the harness in such (or any aircraft) having an appropriate and safe adjustment range.

A general discussion and open-forum then followed....

(if I've missed any significant points, please message me).

TW - Commented on people's ability to safely drive tractors/4x4 and suggested a sign-off sheet for individual vehicles. Need to look at training, qualifications & supervision.

Someone observed they too often saw people driving the tractor or vehicle with little rearward observation, which is essential. JM suggested incorporating best practice and 'authorisations' into the training record card. NN said he'd seen one that covers from Nene Valley GC. NS said he'd seen a suggested Ground-Handling one cascaded by the BGA. This needs consideration & follow-up. Action agreed: TW suggested we ask Simon G/Dave H/Chris H to own this. NS will precis to them.

NC - Raised a very pertinent safety point about tow-rope trip-hazard risks for the person walking a glider out close to the nose, with potentially bad consequences. He outlined a better practice. NS agreed and asked Nigel to email him repeating the detail, for cascade and input into the training point mentioned above.

NN - Will send an email reminder about daily vehicle sign-offs.

SI - Suggested briefing people to lay the winch-cable out in a straight line once hooked on (the part with various linkages, so they don't separate). Seen as good practice.

JU - Spoke about potential loose articles in the cockpit, and a reminder to all to check/avoid.

TW - highlighted the tragic accident at Parham, where the elevator wasn't connected properly, and it seems an independent check was not done. Strongly emphasised the need for nobody to distract someone doing the DI. JU - asked about an independent control rigging check. TW concurred.... this is essential, whether for club or private gliders. NS - said there was a spate of Daily Inspection flaws last Autumn, and emphasised the ABCD checks that NN has written and spoken about.

NS - re-iterated the comms and discussions last year on the BGAs safe winch-launching policy, and the fact that we have to avoid a wing drop. If you can't keep the wings level, release! The pilot, the (experienced) wing-runner, the launch-point controller and the winch-driver all play key parts in this. Focus is needed after we restart.

TW - Reminded everyone how important it was to tape the holes up once the glider is parked overnight, even when covers are fitted.

NS - Asked what we could ask for - or feedback about - at a BGA regional/national level.... Nothing specific was proposed, but the background to the new Flying Suitability policy, and the discussions around safe parachute usage and sizes will be raised, as it was surprising there appeared to be no specific BGA stance on either of these matters.

NN - Reminded everyone of the importance of getting current again at the restart, and also suggested people doing the RT course before going cross-country. TW said there'd be a restart programme where Instructors would quickly get current again, then other members to follow.

TW - confirmed he planned to schedule an Instructors meeting next week, prior to the flying restart.

?? - (I forget) suggested anyone who may potentially land-out have the 'What3Words' app preinstalled on their smartphones, and use to advise precise location. Good idea... this is ideal for the purpose. CH suggested everyone keep a charged phone with them while flying.

NN - reminded everyone to get a new chart (advise Nigel S on PNGC Whatsapp group) and to study & learn, even if not planning x/c yet.

RLB - had sent apologies and asked we remind people to tow out cables in a straight line, not to drive over them, and to ensure that any/all FOD that ensues after a cable failure, is found.

TW - discussed the importance of laying off the drift as if the strop breaks it can travel quite some distance, as we saw on one day last Autumn.

CH - Talked about painting anti-slip paint on the tractor pedals, and picked up the action as a result!

JU - Raised the issue of security at the site. A package of measures are under consideration, in terms of the access gate, cameras and warning signs, the first steps will happen this weekend.

NS – emphasised his willingness to discuss any safety-related observations or concerns at any time, and/or for members to use the Incident Reporting form on the website, <https://pngc.co.uk/incident-reporting/> (Members section/Safety Matters/Incident Reporting) or see the QR code in the 'log cabin'. This can be anonymous if preferred.

Finally, we discussed how beneficial the meeting was; and whether/when to repeat. The consensus was it was very useful, and MW suggested to ideally run six-monthly, at the start and end of the main season. This was agreed.

Thanks to all who attended. The meeting concluded at 20:37.

ps. Thanks to Lee (and Barney) for taking notes during the meeting.

Regards,

Neil Shaw
PNGC Club Safety Officer
9th Feb 2023