

REDHILL AERODROME CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Redhill Aerodrome Consultative Committee Members, held on the 18th November 2025 at 11.00am, hybrid meeting

PARTICIPANTS:

Catherine Baart (Acting Chair; Earlswood & Reigate South)
Graeme Lafferty (CEO Redhill Aerodrome)
Nick Stagg (Chairman Redhill Aerodrome Ventures Limited)
Jonathan Essex (Reigate & Banstead Borough Council)
Michael Blacker (Reigate & Banstead Borough Council)
Emi Verzani (Bletchingley Parish Council) via Teams
Duncan Mallison (Nutfield Parish Council)
Paul Murray (KRAG)
Richard Fowler (Tandridge District Council)
Patrick McIntosh (Outwood Parish Council)
Jim Blackmore (Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council) via Teams
Chris Hoskins (Nutfield Conservation Society)
Louise Barrett (Secretary Redhill Aerodrome)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Nikki Taplin (Cubair)
Paul Cole (NPAS)
Natalie Bramhall (Surrey County Council)

2. INTRODUCTION – Catherine Baart, Acting Chair: County Councillor, Earlswood & Reigate South

Catherine Baart (CB) thanked Redhill Aerodrome for hosting the meeting and those that were in attendance. Everyone introduced themselves around the table and on Teams.

Operational Matters:

3. INTRODUCTION – Nick Stagg, Chairman Redhill Aerodrome Ventures Ltd

The flying levels overall have been down compared to last summer. This puts pressure on the finances of the business. The damage that was caused by the storm last year resulted in Hangar 9's roof being fully replaced at a significant cost, around £200k. Those works have been completed, and the scaffolding is being taken down. Two large tenants have served Notice and are leaving making things financially quite tough as we now have large spaces to let.

4. UPDATE – Graeme Lafferty, CEO Redhill Aerodrome

During my short tenure as the CEO, I have taken new fresh eyes to look at the business and will be trying to implement changes necessary to improve our business and improve the revenue streams across the estate. There have been wholesale changes in the past months within the management, organisational and administrative side of the business with not only me stepping into the CEO role but also a full new finance team, a new safety manager, several new fire fighters and those who have been here sometime stepping up into supervisor roles. There is also 2 new Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCO) which are currently under training and will hopefully soon be helping to reduce the burden on our ATC team. Through all these changes we have managed to not only maintain a high level of satisfaction across our tenant community and attract new tenants and businesses but also maintain a high degree of safety and compliance within the eyes of the CAA which has been recently proven with impressive reports from external audits and inspections.

However, despite our best efforts, there are events and circumstances, which arise, which this team cannot control; external pressures, outside interference and rising costs.

For a start there's the ever-rising Business Rates, which our business, and our tenants, have had to endure. This is a particular problem for aerodromes; for instance, we must pay rates on runways we are often unable to use because of poor weather. The aerodrome estate pays around £700k in business rates, a year, and we get absolutely nothing back for it.

Also, along with most other small employers we must pay the increased national insurance contributions; this is a tax on jobs. With an increase from 13.8% to 15% this will cost our business many thousands of pounds a year; a lot of money, that I had wanted to invest in other parts of our business.

This added to price rises in gas and electricity means that the business must pass more cost onto our tenants or face an uncertain future.

Moving into the new year with one of our major tenants already given notice due to the lack of transport links to the site we are all preparing for a challenging year.

That being said as a business we still continue to invest in the future of the site and our operations with £30k spend on trying to improve the drainage around the site to keep the brook flowing and the runways open although receiving very little help from local agencies or the environment agency, a further 250k was spend across the site on replacing 1 hanger roof and repairing and future proofing others. On the airside we continue to improve facilities and in the next month or so will commence with repainting and remarking all the taxiways which should future proof them for a minimum of 5 years, and early next year we will be looking at introducing a new CAA approved FID (Flight Information Display) into the tower which will aid in flight ops.

5. FLIGHT MONITORING REPORT

Phil Wright (PW) our senior Air Traffic Controller and Aerodrome Manager is not here today as he splits his time between the tower and office. We have two new ATCO's who need to be supervised by him, and he is the only available staff to do this.

The aircraft movements are once again down. Even with the fact we have had 2 bad years with movements in 2023 (35k) and 2024 (32k), so far this year we're down at 27k. Whilst we can try and absorb the impact of these falling figures we cannot continue operating the aviation business, at a substantial loss, year after year. The airfield has very high fixed costs, which we cannot reduce; we cannot become a part time aerodrome. There are various reasons for this worrying trend of lower movements. Climate change obviously has a serious effect on our aviation activities. The number of days lost, due to bad weather, when there is no prevailing VFR environment, is clearly on the increase. We don't earn much revenue if aircraft cannot fly. A shortage of flying instructors has also been a key factor, in reducing movements. This is a "post pandemic" issue and it has curtailed our flying schools' activities, who are a major part of our turnover. This is not going to be fixed quickly. Also, our private pilots are flying a lot less as everyone feels the pinch of the cost-of-living crisis.

Michael Blacker (MB) – are we able to do anything about attracting more flying?

Graeme Lafferty (GL) - We have turned Hangar 9 into a managed hangar and introduced a new pricing index, the more they fly the less they pay. Fly-ins introduced e.g. if your aircraft was of a certain age you could land free on a certain weekend etc. Redhill Aerodrome want to attract more business to the estate, not just us as the aerodrome itself, but for our cafe, for our flight schools and for the local community.

Patrick McIntosh (PM) – Has air traffic gone elsewhere?

GL - A lot of aerodromes are really suffering. I attend regular meetings with the aerodrome association and everyone's feeling the pinch on the hours that flight instructors don't have to do now. We are in contact with private pilots and do offer them deals to encourage them back, but we can't bring our prices down because we've got to make money.

Jonathan Essex (JE) – Do you know the split between grass runways and hardstanding runways flights?

GL – Redhill Aerodrome website holds all the data marked as runway.

Jim Blackmore (JB) - Looking at the presentation from Phil, the October figures for 2025 do say there were movements on the 0624 but they're not shown.

GL – the unlicensed runway was used and these figures are not included. GL will speak with PW and clarify.

Unlicensed runway means it's a taxi way therefore it's not a runway, if it was it would be licensed. Can only be used for maximum of 85 movements across a 7 day rolling average between November and March.

JE – asked if the Flight monitoring report can be summarised in a simpler way.

GL – will ask PW to do this.

6. UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT OF PERMANENT CHAIR

CB – Advertisement for the Chair position has been on 4 websites Redhill Aerodromes, VASE, Jobs 24 and Linked in. One applicant has applied and a holding response has been sent to them. The deadline has been extended to 30th November to try and get a range of applicants to choose from. JE suggested we all share the Chairperson role again.

7. AGREE NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING FOR THE WEBSITE

Chris Hoskins (CH) - Incorrect year was on the previous meeting notes.

CH name had been missed off the attendees list.

The word 'Minutes' are mentioned in the Meeting notes. JE – suggested renaming them 'Notes of Informal Meeting'.

Secretary - will make changes and repost on the website.

8. NEXT MEETING DATE

Provisional dates suggested of 22nd April 2026 and 18th November 2026 subject to the new Chair being able to attend. NS suggested the next meeting will be a hybrid meeting at the Aerodrome. Different locations can be used.

Public Meeting / AGM to be arranged around June time. Outwood Parish Council have offered to host but we are waiting for the new Chair before we set a date. Redhill Aerodrome would like to discuss with the new Chair when they are appointed.

Planning to have hybrid meetings going forward. Can be at different locations.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 1) PM1 – any update on development proposals for the site?
NS – Nothing has changed. Government needs to develop new houses, they are taking land out of the green belt. There is not a discussion at the moment of taking Redhill Aerodrome out of the green belt. We are always looking at ways to increase value of this site as its not economic. The air side activities are loss making. It's the commercial rental activities that make the site break even, make a small profit or make less of a loss. Options could be to close the aerodrome and build 10,000 houses at one extreme. The other extreme is expanding the aerodrome activities by building a hard runway. All of this is subject to planning. Or expanding the commercial activity footprint. No one wants to build houses because of the tax on them. RAVL still have a contractual agreement with Thakeham Homes.
- 2) PM1 - How does the government's announcement to expand Gatwick Airport affect the aerodrome?
GL – The plans won't affect us.
NS – There is a consultation out with the CAA regarding general airspace over the South East as it is full. We have made representations about what airspace we need.
- 3) MB – Has anything been done about the drainage?
GL –£30,000 has been spent on building new drainage systems. Increasing capacity of soakaways. It floods across the estate and hits the brook at the back, and this then floods as it takes all the water in one hit. We could open the brook up with a digger and clear the debris and sediment which would slow the movement of water, but we need permission from the Environment Agency to do this. The Environment Agency are meant to come and clear the brook every few years, but this hasn't been done since I have worked here.
CB – will liaise with the flood team at the County Council.
- 4) PM - Why do you think the Aerodrome are losing tenants?
GL – The last two tenants to leave are both NHS. I was told it is because of the lack of public services, and all staff had to drive here. They have taken a place in Redhill in order that staff and patient services can gain easier access.
- 5) Paul Murray (PM1) – What is the split between aviation and non-aviation businesses with regards to turnover?
GL - 80% of the businesses across the estate are non-aviation.
- 6) Correspondence for Parish Councils to be sent to the Parish Clerks in future.
- 7) Papers to be sent out 7 working days before the meeting.
- 8) JB and NS agreed to meet locally to build relations.
- 9) Redhill Aerodrome's new website will be going live at the beginning of January – all to have a look.

The meeting closed at 12:10 pm