

RETURN TO FLYING AT BGGC MAY 16th 2020

Dear Members

In line with the attached revised guidance from Department for Transport issued today recreational flying is now permitted from English airfields subject to strict compliance with social distancing requirements.

The Committee held a video meeting this evening to discuss the revised guidance and its health and safety implications. It has been decided that:

- Restricted flying operations may commence tomorrow Saturday 16th May.
- To protect our members health, only full flying members of BGGC may fly from Nympsfield until further notice.
- Initially flying will be restricted to private gliders flown solo or with members of the same household.
- The club glider fleet is not yet insured for flight risks and must not be flown.
- Launching will be by aerotow only. The club Pawnee is insured for flight risks.
- Government social distancing guidelines must be strictly adhered to.
- The clubhouse must only be entered for essential purposes, e.g. to use the toilets and collect keys or equipment.
- The kitchen, internal briefing room and PC must not be used.
- Hands should be regularly washed or sanitised in accordance with government advice.
- Last person to use facilities at the end of the day should clean before they leave – wash taps, toilet flush levers, door handles, locks etc.
- Everybody should wash hands on arriving at the club, when they leave and when they arrive home.
- Wingtips etc must be washed clean with soapy water as soon as possible after being handled.
- All members have a responsibility to ensure that all other members respect and follow these procedures and social distancing guidelines.
- Members should comply with BGA guidance summarised below.
- Pilots intending to fly cross country should consider the implications set out below.

BGA Guidance issued 13th May 2020

COVID19 considerations

- **Glider pilots are for the most part in good health (being fit for flight puts a person at the higher than average of the medical fitness spectrum) but some are in a risk category (eg. age, associated medical issues, etc.)**
- **The infection status of members at the same site will certainly not be identical, or even known. In addition, remember that someone with the disease can infect others even before showing any signs of the disease.**
- **The importance of avoiding a further wave of infections**

COVID19 mitigation

The following BGA guidance is based on current Government and HSE published information, and all must be alert to any forthcoming new or revised information which may call for new or different actions. Items 1 – 3 are the personal responsibility of each member. Members should also keep each other honest in the interest of the wider community. At BGGC, every member must take responsibility to ensure that all other members comply with the requirements. If you spot somebody not following guidelines, please challenge them directly in the first instance and if you can't

resolve it speak to a Club Officer or submit a Health and Safety report to Rob Thompson our Health and Safety Officer by email at: robtdiscus722@gmail.com

If another member challenges you, please listen carefully to what they have to say. We are all new at this and it is sure to take a little time for everybody to become accustomed to the new procedures.

1. Members who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable (if in doubt, please seek advice from a GP) should not go to the club and should follow the relevant guidance. (This does not refer to those who are merely over 70).
2. Members who are unwell with symptoms of COVID19 should not go to the gliding site. If the member lives in a household where someone else is unwell with symptoms of COVID19, then they must stay at home in line with the current NHS guidance.
3. Any member who develops symptoms of COVID19 (a new, continuous cough and/or a high temperature) should go home and stay at home, following the latest NHS guidance.
4. Members may be feeling anxious about visiting the site whilst at the same time having a sense of duty. Members should feel no obligation to attend or take part.
5. Mitigating actions are necessary to reduce the risk of transmission between members, who must comply with social distancing requirements. In the first instance BGGC mitigating actions will be:
 - Signage reminding members to maintain 2m distance from others.
 - Club gliders must not be used
 - Signage to remind members to frequently wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water or antiseptic hand cleaning gel.
 - Hand washing facilities in the toilets may be used.
 - Doors in the clubhouse including fire doors in the corridor must be wedged open on flying days and must be closed again when the last person leaves after flying. One person at a time in the corridor.
 - Members should bring their own disposable gloves. There will be a supply of disposable gloves in the clubhouse for members who wish to use them.
 - Equipment that is touched regularly must be cleaned before use and at the end of the day, and/or at crew changes.
 - Used PPE and all waste must be double bagged and disposed of after flying.
 - Cleaning frequency will be increased in the clubhouse, however members must also clean taps etc after use.
 - The clubhouse may only be entered for essential reasons – use of toilets and to collect / deposit equipment. The bar, club briefing room, members PC and kitchen are not to be used. To minimise non-essential entry to the clubhouse members should where possible take their personal parachutes and batteries home after flying.
 - At every crew change and the end of the flying day, controls and harnesses of club aircraft and equipment, log boards, pens etc must be cleaned with alcohol wipes and aircraft external surfaces that have been touched washed with soap and water.
 - To remove the risk of transmission in the launch point bus, the bus is not to be used and hand signals or a private hand held radio used for launch signalling to the tug.

- Be aware of the potential for transmission of the virus while rigging and helping others rig. Guard your social distance and if unable to maintain 2 metres face away or work side by side. Consider using a face covering. Wingtips etc are often touched by both owner and helper. Mitigate the risk by using disposable gloves, sterilising or washing with soapy water
- Having finished for the day, clean and sterilise all equipment used. Everybody should wash their hands for 20 seconds before leaving and the last person to leave sterilise door knobs and lock up.
- Regular handwashing is widely considered to be more effective than wearing gloves.
- **Most importantly, everyone must do what they reasonably can to not only avoid becoming infected but also to avoid infecting others.**

Flight Safety

We must be careful to ensure that our enthusiasm to go flying does not encourage us to take short cuts or compromise on flight safety. We are restarting flying operations with aerotow only as this is arguably considerable safer than winch launching for rusty pilots. Be cautious about rigging and beware the dangers of distraction.

It has been a long winter layoff followed by the enforced shutdown of flying. Many members will be out of recency or marginally current. BGGC recency requirements are to be found on page 4 of the Club's Flying and Information Manual to be found here: <https://bggc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/BGGC Flying and Information Manual v3 April 2019.pdf>

Even the most experienced members are required to fly once every 3 months to stay in recency. If you are out of recency you **must** consult with the duty instructor for a refresher briefing before flying. If in any doubt about your currency you should consult with the instructor. The refresher is likely to involve a review of normal and emergency procedures and any particular challenges with the day's conditions. At the instructor's discretion special restrictions may be imposed before that member is permitted unrestricted flying. I regret that in some cases the instructor may decide it is not safe for an individual to fly solo in today's conditions or until after two seater refresher training has been completed. The Committee will fully support the CFI and Instructors' judgements. I realise this will be frustrating for some but in these exceptional circumstances regrettably there will be some who will be unable to return to flying until an easier day or until we can resume two seater training of members.

Being Considerate of our Neighbours:

Please remember that our neighbours have been enjoying 2 months of peace and quiet which is about to be interrupted by our resumption of flying operations. Some neighbours will be suffering considerable financial hardship, illness or loss of a loved one as a result of the pandemic. Please be considerate and do not run engines unnecessarily over local towns and villages. Test turbos briefly by all means, but not low down. In the current circumstances use of a turbo to climb up high before starting a cross country task is completely unacceptable.

Cross Country Flying:

Neither the BGA nor the DfT have banned cross country flying. However pilots considering embarking on a cross country flight should consider if it is wise to do so. Considerations would be:

- Are you sufficiently current to undertake a demanding field landing.
- Imagine the negative publicity for the club and sport if there was an out-landing accident requiring emergency services.
- An outlanding could receive a hostile reception from the landowner who could perceive the uninvited visitor as at risk of bringing coronavirus onto his or her land.

- If you have a turbo have you recently practiced a start under pressure? Is it reliable?
- At present recreational aviation is currently still not allowed in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales. A trip to a turning point in Wales could be breaking the law.
- You must have retrieve arrangements organised before you fly that comply with social distancing requirements. Either a member of the same household or implement other mitigations. Other club members may feel they are unable to retrieve you.

Summary:

This is a long email for which I apologise but the content is important. These arrangements are just a first step to return the club and its members to flying. Given the short notice from the DfT we have not had time to consider all the implications of a full return to flying with both winch and aerotow launching. Restarting by aerotow of members' private gliders is the first step in what we hope will be a gradual return to normal operations. We have almost certainly not thought of every eventuality and scenario. Please be aware, apply common sense and stay alert to keep each other safe and avoid transmission of the virus. Your committee will keep the situation under review with ongoing risks assessments and step by step hope to return the club operation to as near normal as we can. If you are unable to fly in this first stage, please bear with us, we will try to get as many members as possible flying as soon as we safely and reasonably can.

Andy Davis

Chairman.