

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	SCC/14/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Sutherland County

Date: 23 August 2018

Report Title: Dornoch Aerodrome

Report By: Director of Development and Infrastructure

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This is a situation update report for Dornoch Aerodrome. It provides information to Committee about the unique features of the airstrip and the users and other activities in the area. The report identifies a series of measures to improve the operations at the airstrip.
- 1.2 There has been dialogue with the RAF about a potential letter of agreement covering the interaction between the Council (Dornoch Aerodrome) and RAF Tain Range. The Committee is requested to delegate the Director of Development and Infrastructure to negotiate and conclude an agreement with the RAF.
- 1.3 The Committee is requested to approve the Rules for Users (**Appendix 6**) and the Schedule of Fees (**Appendix 7**).

Recommendations

2.
 - 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. note the contents of this report;
 - ii. note the proposed changes to signs at the airstrip, and efforts to be made to promote the boundary walking route(s);
 - iii. delegate the Director of Development and Infrastructure to negotiate on behalf of the Council and conclude an agreement with the RAF
 - iv. approve the Rules for Users (**Appendix 6**); and
 - v. approve the Schedule of Fees (**Appendix 7**).

3. Airfield Features

- 3.1 Dornoch Aerodrome is one of three aerodromes that Highland Council owns or manages. The other two are Broadford (Skye) and Plockton (Wester Ross). The remit for airfields now sits with the Director of Development and Infrastructure, however it should be noted that local staff in Community Services and Business Support continue to support operational aspects of the airfields.
- 3.2 The airfield was operated for a period by the military, and originally covered a much larger area than the current single runway. The runway is situated on common good land. The runway is grass with approaches on bearings 10/28 and dimensions of 775m long x 23m wide. There are runway approach numbers and edge markers formed in concrete. A single wind sock is located on the south side of the runway. An access track to the nearby sewerage works crosses close to threshold 28.
- 3.3 Dornoch Airstrip signs are in place, as well as timber boundary posts around the airfield confirming the status of the airfield and to prohibit access to vehicles. Photographs are shown at **appendix 1**.
- 3.4 The airstrip operates as an Unlicensed Aerodrome and is unmanned. There are no Air Traffic Control/Flight Information Service facilities and no Rescue/Fire Fighting Services available.
- 3.5 The airfield is within EG D703 controlled air space and all pilots are required to contact Tain Range when the Danger Area is active.
- 3.4 A report to the Sutherland County Committee on 23 May 2018 set out the background for a new hangar at Dornoch Aerodrome ([SCC/09/18](#)). The hangar is currently under construction. The income from the 30 year lease will be paid to the Dornoch Common Good.

4. Airfield Activities

- 4.1 Maintenance and Infrastructure
 - 4.1.1 The Royal Dornoch Golf Club (RDGC) has cut the grass on the runway for a number of years. RDGC provided a cutting log to Council officers and it showed that there had typically been 17 cuts per year. Council officers held a meeting with RDGC officials earlier this year and the outcome of the meeting was confirmation that RDGC agreed that they would continue to cut the grass as a grace and favour arrangement (contribution to the community) with revised arrangements in terms of cutting frequency and length of grass. These arrangements have been in place since May 2018 and are proving effective.
 - 4.1.2 An inspection of the airfield infrastructure has revealed that two boundary signs have fallen from their support poles and are in poor condition. Following a series of recent communications raising concern about conflict and safety at the airstrip the opportunity is being taken to review the wording on replacement Dornoch Airstrip boundary signs.
 - 4.1.3 There has been a series of incidents and landings where damage has been caused to the runway surface. These have typically been associated with heavier aircraft. Officers are keen to avoid these occurrences and have been in direct dialogue with the operators.

4.2 General Aviation

- 4.2.1 There is a wide range of general aviation users of the airfield (all non-military aircraft except for commercial passenger and cargo airliners) that include: microlight (up to 560kg); single engine turbo prop PC12 (typically 4,740kg); and helicopters of various sizes. There is a Prior Permission Required (PPR) protocol in place for aircraft landings at Dornoch.
- 4.2.2 There is one aircraft currently based at Dornoch, a second aircraft is expected to join that aircraft, and both of them will be housed in the new hangar. These aircraft would potentially operate all year round, subject to weather, Tain range activity, and runway conditions.
- 4.2.3 Other general aviation users include aircraft based elsewhere in the North of Scotland, who may be members of the local flying clubs. Aircraft based elsewhere in Scotland, other parts of the UK and Europe also use the airstrip. There have been annual Fly-in events, promoted by LAA Highland Strut (flying club), these are typically held over a weekend during the summer.

4.3 Model/Unmanned Aircraft

- 4.3.1 There have been activities at the airstrip by local model flyers. Prior permission is required for these activities. The operator is required to provide evidence of compliance with [CAP 658 Model Aircraft: A Guide to Safe Flying](#). A recent notification for 'Drone' activities by a CAA licensed operator in the vicinity of the airstrip provided relevant details to the RAF, Police, and Highland Council. A copy of the Civil Aviation Authority guidance to Drone Users is copied at **appendix 2**.

4.4 Outdoor Access (Recreation)

- 4.4.1 The car park adjacent to the airstrip is used by people who use the adjoining golf driving range, and by others who take access to the area of dunes beyond. There are paths around the airstrip that allow routes avoiding any crossing of the runway. Crossing of the runway is not promoted. There are four signs erected around the airstrip (See image at **appendix 1**) confirming the status of the airstrip. There is evidence that the recreational activities include people walking alone or in groups (that might include children), people walking their dogs, and also people riding their horses. There are signs and waste bins placed at the car park that promote compliance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. A summary of some of the key points of the Outdoor Access Code are shown at **appendix 3**. It is [Part 2 of the Outdoor Access Code](#) that confirms that access rights do not apply at airfields.
- 4.4.2 It is clearly essential for walkers/equestrians to stay away from the airstrip, in the interests of safety, and not to cross the runway. It is proposed to take a series of actions to ensure that airfield activities and recreational activities operate without conflict. The proposed actions include:
- erect new Dornoch Airstrip Signs emphasising that access to the airstrip (airside) is only for authorised users;
 - highlight the alternative boundary routes suitable for recreational use; and
 - investigate enhancements of recreational routes with the local Access officer and others.
- 4.4.3 It is noted that Walk 2 in the 'Seven Walks in and around Dornoch' publication identifies a circular walk that goes around the airstrip. A copy of the route information is provided at **appendix 3**.

4.4.4 During a visit to the airstrip the author observed a number of vehicles parked on the access track that crosses adjacent to threshold 28 (West). Following discussion with one driver it became clear that the person did not appreciate how the parking of the car might impinge on the landing of aircraft using approach 28. It is proposed to erect new signs discouraging parking on the section of access track between runway edges (a distance of approximately 30 metres).

5. Liaison with the Royal Air Force and General Aviation Report (Border Force)

5.1 RAF Tain

5.1.1 An approach has been received from RAF Tain seeking a 'letter of agreement' relating to the interaction between Highland Council and the RAF in relation to general aviation using Dornoch Aerodrome. The primary purpose of the agreement is to allow the flexible and safe use of EG D703 airspace for general aviation air systems utilising Dornoch Minor Airfield whilst continuing to provide the highest level of protection to Air Systems within Tain Air Weapons Range. A series of occurrence reports and an 'Airprox' report are copied at **appendix 4** for background information.

5.1.2 The proposed agreement relates largely to the arrangement for Prior Permission Required (PPR). The Committee is requested to delegate the Director of Development and Infrastructure to negotiate an agreement with the RAF.

5.2 General Aviation Report

5.2.1 Under the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 an operator or pilot of a general aviation aircraft in some circumstances are required to report their expected journey to UK authorities. Even if pilots and operators are not required to provide notification of a flight it is helpful if they do provide this notification. A copy of the GAR poster is shown at **appendix 5**.

5.2.2 Inbound aircraft from Luxembourg have shared their GAR with the Council. Discussion with Police Scotland staff based at Inverness Airport confirms that the implications of the UK exiting the European Union are yet to be clarified in respect of GAR.

5.2.3 The GAR guidance documents state that if anyone sees anything suspicious they can:

- contact local police, or
- phone 101 and quote 'Project Pegasus', or
- contact Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111

In an emergency always call 999

6. Handling of PPR, Rules for Users, and Fees

6.1 PPR

6.1.1 PPR is in place to ensure pilots of visiting aircraft are fully briefed on the ongoing situation at the airstrip and where necessary use of the airstrip is withheld on the grounds of safety. An example of this arose recently when the prolonged wet winter resulted in very soft condition of the grass runway meaning that heavier aircraft were not given permission because of the risk of potentially dangerous landings and unacceptable damage to the runway.

6.1.2 PPR requests can be submitted by email or by telephone.

Email	Telephone
Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk	01349 886606

6.1.3 Arrangements for Dornoch Aerodrome PPR to be handled by Business Support staff within the Council are at an early stage. The intention is to provide guidance and instruction to staff that have been identified to handle the PPR process. The guidance will allow for unusual and extraordinary requests to be escalated for advice and/or approval.

6.2 Rules for Users

6.2.1 A set of 'Rules for Users' has been prepared. The proposed Rules for Users are shown at **APPENDIX 6**. They emphasise a number of essential criteria: the status of the Unlicensed Aerodrome, the need for aircraft to be insured; highlight the need to consult NOTAMS, AIP supplements and to seek clearance to enter EG D703 air space; confirm PPR; permitted hours of operation; matters relating to grass runway and procedure for aircraft above 2.73 tonne; arrangements for log book; landing and parking fee payments; no camping; and safety related notifications.

6.2.2 The Committee is requested to approve the Rules for Users.

6.3 Fees

6.3.1 The sustainability of Dornoch Aerodrome relies on a number of different factors. In particular it is critical that income from users of the airstrip is collected. There are historic landing cards that have been issued to certain groups of users. These landing cards expire on different dates and therefore the introduction of new arrangements is not straight forward. The aim is to bring all landing cards into a common duration period from April 2019.

6.3.2 The principles behind the proposed new fees are as follows:

- all aerodrome users will pay landing fees (individual landings or through annual landing cards);
- up-front payment for annual landing cards. Duration 12 months (April to March);
- landing cards will not be issued to aircraft over 2730kg;
- landing card categories: Dornoch Airfield; Flying Club; and Individual. Aircraft registration must be provided for a valid landing card;
- individual landings fee based on MTOM;
- Model Aircraft Users will pay per authorised event; and
- parking fee based on (exceeding 3 hours on the ground) per 24 hour period or part thereof.

6.3.3 A copy of the proposed Schedule of Fees is attached at **appendix 7**. The Committee is requested to approve the Schedule of Fees.

7. Implications

7.1 Resource

7.1.1 The Development and Infrastructure Service now manage the three Council airfields. Maximising income and minimising maintenance costs means that the collection of fees from users is essential and in the case of Dornoch the 'grace and favour' contribution of grass cutting by the Royal Dornoch Golf Club goes a long way to ensure a sustainable operation at Dornoch Aerodrome.

7.1.2 The proposed Schedule of Fees takes forward the historic practice of issuing annual landing cards to certain airstrip users. The benefit of this approach is to take in the funds at the beginning of the period and avoids excessive staff input to landing fee reconciliation. Discussion with two of the parties currently holding landing cards confirmed their desire for the continuation of this approach.

7.1.3 The Fee items worth highlighting include: the doubling of the appropriate landing fee where PPR has not been sought; the level of landing fee for the heavier aircraft (over 2730kg) at £126 per landing; the airside events fees for Flying Club Fly-in and Model Aircraft activities.

7.2 Legal

Dornoch Airstrip is an Unlicensed Aerodrome that is unmanned. Pilots make a landing at the airfield on the understanding that there are neither Air Traffic Control or Flight Information Service facilities, nor Rescue or Fire Fighting Services available. The Council does not warrant or guarantee the condition of the airfield surface or its suitability for landing. Pilots are required to adhere to the 'Rules for Users'.

7.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

Dornoch Aerodrome has provided a facility to the general aviation community for a long time. There are visitors to the area who are making overnight stays and contributing to the wider economic well-being of the area. The lease of the new hangar at the airfield will provide funds direct to the Dornoch Common Good Fund.

7.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

There is a minor detrimental impact on the environment from flying activities at the Aerodrome.

7.5 Risk

The risks for continued operations at Dornoch Aerodrome include.

Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Mitigation
RDGC discontinue grass cutting	high	low	Revised cutting regime Strong community support from RDGC
Damage to runway (rutting)	high	Medium at certain times of the year	Heavier aircraft landing procedure. Observations. PPR withheld for certain aircraft
Insurance renewal due 2019	medium	low	Robust PPR arrangements. Introduction of Rules for Users.
Income levels drop	medium	low	Use of email for PPR requests. Use of the annual landing card. Improved promotion via new THC web page.

7.6 Gaelic

Existing signs already include Gaelic.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 7 August 2018



Author: Richard Gerring, Transport Planning Manager

Background Papers: held by the author



The Drone Code

Don't fly near airports or airfields
Remember to stay below 400ft (120m)
Observe your drone at all times-stay 150ft (50m) away from people & property
Never fly near an aircraft
Enjoy responsibly



Please see the CAA website for the latest safety law updates



You have control

Remember, you are responsible for your drone.

Be safe, be legal

www.caa.co.uk/droneaware

CAP 1002 11/15



Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

- **take responsibility for your own actions**
- **respect the interests of other people**
- **care for the environment.**



**KNOW THE CODE
BEFORE YOU GO**
outdooraccess-scotland.com

The main places where access rights do not apply are:

Places like **airfields**, working quarries and construction sites.

Houses and gardens, and non-residential buildings and associated land.

Land in which crops are growing.

Land next to a school and used by the school.

Sports and playing fields when they are in use.

Golf courses, except for crossing a golf course without interfering with a game.

Visitor attractions which charge for entry.

Responsibilities for your own actions include:

Follow any precautions provided for your safety;

Keep a safe distance and take heed of reasonable advice provided by the land manager;

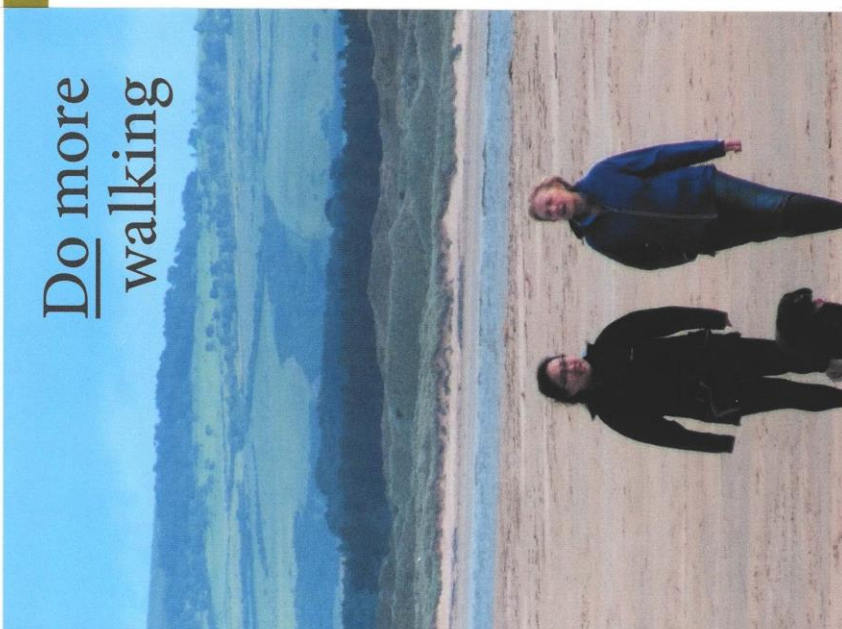
Caring for your own safety by recognising that the outdoors is a working environment and by taking account of natural hazards;

Taking special care if you are responsible for children as a parent, teacher or guide to ensure that they enjoy the outdoors responsibly and safely;

Keep your dog under proper control;

Picking up and removing any faeces if your dog defecates in a public open place.

Do more walking



SEVEN WALKS IN AND AROUND DORNOCH

WALK 2

Dornoch Point

- Distance: 4 miles
- Time: 2.5 hours
- Grade: Flat walking on grass, beach and sand dunes
- Suitable for: Older children and dogs
- Starting point: Cathedral Green
- Description: An excellent coastal walk with good opportunities to spot seabirds and seals. From the Point there are fantastic views westwards up the Dornoch Firth towards the Kyle of Sutherland and the mountains beyond. Care needs to be taken whilst at the Point to ensure you are not cut off by incoming tides (check tide times at the Visitor Centre). Good walking shoes or boots required, as there is some uneven and potentially wet ground. For a shorter walk drive to the Airfield and join the walk at point A.





Occurrence Reports (public domain)

FOURNIER RF5 LIMBACH Climb to cruising level or altitude Tain Range 30/07/2014 201410365 Infringement of the Tain Range (EGD703) by a formation of motor gliders. I was the Air Weapons Range Controller (AWRC) on duty during the infringement. The range was active but contained no aircraft at the time. During my opening up procedure with Inverness ATC in the morning I was informed by the Inverness Assistant that 8 "microlights" had landed at Dornoch Airfield the previous night after the range had closed. Dornoch airfield is situated inside EG D703 Tain Range and permission to enter must be sought from the AWRC before entry when active. The a/c acting on behalf of the formation asked for permission to enter range from Dornoch in order to transit South to Glenrothes. Permission was granted by myself and BS was provided. At this point I looked towards Dornoch and was visual with at least 5 of the formation which were already airborne transiting West and South at approximately 500 to 1000ft. At this point I informed the formation leader that he had entered EG D703 without permission and that I would be filing a report. He apologised immediately and once he vacated the range I asked him to ring me via landline upon landing. The formation leader phoned me several hours later and admitted that he should have contacted me before getting airborne from Dornoch and said that external factors had led him to this mistake. Failure by the formation

leader to comply with the requirement in UK AIP ENR 5-1 for users of Dornoch airfield to make radio contact with Tain during range opening hours prior to entering range airspace (the uncontrolled airfield at Dornoch is situated 3.4nm in direct line of sight from Tain Range Control tower and satisfactory two-way VHF comms exist with aircraft on the ground).

CESSNA 172 LYCOMING 320 FAMILY En-route Danger Area EGD 703 13/05/2014 201406062 Infringement of Danger Area EGD703 (Tain Range) by a C172 squawking 7000 indicating 1000ft. Whilst working as the duty Air Controller I received a phone call from the LARS controller at RAF Lossiemouth asking if I was working traffic squawking 7000 4 miles South of Dornoch Airfield. At the time I wasn't working any traffic and duly made 2 blind transmissions on Tain VHF frequency 122.750 in case the ac had this selected, without success. Shortly after this phone call I received another from the duty Inverness Radar Controller asking the same question. The Inverness controller informed me that this ac had infringed airspace at Lossiemouth and that it had flown through his departure lane. Using Mode 'S' at Inverness the controller identified the aircraft and confirmed that it was approx 4 miles South of Dornoch Airfield indicating 1000ft. I was not unable to raise the ac at any time nor was I able to get visual with it. The ac disappeared off radar and Inverness was unable to give further updates. No bookings had been made for ac although the possibility always remains for 'Bootleg' traffic at any time.

AIRPROX REPORT No 2010121. Date/Time: 31 Aug 2010

The PA28 pilot entered an active Danger Area without permission and flew into conflict with the Tornado GR4s.

https://www.airproxboard.org.uk/uploadedFiles/Content/Standard_content/Airprox_report_files/2010/Airprox%20Report%202010121.pdf



Border Force

Important information for pilots

General Aviation Reporting

There is now a new method of submitting General Aviation Reports (GAR) for pilots and their representatives on their journeys to and from the UK.

Pilots can now submit GARs using an **online system** that is available at **www.aopa.co.uk**. They will be automatically distributed to Border Force and the Police through this system as appropriate.

! Please remember the aircraft commander has a legal responsibility for all persons and goods carried.

For more information go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-aviation-operators-and-pilots-notification-of-flights>

Or email Border Force at:

BorderForceGA@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

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CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS

APPENDIX 6

RULES FOR DORNOCH AIRFIELD USERS

1. Pilots make a landing at one of the Council airfields on the understanding that they are Unlicensed Aerodromes and there are neither Air Traffic Control/Flight Information Service facilities, nor Rescue/Fire Fighting Services available.
2. Aircraft must be covered by insurance in accordance with EC Regulation 785/2004. Evidence of insurance cover must be provided to the Council on request, and any failure to have in place insurance automatically invalidates permission to land.
3. All local regulations should be observed and NOTAMs and AIP Supplements should be consulted prior to every flight. In the case of Dornoch Aerodrome all pilots must contact RAF TAIN to seek clearance to enter EG D703 air space.
4. The Council reserves the right to close the Aerodrome to categories of aircraft, established on a risk based approach.
5. A request to confirm private flight status must be confirmed, in a reasonable period no longer than 4 weeks, upon request by the Council.
6. Pilots are advised that all operations and movements are at their own risk and discretion and they accept full responsibility for their own and others safety for the duration of their visit.
7. A low pass prior to landing is advised.
8. PPR is required for all aircraft that have not been issued a landing card. PPR can be obtained as follows:
Telephone: Monday to Friday 01349 886606.
Email: Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk
9. Permitted hours of operation are between 0800 hours local time (or 30 minutes after sunrise, whichever is later) to 2200 hours (or 30 minutes before sunset, whichever is sooner).
10. Dornoch Aerodrome has a grass runway. The Council does not warrant or guarantee the condition of the airfield surface or its suitability for landing. Grass runways can be very soft after prolonged rainfall especially in winter. Pilots of aircraft above 2.73 tonne must roll to end of the runway before turning back to the park up area.
11. Aircraft may only be taxied on approved runways and taxi ways.
12. Aircraft must be parked so as not to obstruct the taxi ways or apron, light aircraft should be parked in designated areas.
13. A virtual log book will be used by emailing Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk to advise arrival/departure times within 48 hours of the departure date. Aircraft operating with a landing card must provide log book details no later than one week in arrears.
14. Aircraft over 2.73 tonnes will not be issued landing cards, instead will pay a landing fee and a parking fee where appropriate (see schedule of fees).
15. Pilots/Owners must pay the relevant landing and parking fees within 14 days of the landing. The preferred method of payment is debit or credit card. Payment can be made by telephoning 01349 886606 and stating the airfield, date of landing and code 10 41408 000 KC1802
16. No camping is allowed on Council airfields.
17. In order to encourage continuous improvement of safety of our airfields pilots and others can raise matters where a negative impact on the safe operation of the airfields has been observed. These can be reported by submitting an email with the subject 'Confidential Airstrip Safety Report' to Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk

DORNOCH AIRSTRIP LANDING FEES

Prior Permission Required (PPR)/ Compliance with Rules for Users

Item Description	Fee (including VAT)	Note
Landing without PPR	Landing Fee x 2	Higher rate landing fee will be applied where no evidence of PPR Request
Per Landing Aircraft MTOW not exceeding 1000kg	£12	Virtual Log Book populated by email returns from pilots Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk
Per Landing Aircraft MTOW exceeding 1000kg and not exceeding 2730kg	£20.40	
Per Landing Aircraft MTOW exceeding 2.73 Tonnes	£126	
Parking period for Aircraft not exceeding 2730kg (24 hour period or part thereof)	£2.40	Designated area to be used.
Parking period for Aircraft exceeding 2730kg (24 hour period or part thereof)	£12	
ANNUAL LANDING, PARKING and PPR CARDS		
Private Light Aircraft (home airfield) Aircraft MTOW not exceeding 2730kg Tonnes	£145.20	Landing card issued to aircraft. Registration details must be provided. Flight log details to be provided weekly in arrears.
Private Light Aircraft (aircraft based elsewhere) Aircraft MTOW not exceeding 2730kg	£252.00	
Private Light Aircraft (Constituted Flying Club) Aircraft MTOW not exceeding 2730kg	£408	
AIRSIDE EVENTS		
Flying Club Fly-in Event (Airside element only)	£125	Written authorisation required.
Model Flying (authorised user) per day (Compliant with CAP 658 Model Aircraft)	£18	Evidence of public liability insurance to be provided

For payment of the above fees by Credit/Debit Card please telephone **01349 886606**

When phoning confirm the airfield, date of landing, fee value and the following code

10 41408 000 KC1802

Effective from the Date Approved by Committee