



GENERAL AVIATION PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Thursday 15th February 2024 – 10:00 – 12:30

Via Microsoft Teams Conference Call

Representatives from the following Organisations Attended:

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)
British Balloon and Airship Club (BBAC)
British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA)
British Gliding Association (BGA)
British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (BHPA)
British Microlight Aircraft Association (BMAA)
British Rotorcraft Association (BRA)
Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)
Department for Transport (DfT)
Flying Farmers Association
General Aviation Awareness Council (GAAC)
General Aviation Alliance (GAA)
General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo)
Historic Aircraft Association (HAA)
Royal Aeronautical Society – General Aviation Group
British Skydiving
Helicopter Club of Great Britain
PPL/IR Europe
The Royal Institute of Navigation/Air Pilots

1. **Welcome:** Chair welcomed the group to the meeting. He explained the recent organisational changes in the CAA, highlighting that the GA unit has been split from the RPAS team to become a standalone unit.

Section One

2. **Pilot Licensing project:** CAA gave an overview of progress on its Licensing & Training Simplification project. They explained that the phase 2 consultation will open in March, which will give the community an opportunity to pass comment on our policy decisions. CAA encouraged associations to promote the consultation amongst their members' when it is published. Following the consultation, the CAA will begin to prepare its formal recommendations for DfT. They explained that this process would involve further consultation with industry through a de minimis impact assessment and further policy development for Alternative Means of Compliance/ Guidance Material to accompany the amended regulations.

AOPA asked how the CAA knew that changes would meet the threshold for performing a de minimis impact assessment instead of a full impact assessment. CAA explained that their assessment of the changes is that they will have an impact of less than £5 million direct costs or benefits to industry. However, they said this assessment could change once the process is begun. AOPA asked if each paper would get its own impact assessment. CAA confirmed that only one assessment would be performed on the package of recommendations which they are making to DfT.

The BGA pointed out that with an imminent election and a potential change of government, it is possible that plans to change regulation during the spring 2025 statutory instrument slot may not come to fruition. They asked what would happen to the SPL licence conversion deadline if changes to UK Part-SFCL are not made in time. CAA said that they are committed to delivering changes on time and that they are working hard to provide the necessary materials to DfT in good time to ensure changes are made. However, they cautioned that the group must recognise there are factors outside of the CAA's control. They explained that the September 2025 conversion deadline is set out in statute and will stand, with or without the changes being proposed in this project.

The BGA asked if changes to Pilot Medical Declarations are also planned for the same legislative slot in spring 2025. The CAA confirmed that they are. GAA asked when the community would hear of the outcome of the PMD consultation. CAA said that they are finalising their analysis and that a Consultation Response Document would be released soon.

- 3. NATS OpenAir:** NATS gave a briefing on the proposals being made as part of their OpenAir project. The proposals, which are currently out for public consultation, aim to reform the provision of air traffic services in the UK by providing a common data "backbone" for Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) to use. The measures will facilitate the integration of new technologies, such as drones, into Class G airspace.

HCGB suggested that the CAA would need look at the Rules of the Air to fully enable integration of new users, explaining that there is little chance for a helicopter pilot to spot and avoid a drone under normal operational conditions.

The LAA said that the project would encourage ANSPs to enlarge their controlled airspace for the purpose of delivering the scheme. NATS said that they are not proposing new airspace structures, explaining the project is designed to facilitate fair and consistent data sharing to support the integration of new users.

AOPA said that the project would need further regulatory oversight to ensure that increased complexity does not impact safety. NATS explained that these aspects still needed to be explored and said there would be further opportunities to provide feedback during the process of implementation.

BGA said it is not clear how all aircraft operating in UK airspace will receive data, suggesting that the costs of providing it will inevitably fall to users. They explained the potential for increased costs is concerning to a lot of pilots. NATs explained that it does not plan to charge users directly. The BGA responded that ANSPs will look to pass on the cost somewhere and suggested there needed to be more clarity on how the scheme will be funded.

BHPA said that the volunteer staffs of GA organisations were stretched by the need to respond to so many complex consultations. NATS offered to set up further workshops before the consultation ends if this would be helpful to group members.

Section Two

- 4. Department for Transport update:** DfT updated the GAP on a project to develop a native satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS) system to replace the European Geostationary Navigation

Overlay Service (EGNOS) following the UK's withdrawal from the scheme. They provided an update on work to progress GNSS approaches for hospital landing sites.

AOPA asked if funding is likely to be approved by Ministers for the Inmarsat replacement for EGNOS. DfT said that the project remains in the early scoping phases.

DfT updated the group on their airspace work, including efforts to create a single airspace design entity. They also highlighted that the electronic conspicuity rebate scheme closes on the 31st March, with applications being taken up to that date.

DfT also explained their recent environmental policy work, providing updates on their support for transport research, the Jet Zero council and the zero-emissions airport target.

AOPA asked if zero emissions targets for airports would also apply to GA airfields. DfT confirmed that they would.

GAAC asked if any work had been done to identify a strategic network of GA airfields. DfT highlighted the GA handbook for local authorities, which was published last year and suggested local councils could be reminded of the guidance that is available.

BGA asked if the DfT is still working to deliver the Flightpath to the Future strategy. DfT confirmed that they are, but cautioned that changes may be required should a new Government be elected.

- 5. GA Safety Update:** Chair presented the latest GA safety data compiled by the CAA. Chair also updated GAP on the work of the CAA's Loss of Control Working Group, explaining that while no trends could be identified, the CAA will look to improve its data sharing with GA organisations.

GASCo presented a breakdown of GA occurrence reports between November 2021 and December 2023. They highlighted the lack of safety reporting in GA relative to the size of the industry. GASCo also presented a number of safety topics raised by their members.

LAA raised the issue of drone incursions at Manchester Airport and asked whether these were all captured as MORs. The CAA confirmed they are not all captured as MORs but the reports are monitored.

BGA suggested that a safety campaign on loss of control issues should be pursued. Chair agreed.

- 6. CAA Communications:** CAA gave an overview of its recent communications work with the GA community.

- 7. AOB: NIL**

Proposed Date for the next General Aviation Partnership Meetings is

20th June 2024 , 10:00am-12:30pm