

# Shenington Gliding Club, Shenington

16/00982/F

**Ward:** Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton

**District Cllrs:** Cllr Atack  
Cllr Reynolds  
Cllr Webb

**Case Officer:** Michelle Jarvis

**Recommendation:** Approval

**Applicant:** Mr Joseph Gibbs

**Application Description:** Using tarmac and grass runways for winch, aero tow and self-launching of gliders and associated powered aircraft movements. Winches and tow out vehicles to be stored on the airfield and members glider trailers to be kept in designated area. Airfield to be used for agricultural purposes when not in use for gliding.

**Committee Referral:** Major

**Committee Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> August 2016

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## 1. Site Description, Planning History and Proposed Development

### Site description

- 1.1 This application relates to an established airfield outside the village of Shenington. The airfield was formerly known as RAF Edgehill and was constructed in 1941. From then until the end of the war it was a station for military aircraft. After the war, it was briefly used for RAF flying training in the 1950s before reverting to civilian use. Gliding was first carried out in 1984 by Altair Gliding Club but since 1990 the airfield has been operated by Shenington Gliding Club.
- 1.2 The site occupies some 32 hectares and there are a number of land uses on the site. As well as the gliding, there is an area with permission for the long term storage of caravans, a club house building, a go-kart track and also a children's nursery at the entrance to the site. There are also a number of concrete structures dotted around the site which are a remnant of its former RAF use.
- 1.3 The site is not located in a conservation area nor are there any historic assets nearby. There is noted to be both grass snake and barn owl within a 250m buffer (both being protected and notable species) and in addition there is a Public Bridleway (ref 339/11/20) within a 25m buffer. The site is also classed as Grade 2 agricultural land. The westernmost runway on which the gliders are launched is just under 400m to the closest property on the edge of Shenington.

### Planning history

- 1.1.5 Whilst the nursery and the go-kart use all have their own separate permissions, the only planning approvals of direct relevance to the airfield and the Gliding Club are as follows:
  - CHN223/91 – *Using tarmac and grass runways for winch and aerotow glider launching plus associated light aircraft (tug plane and motor glider for advanced training) also storing up to 10 glider trailers by clubhouse. Grass to be used for cattle grazing when not in use for gliding; winch and tow out tractors to be kept on airfield. Operation maybe 7 days a week.*

- 10/00454/F - *Retrospective siting of prefabricated building adjacent to existing clubhouse for use as new office and additional clubhouse facilities. To replace 2 No. existing portacabin structures.* This was approved in May 2010
- A recent application (ref 16/00114/F) was submitted to update the 1991 approval; but was withdrawn once it was established that the change in operation could not be dealt with by way of a variation of condition application – hence the need for the current application.

### Proposal

- 1.6 Following a complaint to the Council in respect of noise generated from the gliding activity, an investigation was carried out by the Council involving officers from the Planning Enforcement and Environmental Health Teams. Whilst it was concluded that the particular noise complaint was probably not related to the Gliding Club it became apparent that the Club was not adhering to the requirements of the 1991 planning permission. Officers therefore liaised with the Gliding Club with the intention of bringing forward an application which would address the breaches of planning control identified whilst protecting the amenities of the residents of the surrounding villages and also ensuring that the local landscape was not unduly affected.
- 1.7 As a result of these discussions permission is sort to continue using the tarmac and grass runways for winch and aerotow gliding as well extended the permission to cover more recent innovations such as self-launch gliders and self-sustaining gliders (which generate less noise than the aerotow launches). The Club are also seeking to increase the potential number of launches each day (from 15 to 25) as well as increasing the number of days that the airfield is used for competition purposes; they are proposing to have two tournaments a year of up to nine days in length an increase from the single annual tournament of eight days. Retrospective permission is also being sought for the open storage of winch tow vehicles and the storage of Club members' gliding trailers.

## **2. Application Publicity**

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by way of a site notice, neighbour notification letters and publication in the local press. The final date for comment was 14 July 2015.

There have been no third party comments.

## **3. Consultations**

- 3.1 Shenington with Alkerton Parish Council: No comments received at the time of writing

## **3.2 Cherwell District Council Consultees**

Planning Policy: No comments received but raised no objection to the previously withdrawn application

Environmental Health Officer: "This department has no objections to this application with the suggested conditions as presented. I would like to suggest the following as a planning note if possible:

The noise nuisance avoidance rules are to be published prominently on the club website and are mandatory for all members and guest fliers. Sanctions will be taken against any flier found to be wilfully transgressing the club's conditions aimed at noise nuisance avoidance. A written log of such transgressions, sanctions and complaints

from local residents will be kept by the club and made available for council officers to view on request.”

Landscape Officer: “There are tranquillity issues that should be resolved with this planning application – refer to CDC Local Plan Policy ESD 13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement – The CPRE Tranquillity Map indicates a medium tranquillity area.

As this is an established site and use within (a previously designated) AOHLV and the Cotswolds AONB (*sic*) that are foreseen negligible LVIA issues.”

### 3.3 Oxfordshire County Council

Highways Officer: make the following comments:

*Thank you for obtaining the information on the likely traffic movements generated as product of this proposal. From what you have described in addition to the submission it does seem to be a proposal which will increase traffic to a very modest degree if at all.*

*When visiting the site I noted that there was plenty of room for parking and that the access itself was reasonable both in terms of its construction and geometry.*

*Given the submissions mentioned above H.A. considers that this proposal is unlikely to increase vehicular movements to any significant degree and therefore it would be reasonable to recommend ‘no objections’ on the application.*

## 4. Relevant National and Local Policy and Guidance

### 4.1 Development Plan Policies

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 - Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2031. The Local Plan 2011-2031 – Part 1 replaced a number of the ‘saved’ policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 though many of its policies are retained and remain part of the development plan. The relevant planning policies of Cherwell District’s statutory Development Plan are set out below:

#### Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031 Part 1 (CLP2031)

PSD 1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
BSC10: Open space, outdoor sport and recreation provision  
ESD12: Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)  
ESD13: Local landscape protection and enhancement  
ESD15: The character of the built and historic environment

#### Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (Saved Policies) (CLP1996)

C28: Control over the design of new development  
ENV 1: Development which is likely to cause detrimental levels of pollution

### Other Material Planning Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

## 5 Appraisal

5.1 The main issues to address in this report are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Impact on residential amenity
- Visual impact and appearance of the landscape
- Impact on the highway safety
- Planning balance

### Principle of development

5.2 The principle of the Gliding Club, which has already been established when the 1991 application was approved, is assessed against Policy BSC10 of the CLP2031 which is broadly supportive of outdoor recreational pursuits, a position that it reflected in the NPPF at paragraph 73 which states that ...*'sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities'*. Indeed, with existing recreational sites/operations, such as the Gliding Club, the emphasis is very much on the protection and enhancement.

5.3 Against this positive policy background, the acceptability of what is being proposed, and what has already been implemented, is balanced against any harm resulting from the changes to the operation in respect of the noise resulting from an increase in the number of launches and the associated flight paths, and the visual impact the changes to the operation will have on the immediate environment. These material considerations are assessed below.

### Impact on residential amenity

5.4 As has already been referenced earlier in the report, this application is the result of a planning enforcement investigation which centred on the alleged noise nuisance caused by the motor gliders flying over Shenington and Alkerton. Indeed, it is considered that the key issue in this case is ensuring that glider activity does not unduly impinge on the amenities of the residents of the surrounding villages.

5.5 The NPPF considers that “ *planning policies and decisions should avoid noise from giving rise to significant impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development*” (para 123). The thrust of this guidance is replicated in Policy ENV1 of the CLP1996 which guards against development that will cause materially detrimental levels of noise and other types of environmental pollution.

5.6 Although condition 3 of the original permission prevents aircraft from flying over Shenington and Alkerton, it is felt that having a plan showing the exclusion zones for the four surrounding villages, which can be cross referenced with flight path data, will ensure that any future breach of planning control can be more effectively enforced. The Gliding Club, which has shown a sensitivity to the concerns the local villagers, will also require its members to adhere to rules ensuring that noise generation is kept to a minimum (e.g. they will be required not to circle the airfield and the self- sustaining gliders will not operate their motors within 3km of the site).

5.7 The Environment Health Officer was satisfied that with exclusion zone condition and the other enforceable conditions put forward by the applicant. It is therefore concluded that the additional glider launches proposed, which will future proof the possible expansion of the Club, would not bring the activity into conflict with Government guidance or Policy ENV1 of the CLP1996 in respect of unacceptable noise pollution. It is noteworthy that this application has not generated any correspondence from the residents of the surrounding villages.

#### Visual impact and appearance of the landscape

- 5.8 The landscape impacts of this proposal are assessed against Policy ESD13 of the CLP2031. This policy requires new development within the countryside to respect and enhance the local landscape character and not to cause any undue visual intrusion into the countryside. Although not within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) the site the impacts on the setting of this designated area, which bounds the western edge of the airfield, and therefore Policy ESD12 of the CLP2031 also needs to be taken into consideration.
- 5.9 The principal impact on the local landscape is the regularisation of the area of land used for the storage of the glider trailers which is located just to the north of the go-karting track. Although the applicant acknowledges that this development is unauthorised, it is quite probable that a lawful change of use has occurred given that aerial imagery confirm that trailers have been on this part of the site since 2004. The reason why this unauthorised activity may not have attracted any adverse reaction is that it is largely well screened from the surrounding area. Further the trailers do not appear so incongruous when seen in the context of the other approved activities on the airfield, especially the storage of caravans, when viewed at long range (minimum 650m away) from the footpath to the north east of the airfield. A condition is however recommended to ensure that control is exercised over the further extension of the trailer storage area.
- 5.10 There is sufficient parking space on the airfield to accommodate the potentially modest increases in the number of parked cars as well as the winch tow vehicles associated with the Gliding Club without unduly impacting on the local landscape. Officers have also determined that the impact this proposal will have on the setting of the AONB is negligible. The trailer storage area is not readily visible from the AONB as it is screened by a number of airfield buildings and other land uses, including the caravan storage site. Officers therefore consider that from a landscape perspective, the proposal is acceptable without the need to require any additional planting. Officers are further satisfied that the medium tranquillity area (guards against noise and visual intrusion), identified by the Landscape Officer will not be compromised by this development.

#### Impact on highway safety

- 5.11 The Local Highway Authority has concluded that the increase in traffic from this proposal is not going to have a detrimental impact on highway safety and that there is sufficient space on the site to accommodate any increase in parking requirements. The development therefore accords with Policy ESD15 of the CLP2031 and Government guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### Planning balance

- 5.12 Based on the assessment above, Officers are satisfied that the principle of development remains acceptable and that any harm resulting from the Gliding Clubs intensification of the use is appropriately mitigated, where necessary, through the imposition of the recommended planning conditions. The development is therefore considered to accord with Policies BSC10, ESD12, ESD13 and ESD15 of the CLP2031 and Policies C28 and ENV1 of the CLP1996 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### Engagement

- 5.13 With regard to the duty set out in paragraphs 186 and 187 of the Framework, any issues that have arisen through the processing of this planning application have been

addressed through a dialogue with the applicant. Additional information and clarification has been which has resulted in the approval of the application.

## **6. Recommendation**

Approval subject to:

1. Except where otherwise stipulated by condition, the development shall remain in accordance with the site location plan; the supporting statements, Appendix 1 "Noise Avoidance" chart and the Trailer Storage Plan.

Reason - For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to comply with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. That except in emergency, there shall be no powered flying over Shenington/Alkerton, Epwell, Tysoe or Upton House, in accordance with the exclusion areas identified on the approved "Noise Avoidance" chart (Appendix A).

Reason - To ensure the creation of a satisfactory environment free from intrusive levels of noise and to comply with Policy ENV1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. That no more than 25 power movements either by tug-tow glider launches or other powered aircraft/gliders shall take place on any day throughout the year.

To ensure the creation of a satisfactory environment free from intrusive levels of noise and to comply with Policy ENV1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. That notwithstanding condition 3 above, the site may be used for no more than 2 gliding competitions of no more than 9 days each in duration per calendar year, when the number of powered aircraft movements shall not be limited.

To ensure the creation of a satisfactory environment free from intrusive levels of noise and to comply with Policy ENV1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. There shall be no take-offs of powered aircraft outside the hours of 09:00 - 19:00 and that there shall be no landings outside the hours of 09:00 - 21:00 on any day.

Reason: In order to maintain the character of the area and safeguard the amenities of the occupants of neighbouring properties and to comply with Policies ESD13 and ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1, Saved Policies C28 and ENV1 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. That a record of all glider launches and associated flight plans are kept available by Shenington Gliding Club for inspection by the Local Planning Authority within 24 hours of such a request being made by the Local Planning Authority.

To ensure the creation of a satisfactory environment free from intrusive levels of noise and to comply with Policy ENV1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. That the storage of glider trailers belonging to Shenington Glider Club members shall be restricted to the hatched area of land identified on the Trailer Storage Plan.

Reason - In the interests of the visual amenities of the area, to ensure the creation of a pleasant environment for the development and to comply with Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning Note

1. The applicants are reminded that there is no permission for the take-off and landing of helicopters on this site with the exception of emergency services.

**STATEMENT OF ENGAGEMENT**

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2015), this decision has been taken by the Council having worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive way as set out in the application report.