

Subject: Urgent Message to SDMAC Members

Dear Members

Our Chairman and Vice Chairman, today met the Head of Air Traffic Control (SATCO) and Airfield Safety Manager at Biggin Hill Aerodrome.

The purpose of the meeting was amongst other matters, to seek formal permission for our club to continue flying within the Biggin Hill Air Traffic zone. Members will be aware that this permission is required under the new Air Navigation Order, regulations to come into force in early March. The background to these regulation changes relates to the enforcement of the new UAV exclusion zones around licensed airfield air traffic zones. The definition of UAV's extends to all radio controlled aircraft including drones.

Today's meeting was critical for the continued operation of our club and without the SATCO's consent, model flying would have to cease from our site.

We are very pleased to report that we have received this consent to continue flying subject to the following club rule changes, which have been agreed by the Committee as temporary rule changes (to become permanent at the next AGM) to come into force with **immediate** effect :

1 Operation of drones ie multicopter aircraft (excluding conventional RC helicopters, with main and tail rotor) is now banned from our Beech Farm Road flying site.

2 The maximum altitude that a model may now fly above the prepared strip at the Beech Farm Road flying site is reduced from 400ft to 300ft.

In addition to the above the Committee have decided to apply a temporary ban on the flying of gas turbine fixed wing aircraft from the flying field, to give time for consideration of whether continuing to fly such models poses a risk of a breach of the above rules, due to their large turning radii. The Committee will consider whether this ban should be made permanent at its next meeting and report back to members.

The Committee consider that we are extremely privileged to get this consent as the personal liability rests with the Biggin Hill SATCO, in agreeing this. We must all therefore maintain his trust and confidence. However, it was made absolutely clear that one reported breach of these new rules will lead to his permission being revoked. The consequence of this will be that we will no longer be able to fly from our current site and will have to find a new flying field. This will be devastating for the club and its members and indeed pose a major financial challenge as we have a five year lease on our current site. Also the chances of finding a suitable site are very slim.

We were also asked to pass on these new rule requirements to the other two clubs who operate within the zone and it was made clear once again that any breach by those clubs would likely lead to

all model flying consents being withdrawn from within the Biggin ATC. The Committee will therefore be engaging with those other clubs.

Any member of SDMAC being observed to breach any of these new rules by the Committee or through any report to the Committee of same, will immediately have their membership of the club revoked, as the stakes are now so high for the future of model flying within the Biggin Hill ATZ.

Indeed it was made clear to us that there had been two recent near miss events reported involving model aircraft within the zone, albeit fortunately not involving the SDMAC site.

To conclude, we consider that we are extremely fortunate to be able to continue flying from our site at Beech Farm Road and we ask all members to pay acute attention to the above new rules and ask that if any member sees any contravention of these, to anonymously report this to any Committee member.

Kind regards

SDMAC Committee