

Minutes of the General Meeting of Skydive Chatteris Club Ltd. held at 17:30 on 05 August 2017 at Chatteris Airfield, Block Fen Drove, Wimblington, March, PE15 0FB

Attendees

Mike Rust, Chairman	Gee Watkins, Pilot
Chris Beattie, Development Director	Geordie Best, Member
Kev Dynan, Director	Sean Healy, Member
Martin Crossley, Airfield and Aircraft Owner	Dragoş Lupu, Member
Tanya Burton, Social Director	Tim Hanlon, Member
Gary Small, Director	James Moran, Member
Graham Ablett, Secretary	James Bonwick, Member
Jon Payne, Deputy Social Director	Dex Marius Vancea, Member
Sophie Barnwell, Deputy Development Director	Oscar Lopez, Member
Peter Herrick, Member	Alijandro Ibanez, Member
Ali Atlasi, Member	Jan Zackl, Member
Alison Peock, Member	Christian Thomas, Member
Bobby Islam, Member	

Apologies

None

The Chairman asked for Tanya Burton, Social Director, to explain the reasons why this meeting had been called.

Tanya explained that the meeting had been called because of comments made by some of the more regular club members, both restricted and full, who felt there were mixed messages coming from the club management regarding fun-jumping at the club (i.e. jumps made by club members who are qualified skydivers using their own equipment).

This followed the turning away of some 30+ skydivers from Dunkeswell who had contacted the Chief Instructor (CI) asking if they could visit the club over the weekend 8th / 9th July 2017 and collectively make 300+ jumps.

As the CI no idea of how many of the regular fun-jumpers would also be attending that weekend, he thought it best they didn't attend in case it overloaded the system.

This had then created some bad feeling amongst some of the members and as such Tanya felt it best to call the meeting to discuss the situation further.

Mike Rust (the CI) had made his decision based around the legal agreement in place with Martin Crossley (the airfield owner and aircraft supplier) and such Martin was asked to comment

Martin responded by reminding those present that it was not up to him, but rather the club committee to decide how the club was run ...**BUT... that any decisions had to be based on the agreement already in place with the club covering the use of his aircraft and airfield.**

Christian Thomas then arrived and joined the meeting at 17:33.

Martin felt it might be useful to explain the reasoning behind the caveats he had included in his agreement with the club to operate his aircraft. These caveats being...

1. That Club Members making Tandem and AFF jumps, as well as their associated cameramen, were to be given priority over others – as basically they pay the bills.

2. Where possible the aircraft would only be flown with 80% or more of the seating capacity occupied (i.e. at least 15 paying places) on minimum two lift cycle – so as not to wreck the aircraft engines.

He explained that the airfield cost £22,000+ per week to keep open for the club to use but that the “fun-jumper element” had only contributed £28,000 towards the costs during the previous 12 month period – or the equivalent of around 2% of the overall operating costs.

This meant, on a pro-rata basis, that on a perfect weather day when approximately 360 aircraft slots would be available the fun jumpers would be entitled to 7 or 8 slots but were in fact being allocated around 140 - as tandems were being limited to 85 per day.

Martin felt it important therefore that the fun-jumpers appreciated what a good deal they were on and that the highly subsidised flight ticket prices they enjoyed only came about because of these caveats.

Martin also pointed out that the CI been not been provided with any clear instructions from the committee on how they wanted these fun-jumper slots to be allocated and thus it was perhaps time for committee to come up with some rules.

Martin also pointed out that the fun-jumpers were only utilisation about half of the 7000 slots allocated to them each year (a good example being Sunday 8th July when the weather was perfect but no-one had attended) and it perhaps time for the committee to take more of an active role in developing strategies to encourage fun jumpers to turn up in the own right rather than just relying on how many tandems were booked in on any given day.

Martin commented that this might include a pre-booking system for fun-jumpers, as he had previously suggested like that of the tandems so that the fun-jumpers could see how many of them would be turning up on any given occasion. Or, something as simple as priority being given to those who arrive early and are prepared to stay at the airfield all day. He said it would also be nice to see people staying over more at weekends and this is something the committee should again try and encourage.

Martin also commented that once enough money was being generated ‘on a regular basis’ from the fun-jumpers to justify operating a second aircraft solely for fun jumpers (either through Lottery funding or otherwise) this is something the committee should consider – but the club wasn’t currently anywhere near that stage.

Various discussions then took place regarding operating Martins aircraft for fun jumpers once the tandems had finished and whether if there weren’t enough of them to fill the required 15 slots could the aircraft go up light with those on board covering the cost of the unfilled slots.

Martin said he had no problem with that if at least £300 per lift was generated by the club and that the ‘2 lift or more’ cycle limit had been met considering the total engine starts and lifts completed within that day.

Also mentioned was ‘double manifesting’ – which Martin said was up to the Committee to decide whether they wanted to allow but from his point of view should be discouraged as it would end up favouring the few and not the masses.

The suggestion of running a Boogie and getting additional aircraft in was also discussed – with a comment from Martin that the committee should very carefully consider the costs and understand the risks on weather before giving the go ahead. He was happy to offer further advice if needed.

Sean was then invited to read out the suggestions from the suggestion box, he read them out as follows:

- Bigger box of chocolates each weekend.
- Price of tickets depending on altitude.
- Having a shoe brush outside the hangar.
- Showers/toilets upgrade.
- Gordon Ramsey's Kitchen Nightmares.
- New packing mats/carpet, packing mats clubhouse.
- Aircraft emergency safety days.
- Tannoy in the clubhouse.
- Permanent stools for the barbeque.
- Projector/big screen for clubhouse.
- Pool table for club house.
- 2018 boogie.
- Heli jumps.
- Night jumps.

Other subjects such as charging to use the bunk room, free showers, foreign drop zone business models and a tour of other drop zones using Martins aircraft were briefly discussed.

The Chairman stated that a committee meeting should be called within the next month to discuss all the suggestions and if there was no other business the meeting should be concluded.