



# Kemble and Ewen Parish Council: Minutes

*Meeting held on: Wednesday, 21 May 2008; 7.30pm*

*at: Kemble Village Hall*

Present: Councillor R Pettit, Chairman  
Councillor D Ball, Vice-Chairman

Councillor S Lawlor  
Councillor G Somerville  
Councillor S Turner

In attendance: F Garnet-Lawson, clerk  
John Birch, District Councillor

22 Members of the public:

**1. Apologies received from:**

Pat and Tony Owen (letter received) and Cecil Cleverley (letter received).

**2. RP opened the meeting**, explaining that the purpose was to consider the 'application for a certificate of lawful use' by Kemble airfield.

**3. Introduction by District Councillor John Birch**

Councillor John Birch outlined the background to the application - primary use of the airfield had been for storage, maintenance and repair of aircraft. It subsequently came into private ownership, and had to consider if there had been a 'material change of use'. The CDC issued an enforcement notice to compel the airfield to either apply for planning permission for the change of use, or to submit evidence that it was entitled to obtain a certificate of lawful use because the flying activities had been established over previous years.

JD welcomed written or emailed responses direct from residents, as well as through the parish council, if they wished. All the villages surrounding the airfield are being consulted.

JD then left the meeting, without entering in to dialogue or answering questions, so as not to prejudice his role on the planning committee.

**4. Residents discussion**

There followed an extensive discussion about the airfield.

All the speakers were content with the presence of the airfield and accepted that flying would continue. The contribution of the airfield itself to the local economy was noted and appreciated. However, there was a divergence of opinions over:

**4.1 a) the extent to which flying activities had materially increased.**

On one hand, Dakotas flew during WW2, and the Red Arrows flying team flew from Kemble for many years.

On the other, the level of pleasure and light commercial flights had significantly altered - particularly through the air day(s) and PFA (the Popular Flying Association) events. [The latter last took place in 2006]. Although it was noted that it would be very unlikely that commercial passenger flights would ever be possible, there was some unease that 'unrestricted flying' meant that this type of activity would not be ruled out

completely.

**4.2** *b) the noise of the aircraft, particularly the jets*

On the one hand the jets do not fly on Sundays, and generally only during the summer. The June Air Day is once a year, and raises valuable contributions for the Air Force Benevolent fund.

However, the regular incidence of low flying jets, particularly directly over the village, was reported by some residents to be excessively noisy and intrusive. Low flight passes, low run-ins and breaks by certain planes were not appreciated on any occasion, and also frightened animals and stock nearby.

**4.3** *c) the number of aircraft movements*

On the one hand, large number of flights only occur during air days - of which there are only a few each year. These air days are popular with families, local trades people, and help to ensure the commercial viability of the airfield.

On the other hand, concern was expressed that the number of aircraft movements was (subjectively) higher, and that if the airfield was permitted unrestricted flying activities, for example if the number of jet flights grew in proportion to those of light aircraft, there would be no controls or restraint on this in the future.

**4.4** *d) the control over the flight paths of the aircraft, and the implications of this for the airfield's ability to control its operations and hence for the risk of potential flying accidents.*

The tendency for some pilots not to follow the prescribed flight path around the village, and the airfield's apparent inability to ensure that only the prescribed flight path was followed, was discussed.

**4.5** *e) aerobatics*

It was noted that whilst a certain amount of turns and rolls were necessary for teaching and practising, an extension of aerobatic activities on a regular or sustained basis was not acceptable.

**5** Brian Ayres cordially invited residents to visit the airfield, and the control tower, to be reassured about the air-tower safety and maintenance standards.

**6** RP emphasised that the CDC application had no intent to cease flying at Kemble. A certificate of lawful use could be granted and this, it was understood, would not apply constraints or controls. A planning application on the other hand, could be simply granted or refused, or could be granted with conditions which would enable the type and amount of flying activity to be controlled. In addition, further consent would be required before any alterations to activity could begin to take place.

**7** There then followed a brief discussion about the desirability for unrestricted, in comparison to restricted, flying activity at the airfield.

Some residents thought that all flying should be unrestricted; others that a certain amount of discretion by the airfield was necessary so that it could adapt to commercial pressures; and others indicated that restrictions on the type, timing and quantity of

flights should be in place including a requirement for fully qualified traffic control officers and systems.

Jet noise in particular was an irritation, and although not specific to this application, residents would not want motor sport/testing to increase at the airfield because of a potential rise in noise levels.

Although no consensus was reached, it was agreed that residents desired an amicable settlement which showed respect and consideration of all views of rather than a polarised statement of apparently conflicting positions.

It was noted that the Airfield Liaison Committee meetings had fallen away, due to the pending legal processes.

- 8** The Parish Council agreed to publish Mike Napper's contact details to enable residents to write directly to the CDC if required. **action**  
**PC**

*The meeting closed at 8.45pm*