

9. Commercial use of WotG Airfield – 7 August 2024 PC Meeting

The meeting held at the airfield on July 11th was very informative. The trial period for the commercial jumping has been pushed to September because of the investigation into the death of a glider at Hinton. The villages will feedback regarding noise at the end of two weeks and again at four weeks. Squadron Leader Liam.will look into getting noise metres for us so our noise level is accurate. The aircraft used will be a Cezna Green Caravan (hope I have that right) which is much quieter than the Air/Sky Van being used by the military. The air space is much larger since the commercial group will not have the 2 mile radius constraint that the military has. We can expect up to 15 jumps per day from 9am until sunset.

Currently the airforce is having deconfliction meetings with the commercial gliding group that has used the base for 40 years.

There are stiff regulations as to the conditions for commercial jumping. Insurance is public liability at £9 million per person jumping.

Concern was firmly shared about intrusive and constant noise. All village leaders present declared support for military training and currently it is constant. Apparently WotG airfield is the largest jumping site in Europe and is responsible for training all UK military in parachute jumping. We've had parachuting jumping seven days per week for several weeks now and will welcome some peace when the training is concluded. The thought of commercial jumping on top of that remains a concern.

One concern mentioned was that there is an issue of infra-red beams aimed at aircraft. Liam explained that such a beam accurately aimed at the cockpit would blind the captain and the resultant crash could kill upwards of 60 military and whoever lived or worked at the crash site. Villages have asked for a comment from Liam to put into our newsletters in the hope that parents read and act on this concern.

Next steps:

1. Hear about the noise meters.
2. We are going to check with Cherwell District Council about the requirement for planning permission as the use is not military.
3. We will also check regarding the rules for environmental noise.