

SKYWORDS

December 2020

Chairman's Chat



I think you all deserve an explanation as to why we decided to close DHPC sites during Lockdown 2.

Each year we elect a committee to act on your behalf. The committee has the power to legislate on any point not provided for in the Constitution (like COVID-19). Whilst some of the committee consider me a bit of a dictator, I try to run things on a democratic basis. We hold committee meetings every 2 months (mostly on Zoom this year) and for urgent business we have an area of the forum where we can hold discussions and votes. The discussion on Lockdown 2 currently runs to some 10 pages. We also have an enduring vote on whether to keep our sites closed and the current standing is 6 in favour, 2 against, and one for asking the landowners.

I don't know exactly why the committee voted the way they did, but I can tell you some of the issues that we considered.

We actually started to consider the problem when it was announced that West Yorkshire (where most of our members live) was due to go into Tier 3. Whilst that would have prevented those of us in Tier 3 travelling to other areas, it wouldn't place any restrictions on pilots flying their local sites. We came up with a generic policy, 'Members are encouraged to comply with Government and Local Authority guidance'.

But the plan to place West Yorkshire into Tier 3 never happened because Lockdown 2 was announced for the whole of England. As per the previous lockdown it took some time for Government Agencies, the CAA and the BHPA to interpret the implications, some of which were fairly contradictory.

New laws are not normally rushed in; and for good reason. They are carefully considered and amended before being passed, it takes time for law enforcement to interpret them, and for the public to understand and comply. An important element of our judicial system is common law which is based on precedent – a bit tricky when there isn't any. Some of you will remember when seat belt laws were introduced in 1983.

I think that most people concluded that they probably wouldn't be prosecuted for hang gliding or paragliding, although nobody really knew. I thought that it was very telling that the Chairman of the BHPA (a practicing barrister) wouldn't actually commit to endorsing a statement that flying was legal.

But it wasn't just about the law. There were numerous examples where advice and guidance suggested that flying wasn't a good idea. The Government messages said, 'Stay at home', 'Avoid unnecessary travel', and that 'Private pilots should not undertake any sport or leisure flying'.

Whilst individuals can make their own decisions about the law and the guidance, it's slightly different when you want to portray the image of a responsible organisation to the Land Owners and Local Authorities, who ultimately control our long-term access to sites.

As Chairman I also have a 'hot line' to our neighbouring clubs, most of whom we have a reciprocal rights arrangement with. We tried to co-ordinate our policy.

At one stage we even compared our constitution to that of another club. The Wessex club's stated aim is *to enable flying sites for our members*. In contrast extracts from our own constitution read as follows:

*The Club was founded in 1974, after a few enthusiasts had felt the need to organise themselves **in order to control the activities of the flyers and to retain the good will of the land owners.***

*The object of the Club shall be to promote the interests of the sport of hang gliding and paragliding, and its participants, throughout the Yorkshire Dales and beyond; **to acquire, control, administer and maintain flying sites; to educate its members in the conduct of their flying, with due regard for safety, the Rules of the Air, the rights of landowners and with due courtesy to all other users of the countryside.***

Remember that it is easy to win an argument but lose a site.

I personally received only a small amount of lobbying from members keen to fly. I'm very grateful to Darren for opening a [thread](#) on the forum. Short of standing for the committee, if you want to voice your opinion that is the place. I promise to read every post will try to answer as many of your questions as I can.

As I write this (23 Nov) the Prime Minister has just declared that we will return to a tiered system on 2 Dec. We don't yet know which tier we'll be in, or whether we'll be allowed to travel outside our area. If previous experience is anything to go by it will take a while for any guidance to filter down to us, so you may not see any immediate change. I'm hopeful that we can move back to some generic guidance, allowing you to make your own decisions, as quickly as possible.

Thank you to all the pilots who have resisted the temptation to fly club sites. The UK weather has dictated that we haven't sacrificed more than a couple of days flying.

Whatever the restrictions, I wish you a very Merry Christmas, and the hope of better flying prospects in 2021.

**Fly safely,
Martin Baxter
Chairman**

Bio – Pete Logan

(New Chief Coach)

I thought I'd take the trouble to introduce myself to folks since I've taken over the role of chief coach.

I live in Baildon and am very much a flying Dad but thankfully my job allows me to get out in the week more than a regular nine to five might. Training at Northern Paragliding, I qualified in 2000 and apart from a three year break have flown every year.

You'll notice 2000 had it's own lock down for foot and mouth... plus ça change¹



Cross country is what I'm most into and it's occasionally nice to fly new or less popular sites, especially the ones around me. You can usually find me on my trusty, white Cayenne5, although I do fly my Yeti as well. Here's a potted history:

- Organised the British Clubs Challenge and Dales club team.
- Ran the BP Cup for fourish years with a few other guys.
- Been on the DHPC cmte before so I know what I'm letting myself in for.
- Competed in the BPCup and the British Opens.
- Contributed to the AirWhere instrument and tracking system for a few years.
- Built and now run the CANP system this year <https://canp.logans.me.uk>
- Meat head of the internationally recognised Baildon Sod competition.
- I just passed my advanced pilot exam this autumn but there's still plenty to learn.

My last coach course as maybe fifteen years ago so I'm definitely due a refresher. I'm on the one that Rahul is organising, whenever a group of us is allowed to meet together.

What do I want to do as chief coach?

Help people to enjoy their flying - that's what we do it for right? I think I can help by making sure we continue to have a keen set of local coaches to call on, to make it easy for pilots to explore sites new to them at a pace they need and continue to run coaching days. And I'll occasionally put a few articles in the mag where I think they'll help.

I want to get people more interested in a couple of things - winter flying and ground handling. I'm deficient myself in both I recognise!, to help maintain and build experience and currency.

I'm going to try and setup a buddy system for flying XC. A small group is a great thing for motivating and learning from, and we'll try to make our hand over local schools is as good as it can be.

I'm always open to suggestions - I haven't got a monopoly on being right.

¹ resigned acknowledgement of the fundamental immutability of human nature and institutions

Bio – Rahul Basu

(New Membership Secretary)

Hello, A bit about me too as I stood for the membership role.

I joined the club at the end of 2016 straight after completing a CP course with the local trainer Dean. I've always wanted to fly, but only got around to it in my middle years. Flying for me has been life changing and bordering on an obsession. My partner Lisa probably regrets getting me the EP and CP course as gifts, and now of course, I use this fact in my defence! But I am forever in gratitude to her for setting me off on this journey.



Starting out with my Ion 4, I found it mind-blowing and euphoric, that I could fly, albeit for only a few minutes! Luckily for me, I have had access to great advice and guidance from the beginning. As I live in Hebden Bridge, Richard Meek reached out and gave me and David Hedley, lifts to the club nights. Secondly, I had recently started working at the same place as Peter Balmforth, but didn't really know him until I met him at club nights.

On the hills I met others from the club who were always very friendly and helpful. I really couldn't have asked for a better start!

I now fly an Artik 5, which I'm very pleased with, especially now I'm getting into XC. My aims for 2021 are simple; to learn more, do more XCs and hopefully fly in bigger mountains! (Oh yes and don't get injured of course). I also want to contribute to the club which has helped me so much.

Through it I have found new friends with the same passion and can't wait to meet more. Taking on the membership officer role will be new to me. However, I believe I can do a good job of it. I work in IT as a business analyst, so should have some of the necessary skills to do the paperwork. I will also look to establish new members by connecting with the local trainers. I look forward to welcoming new members to our club, getting them connected to all the club offers and have as good a start as I did.

Our Website through the ages...



You may have noticed that after more than a decade, the Club website has had a well-deserved face lift.

This should be more “responsive” (to the rest of us that means it’ll work better on a mobile!)

Many thanks to Alex for all the good work...

Around 2008 was the last time it had a face lift, which was a significant improvement, bringing the club more into the digital age – look a Shout box!



Early days (our internet archive only goes back to the start of 2001) it was very similar to most websites at the time – much like a poster...

For those interested there are 209 (at the last count) snapshots of the website available on the web archive (<http://web.archive.org/web/20080515063603/http://www.dhpc.org.uk/>).

Membership renewals

In last month's issue we introduced you to our new membership management system using Membermojo. If you haven't signed in to your Member Page yet, why not read last month's article and have a go?

You'll already be aware that the club operates a fixed membership year, starting on 1st February each year. So, whether you're a club veteran or you've just joined us in the last couple of months, you'll need to renew in the New Year if you want to remain a member.

This year we'll be using our new system to manage membership renewals starting in January. This means you'll see a slight change in the way you renew your membership. Don't worry – you'll still have an opportunity to take advantage of our prompt renewal discount, and we'll still be sending out reminder emails ahead of the renewal date. These emails will start a little earlier, at the beginning of January, and will be sent from Dales Hang Gliding & Paragliding Club <noreply.dhpc@membermojo.co.uk>. To avoid these emails ending up in your Spam folder you can add this address to your contacts.

How to renew your membership

We always appreciate your prompt renewal as it reduces our administration effort and helps with the smooth running of the club. You can renew your membership at any time from 1st January by signing into your Member Page and clicking the orange Renew button.



Your details will be pre-populated on the membership renewal form. Review your details and update them if necessary. Choose your preferred membership level – the prompt payment discount will be automatically applied if you renew by the end of February.

Tim Rogers
Outgoing Membership Secretary

Note from the Editor:

- A little thin this month – all contributions gratefully received, or feel free to nominate someone...
- Please submit to newsletter@dhpc.org.uk
- We are also trialling a new email approach (via Membermojo) so anyone who doesn't get this then please shout (joke)....

Carl Maughan

DHPC Themed Clothing

Don't forget that you can buy DHPC themed clothing online. The club holds no stock of these items, and makes no profit from their sale, but you can show your love of the sport when you are out and about, for very little cost.

Polo / Sweat shirts

A huge range of colours available, and a choice between highly wickable polyester based fabric, or cotton. These come with an embroidered logo on the front, and you can chose to have Steve Ham's brilliant transfer design on the back or not. Cotton T shirts are also available.

Order from: https://www.conistonshop.com/shop/index.php?product_cat=635



DHPC Buffs

https://giraffeuk.com/search.php?search_query=dales



Made with 100% Coolmax Microfiber these are available at £14.99 each. A choice of 2 designs – either the club logo, or the “Skywords quotes” one, featuring many quotes from members’ tales in Skywords over the years.