

December 2023



# WAYPOINT



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Newsletter of Priory Farm Aviators  
[www.flypfa.co.uk](http://www.flypfa.co.uk)



#### Committee Members

John Fielding (chair), Bob Sage (airfield owner), David Brown (Deputy Chair & Facilities), Mik Horne (Treasurer), Alan McNeal (WX station, R/T, Waypoint editor), Richard Flagg (webmaster), Sean Simington (social events booking), Julian Campbell, Nigel Hall., Paul Jackson, Maurice Edwards.

### *Season's Greetings...*

Without wanting to anticipate Christmas too early, this is the last Waypoint of the year so I won't get another chance to wish you in print a very Happy Christmas in three weeks time with safe and enjoyable flying in 2024!

### **John Fielding**

By the time the January 2024 Waypoint appears we will have a new person to lead the PFA Management Committee. As most of you know, after seven years of diligent & devoted work for the PFA, John has decided to stand down as Chair at the end of the year. I understand he will continue to fly from the airfield and to serve on the committee.



When I first started coming to PF some years ago as a guest of Adrian Hall-Carpenter and joined the PFA, I innocently said to John that I would be happy to help out in some way or other. Before you could say 'clear prop', I found myself on the committee! At that time there were a handful of members doing most of the work, with John taking on more tasks than he should and doing it all very well. Now the work load is more evenly spread across the talents of all eleven committee members, so John has chosen this moment to step aside.

I can only speak for myself, but in the time I have been coming to Priory Farm, it's my view that John Fielding has done an outstanding job as chairman, with friendliness, good humour, capable organisation and on occasions when necessary, a firm hand. I have served on various committees in my time. Your PFA committee are a bunch of friendly and capable souls who get on with their various jobs effectively - a pleasure to be part of and to a significant extent a credit to John Fielding's character and temperament. So, many thanks John for all your good work. Less management & more flying for 2024 John?

So, what next. Protocol prevents me from saying much about a replacement, except that he/she will be elected at the AGM in January 2024.

### **Airfield matters**

Just one item. You have all received an email about a member's close call with a glider tug from Tibenham, I need not repeat any of John's excellent 'cautionary tale' email here except to say keep Tibenham operations in mind and remember that aircraft from there may not be occupying the bit of sky you expect on every occasion!

# Committee meeting minutes

Meeting held at the Fox & Hounds in Great Moulton - chaired by John Fielding

**Present:** Alan McNeal, Bob Sage, David Brown, John Fielding, Maurice Edwards, Mik Horn, Richard Flagg, Sean Simington.

**Apologies:** Julian Campbell, Nigel Hall, Paul Jackson.

## 1. Procedure for electing a new chairperson

John is standing down at the next AGM in January and it was agreed that the committee would elect the new chairperson at the committee meeting at the next AGM.

## 2. Glider & tug flying through PF circuit

This was discussed and John said he'd send out an email to the members.

## 3. Finance

Mik Horn gave a financial statement (that can be made available to any paid-up PFA member on request). The committee discussed the need to maintain a balance that would enable the club to replace the facilities when the need arises. Maurice agreed to estimate what this cost might be. The committee agreed that £40 would be the membership fee for 2024. Alan said he would ask members to pay their fees in the next Waypoint.

## 4. Membership

Bob stated that we now had 76 members and that there would be another three new members joining imminently.

## 5. Insurance

John read an email from Nigel who had arranged this year's liability insurance for the club. He explained that he had looked for alternative providers but that he could not find anyone interested in airfield insurance other than the broker that John had found the previous year. There was a discussion regarding the current lack of precautions against theft and vandalism in the club hut.

## 6. January committee meeting and AGM

Bob explained that it may be possible to hold it at the Gliding Club with catering available but that it would have to be on the second Wednesday of the month - 10th Jan.

## 7. PFA Christmas Dinner

Sean has been liaising with the manager of the Gamekeeper and advised the committee that the price would be £30 for a two course dinner including £2 for service. He will ask members to pay him £30 by BACS when they request tickets. Sean will also liaise with John in a couple of weeks so that the invitations and menu can be sent out to the members.

## 8. April group outing

Richard is in discussion with the Air Ambulance to arrange a tour of their facilities and helicopters. Part of the tour would be a CPR training session for the attendees.

## 9. Norwich ATC visit

David has been trying to arrange a discounted landing fee for PFA members flying there for a tour. Saxon Air have not responded to his requests ... yet.

End of minutes.



## Droning on and on...

...no, not that kind of droning...nor the kind that amateur drone pilots like our John & Richard have so much fun with, nor the kind that Amazon want to delivery your goodies....or even the kind that deliver blood & vital hospital supplies across the water to the Isle of Wight or the Scottish islands either!

I'm talking about the kind of drones that have a wingspan of 80ft, weigh 12,500lbs, can carry Paveway laser guided bombs and Brimstone missiles and can stay up there for over forty hours...the Protector RG Mk1.



Impressive, but what's it got to do with us at Priory Farm I hear you say? Well, RAF XIII squadron which operates these beasts is coming to RAF Waddington. That is up in Lincolnshire, so how does it affect us? Only that RAF Marham will be a designated alternate recovery airfield if the aircraft cannot get back into Waddington. So, the MOD have opened a consultancy process and are advising all aviators in the region to be aware that these UAVs could operate in the skies of Norfolk in the future.

Our own David Brown is a member of the East Anglia Airspace Users Working Group (EAAUWG), so he has been invited to engage in the consultation on the possible effects of this activity. So, when is this going to happen? Some time in the medium future.

The arrival of drones, small & large seems to have happened overnight. Just about every film & TV series & documentaries has drone footage. The medical delivery functions already mentioned can only increase and as for their use in wars, I wonder how many thousands of drones have already been used in Ukraine and other theatres. In short, we are living in the start of an 'age of drones', so we had better be aware of them and how they will affect our flying activities.

As part of my ROCC Training I already teach airfield radio operators to be aware of commercial/military drone activity of all kinds and as GA pilots we will have to do the same. Obviously this will have some impact on our flying, but I guess we will all deal with it to the extent that drones in the sky will become fairly normal and just another aspect of flying that pilots will learn to accommodate.

See these sites for drone awareness....

[www.nats.aero/airspace/drones/](http://www.nats.aero/airspace/drones/)

<https://nats.aero/blog/2023/11/nhs-airport-drone-flight-gives-glimpse-of-the-future/>

There are many other sites on the subject so have a browse around the Web...

## An Autumn Turkey Trot!

Some of our intrepid balloonists, faced with very few potential flying days here in the UK, decided to take a ten day break to somewhere with better weather and a reputation for balloon flying.





If you're unfamiliar with Cappadocia in central Turkey, it is famous for its unique rock formations and amazing hot air ballooning opportunities. Its otherworldly landscapes are one of Turkey's most popular natural wonders. Unusual honeycombed boulders rise from the plateau of Central Anatolia and have, over the centuries, served as the backdrop for a history equally as fascinating.

The region was once the heartland of the Hittite Empire and later gave rise to some of Christianity's earliest philosophers. Cappadocia is now a prime tourist destination and one of the best places to visit in Turkey. Here are a few facts about the place, (courtesy of 'On the go tour guides')...

1. Cappadocia's landscape was formed by volcanic erosion. Thick ash solidified into soft rock, called tuff, and over time these rocks eroded with wind and water, creating the iconic fairy chimneys today.
2. Cappadocia spans a distance of 5,000 kilometres and sits on an altitude of over 1,000 metres, cutting through three Anatolian provinces – Nevsehir, Kayseri, and Nigde.
3. There are a number of underground cities in Cappadocia, some connected by a network of tunnels. These subterranean settlements were made possible thanks to the pliability of the soft rock. Many are open to visitors, however, a lot of the land in the area is private property.

Here's Paul Coman's comments on the holiday and the balloon flight they had booked over this amazing landscape...

*Our own balloon flight was booked for Tuesday, but we had already been to the launch site on Monday to watch a launch. The Balloon operators collect you from your hotel at 4.30am to 6am! The first balloons take off before sunrise then the next ones 30 minutes later.*

*As you step out of your hotel in Goreme you can hear the fans running cold inflating the Balloons. We took off at 06.45 am and landed at 08.15, our pilot having flown us between the caves with the other 150 odd Balloons. One of the Balloon operators told me they fly on average 270 days out of 365. If only that were possible in the UK!*

Paul's pictures tell the rest of the story!



Small training Balloons take off after the main launch at 8 am.







## A couple of reminders...

Our **Christmas lunch** is coming up on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December at last year's venue, the Gamekeeper on Old Buckenham green. Our Sean Simington is the organiser. A change this year is that Sean needs your booking, menu selection and BACS payment by Wednesday 29th November at the latest. Please feel free to invite a partner or friend and provide Sean with the name of your guest. , so if you haven't tied down your booking - contact him now! [s.simington@outlook.com](mailto:s.simington@outlook.com)

David Brown is setting up a fly-out visit to **Norwich Airport**, to include a tour of the airport facilities including the control tower. This will be sometime in the spring of 2024, so if you want to go along, email David Brown to show your interest. [dsbreflex@gmail.com](mailto:dsbreflex@gmail.com)

Finally, our **AGM** will be early in January on a date and at a venue to be advised soon. Watch out for emails on this. Simon Stoodley & Matt Hyde have agreed to give a talk with slides on their recent North Cape trip, so we'll get the full story with more details of their adventure with more anecdotes than I could include in the Waypoint articles.

That's it for now. Hopefully see you all at the Christmas bash!

