

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee

5<sup>th</sup> April 2006

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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### **S/0607/90/F - Little Gransden Annual Gliding Competition, Gransden Lodge Airfield For Cambridge Gliding Club**

#### **Recommendation: No Objection**

##### **Site and Proposal**

1. Gransden Lodge Airfield straddles the boundary between South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Districts. Access is gained via the B1046 opposite Gransden Lodge.
2. The Cambridge Gliding Club has written to request approval of its annual gliding competition which will be run from Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August. A copy of that letter is attached as Appendix 1.

##### **Planning History**

3. Planning permission was granted for the use of the site as a gliding club in 1990 (**Ref: S/0607/90/F**). One of the conditions attached to that consent limits the number of aero tows (launching of gliders by 'tug' aircraft) to 40 per day to protect nearby residents from noise. However, each year, this Council has allowed a temporary variation of this condition during the annual competition week to enable up to 80 aero tows per day.

##### **Consultation**

4. **Little Gransden Parish Council** comments "despite assurances from the Gliding Club, the Parish Council continues to be concerned about the safety implications of running a competition at the Gliding Club on the same day that events are scheduled for Little Gransden Aerodrome. Despite being supportive of the Gliding Club in principle, Little Gransden Parish Council recommends that, on safety grounds, permission should not be granted for events at the Gliding Club and at Little Gransden Aerodrome to be held on the same day."
5. **Caxton Parish Council** objects. It states 'as you are aware the village has suffered in the past to tugs flying over the village causing nuisance as per its letter dated 22 September 2005 to the club. Caxton Parish Council therefore recommends that the application to vary the condition in August is refused.'
6. **Croxton Parish Council** has no objection to the proposals.
7. **Eltisley Parish Council** has no objections.
8. **Longstowe Parish Council** has no objection to the increased number of aero tow launches during the competition.
9. **Great Gransden Parish Council** has no objection.

10. The comments of **Abbotsley, Arrington, Bourn, Cambourne, Croydon, Gamlingay, Waresley Parish Councils** and the **Chief Environmental Health Officer** are awaited and will be reported at the meeting.

### **Representations**

11. None received.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

12. I have attached as Appendix 2 a copy of a letter that has been sent from the Gliding Club to Little Gransden Parish Council in response to concerns it raised about safety issues arising from holding the competition over the same weekend as the Children in Need event staged at Little Gransden Aerodrome, which has been the case for the last couple of years.
13. The planning consent for Little Gransden Aerodrome allows it to stage two special event days each year when it can exceed the normal daily restriction of 30 take-off movements a day, provided that the Local Planning Authority is given at least one month's prior notification and that the event is publicised in the locality for a similar period. On such days there is a limit of 70 take-off movements a day. However, the specific approval of the Local Planning Authority is not required. This year's Children in Need event is due to be held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August.
14. The issue of safety has been raised previously at meetings of both the Little Gransden Aerodrome and Cambridge Gliding Club Consultative Committees when representatives from both operators have given assurances similar to those set out in the letter at Appendix 2. Safety in the air is controlled by other regulatory bodies and I am of the view that it would not be reasonable for this Authority to object on these grounds.
15. I have asked the Chief Environmental Health Officer to advise whether any direct complaints were received during last year's event. I have also requested that Caxton Parish Council supply a copy of the letter to the Gliding Club referred to in its representation. I understand that there is also a response from the Gliding Club to that letter, a copy of which is also to be provided.
16. Consent has been given for a temporary variation of condition in previous years to allow up to 80 aero tows during the competition week. The nature of the event means that the Club will often launch a large number of gliders in a short space of time resulting in a fairly intensive period of activity and it is this that tends to give rise to complaints, particularly if this activity is centred on one area. Once the gliders are in the air they can be away from the airfield for the majority of the day.
17. The Gliding Club has always said that it will try and disperse activity as much as possible although the ability to do this is largely dependant on weather conditions at the time. In agreeing to a variation for last year's competition it was stated that consideration of any future relaxations of Condition 4 would take account of experience and comments made following this year's competition.
18. I will report the comments from outstanding consultees and the Chief Environmental Health Officer. I will also advise Members of the contents of the letter from Caxton Parish Council to the Gliding Club and its response.

## **Recommendation**

19. Subject to the above I am likely to recommend that no objections are raised to a temporary variation of Condition 4 to allow up to 40 aero tows a day during the period Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2006. In addition I will ask that the Chief Environmental Health Officer carry out noise monitoring during the competition.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning File Ref: S/0607/90/F

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