

GRADE RUAN PARISH COUNCIL

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Meeting with RNAS Culdrose – 9 November 2022, 13:00

Notes of the meeting as above held at the Sunday School Room, Methodist Chapel, Ruan Minor.

Persons Present/Apologies

Parish Council: Cllr Preston (Chairman), Cllr Green (Vice-Chair), L Dunkley (Clerk).

RNAS Culdrose: Lt Cdr "Tank" Murray, Pete McQuie.

Cornwall Council: Cllr Soady CC

Cornwall AONB: Jim Wood, Planning Officer

Apologies: None.

Introductions and update on contacts since the last meeting (October 2019): new Personnel and elected Councillors.

The Parish Council have a new elected membership (May 2021) and a new Cornwall Cllr. Lt Cdr Murray has replaced Lt Cdr Neil Brian who was in post for two years after Lt Cdr John Shallcroft during the pandemic (the Council did not meet Lt Cdr Brian). Pete McQuie is Public relations officer at Culdrose.

Background to this meeting.

During the 'Airspace Change' consultation (about the new Drone squadron), meetings had been held in 2018-19 between the Parish Council and Culdrose to discuss the feedback. These meetings proved beneficial for raising shared awareness and detail about airspace use in the local area. In line with its 'Terms of Reference', following the pandemic in April 2022 the Council wrote to Culdrose (and to other local stakeholders) requesting a resumption of liaison meetings. Further helpful written communication took place through the summer of 2022. This meeting was arranged as the best method to discuss specific local details with Personnel closely connected to flying, and facilitates on-going connection between the Parish Council and RNAS Culdrose as stakeholders in the community. The aim is to help raise and retain mutual awareness and understanding, and identify small adjustments beneficial in the populated coastal strip in this section of Cornwall's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Main Matters Arising:

- a) Flight patterns not connected to Predannack airfield: Repeated overflying: Grade Church, Cadgwith, Ruan Minor, Poltesco, Kuggar, Kennack.

Discussed as above:

A recurring response in the feedback of 2018-19, and through the pandemic, has been about repetitive straight line flying between Grade Church / Cadgwith to the other side of Kennack and back, above the populated coastal strip. These are not circuits of Predannack airfield. A number of examples were examined, (including at weekends and a Bank holiday). The three aspects were discussed:

- 1.) the nature of the flying – repeated fast and slow speed manoeuvres at high and low levels;
- 2.) the nature of the location : the populated coastal strip encompassing Cadgwith, Ruan Minor and Kuggar in the Cornwall AONB; 3.) The overflying is in addition to circuit flying of Predannack airfield, contributing to a cumulative affect. Lt Cdr Murray explained that there is a local flying area extending SW from Traboe Crossroads towards Bass Point, and SE towards Blackhead. Testing of flight equipment for faults/repairs could happen in the area, performed above 1,000ft. He referred to the Lizard Peninsula as Culdrose's 'backyard' but stressed that efforts would always be made to keep disturbance to a minimum and that overflying of sensitive areas should be kept to transit flights.

This is a key issue, and the Council is duty bound to work with Culdrose flight planning as neighbours, to identify the small adjustments which can mitigate the impact.

- b) Flight patterns which are connected to Predannack airfield: day, evening, and nights.

Discussed as above : Circuit flight patterns of Predannack airfield; these should not routinely fly out wide over the villages. Inexperienced pilots may take wider circuits (2 miles). Pilots must use areas that are the best for flying conditions; there are a number of variables and can be dependant on wind direction and which runway is in use. Buildings are used for visual navigational fixes. Wide night-time circuits, especially after 9pm, can cause considerable disturbance, and airspaces over less populated areas to the south, west, north/north-east of Predannack airfield were discussed and identified.

- c) Changes in the local flying timeframe since 2019. -

Helicopter flying will normally only commence after midday due to the 700X drone NAS which have priority-use of the airfield in the mornings.

It was noted that since 2019 in April to July flying has often commenced from late afternoon until dusk. This should not be the case and daylight flying should not continue after 17:00hrs as the airfield is then 'closed'.

Items and updates Discussed and Noted as relevant to wider context :

- a) Changes post-pandemic.

More individuals working from home and businesses having relocated. Wider appreciation and interest in the local environment and especially the local public footpath network.

- b) Airspace Change consultation feedback / 700X NAS.

The consultation has closed and the changes implemented. Drone activity will increase but minimal impact is expected on the community. Discussed: rules about private drones operating, and the logging of flights generally.

- c) Traffic.

As discussed at previous meetings, this is not the remit of the Personnel present at this meeting. It was however noted that the large fire engines have been replaced by smaller ones which are less imposing on the road.

- d) AONB Management Plan 2022 -2027.

The 'Statutory Duty' on all relevant authorities is to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty. The AONB has the same status as National Parks, but there is more understanding of everyday needs of working living landscapes.

Cornwall AONB is '*uniquely placed to work in partnership*' with '*a new focus on the AONB role in supporting communities*', '*recognising the importance of the connection between nature and wellbeing*'. The Gov' Landscape Review seeks to '*ensure sufficient resources*'.

- e) Exeter / Falmouth University studies.

Noted: Studies based on the Lizard Peninsula about the benefits to health from 'therapeutic landscapes', including specific studies on 'Soundscapes' and the impacts of noise.

- f) Dark Skies initiative : potential for partnership.

All parties are generally in favour of the initiative with other stakeholders. The Council thanked Culdrose for replacing glaring lights at the base with downlights.

- g) Update on other operations based at Predannack airfield

There are trespass issues at Predannack airfield, which is a potentially dangerous place. The Council was asked to report anything they become aware of. A new RAF building is being constructed to facilitate gliding, using winches. The ATC tower will be modified.

Ongoing communication, and Request for follow-up meeting July 2023.

Culdrose have a set procedure for logging complaints and enquiries 01326552415. The background to public contact with Culdrose was discussed, and this in itself could form the basis for a separate meeting. Ultimately the Parish Council are best placed to represent community sectors for managing expectations and as a conduit for specific enquiries which can be dealt with direct or referred on to Culdrose for verification or further consultation. All such communication should be logged on the MoD system for reference.

Councillors recognise that Culdrose have a job to do and support this. There is much common interest and overlap locally in communities and sport activities. A follow-up meeting was agreed for **July 2023**, and annually thereafter.

The meeting closed at 15:10