



Essex and Suffolk Gliding Club Planning Application 150127

Questions for Mr Rob Godden, Chairman ESGC

1. Can you provide a brief explanation of how a TMG operates and how it differs from ordinary gliders as well as Self Launching Motor Gliders (SLMGs) and Self Launching Sail Planes (SLSs)?

A TMG has a propeller at the front whereas a SLMG or SLS usually has it within a cavity in the fuselage and it is erected as and when required. The main difference insofar as our application is concerned, and the reason why we are specific as to the term TMG, rather than the more generic term "motor glider" is that the TMG uses a very well silenced four-stroke engine.

2. How does the club currently comply with EASA rules for pilot training?

EASA rules are coming into force and are not yet implemented. Implementation in the UK is agreed and the Civil Aviation Authority is in the process of formulating the finer detail. Our need to operate a TMG fully is to be prepared for a seamless transition and to have our training regime follow the developing rules so that we are compliant at the point when they become mandatory. Preparation will include, for example, ensuring that we have sufficient instructors qualified on this type.

3. We understand that a new TMG is required to comply with statutory requirements for training pilots from your governing body. Can you confirm how many pilots have been trained, on average, each year for the last 10 years?

Gliding requires training to a basic level in one type of glider and then supplementary training to achieve various "ratings" which, for instance, allow the pilot to fly other types of glider or to fly away from the local airfield. Having gained a qualification, pilots are regularly retrained and re-tested to maintain that qualification. This progressive and continuing approach means that all members of the club may be considered to be under training and improving their skills with perhaps 10% of the membership still striving for

the “solo” level. A TMG will primarily be used for those aspects that involve flight away from the airfield to achieve the license and for instructor (re)training.

4. How has the membership of the club changed over the same 10 year period?

It has not changed by much but, in relation to training, especially younger pilots, there is a turnover as they mature and this often means a move away.

5. There is much concern regarding the noise level at which a TMG may operate in future. What studies or assessments have been made in this respect to support your application.

The Club provided demonstration flights last August under an open invitation via the local Parish Council Chairmen so that people could judge for themselves the level of noise produced by the TMG. The aircraft was flown around the airfield environs as well as several flights around the wider area. About eight flights were conducted. Also in attendance were representatives from the environmental side of Colchester Council.

There were no noise complaints from residents and the reaction from those who attended was favourable.

We were advised at the time that noise level tests would not be necessary. Prior to this we had contemplated noise measurement and, in particular, which technique would be necessary. An acoustic expert, who is a member, advised that it would be difficult to measure the noise levels and produce meaningful results due to background noise levels from other sources.

6. Can you confirm the Decibel (dB) levels your TMG will operate at and how would this compare to ambient noise from HGVs, Tractors, passing traffic, existing use on the airfield.

If I can answer partly by referring to the previous response and adding that the noise level on take off i.e. high power level, was heard to be no noisier than our winch (about which we have never had any complaints). During the aforementioned demonstration flights conversation had to be paused in order to pick out the engine noise from the TMG being flown over the airfield at normal circuit height.

7. If the club only requires a new like for like TMG to continue as a training school why does this application seek to remove current restrictions on number/frequency of flights?

Because the existing planning permission effectively relates to glider tugging by conventional powered aircraft. It restricts the number of days per annum to four but does not impose any restriction on the number of flights per day.

We are not attempting to alter this restriction which is a further reason for our drawing a distinction by being very specific about the type of aircraft the application applies to and the intended usage.

8. By making reference to a similar application at Great Oakley does this mean that the ESGC will also seek to expand operations at Wormingford up to and including unrestricted powered flights and/or use by 5 helicopters.

Absolutely not! I would add an assurance that this application is not the thin end of any wedge in terms of usage of powered aircraft of any type. The ethos of the club is the pursuit of gliding as both a sport and recreational activity.

This reference was purely to draw some sort of comparison in relation to the high number of movements approved in the context of the noise level of helicopters.

9. Section 1.5 of the Supporting Statement makes reference to “ a relatively low population” in the Parishes of Wormingford, Mount Bures and Fordham (1499?). Is this relative to the 110 members of the club or the 25 qualified instructors? How many of their members live in the 3 adjacent parishes?

Can I answer this as per question 11 below.

10. Can you specify the bare minimum requirements you need to satisfy to adhere to the current EASA statutory requirements?

We need to be able to teach cross country navigation and selection of suitable fields for making outlandings as part of the revised curriculum for the glider pilots licence. The only practical way of doing this would be in a TMG or other type of powered aircraft. Instructors need to maintain currency (frequency of flight experience) on the TMG and licenced pilots may from time to time require refresher flights to improve specific aspects of their flying skills.

Weather has a determining effect on carrying out some of these exercises in a conventional glider. The flexibility afforded by use of the TMG with permission to take off under its own power and perform flights away from the airfield, especially on days when conventional glider flights are of limited duration, would be of significant benefit.

11. Section 3.5 of the Supporting Statement states “The club provides a real community feel”. Can the club provide any evidence of their attempts to win the hearts and of the people of Wormingford?

Community in this context is wider than the immediate environs of Wormingford. Gliding airfields are quite far apart and so membership is unlikely to be largely from the immediately adjacent community. It simply depends on how many local residents are keen on gliding.

We carry out hundreds of flights each year at discretionary rates for scout troops from Fordham, Eight Ash Green, Braintree, Sudbury and others as well as flying days for some of the Colchester Schools. We run a Cadet Scheme also at discretionary rates in order to encourage young people from the Colchester area to enjoy the sport. Even if an individual does not proceed to formal flying training, at least the experience will, we hope, contribute to their general fulfilment. We have latterly provided educational presentations to schools and other organisations in the area and are keen to increase this activity wherever possible.

We also provide trial flights and air experience flights for members of the public who want to try gliding and the operational flexibility of the TMG would provide a valuable additional option to fly a few of those who are more time constrained.

As I said in my letter to the Parish Council chairman I believe that, during the time ESGC has been at Wormingford, we have been reasonable, if unconventional, neighbours. We have always responded to any complaints or concerns that have been raised with us. We plan to hold an open day this year to celebrate our 25th year at Wormingford Airfield and will communicate on this as plans develop. Overall, Wormingford residents are always welcome to visit ESGC and experience for themselves the activities of the Club.

12. Section 4.3” ... The (Borough Council Development Plan) policy goes on to highlight that existing visitor accommodation sites in rural areas may be an acceptable location for further small scale development” Please clarify this statement.

I frankly do not know. It does not add anything as I see it and is not in any way a reference to any intentions on our part.

13. The application is somewhat opaque on when the TMG is intended to be used, they suggest that they would be happy for conditions to be applied, but in the interests of transparency, can they provide details on what their intentions may be? Days of operation, hours of operation, take offs and landing per day, etc.

Our planning permission allows glider flying all days of the year with no time restriction. We would hope that permission for the TMG would be in parallel with this based upon an acceptance that it will not present a measureable intrusion.

The number of flights by the TMG would be significantly lower than those by conventional gliders and most of its flight time by far would be away from the environs of Wormingford. A typical sortie would involve a take off, proceeding at cruising height out into the East Anglia region returning an hour or more later. On its return the norm would be for the engine to be shut down prior to descent towards the Airfield for a conventional glider circuit and landing. Even with the engine on very little, if any, power is used for the circuit and landing.

We would ask that you bear in mind that we need to allow for the busiest day, the vagaries of our weather and that the TMG will not be in use on every flying day. Flexibility is of the essence and in this context a weekly limit would be preferable which would need for all practical purposes to be 70 flights in any one week (a flight being from engine startup prior to take off and until the aircraft comes to a halt on completion of landing).

14. What airspace would be affected? The Application talks of the aircraft spending time away from the airfield environs, but not where this might be, might be over flying residential areas and therefore have more of an impact on residential amenity?

I hope that answer to question 13 will cover this one also. It is worth my adding that the aircraft will, for most of the time away from Wormingford, be at a cruising altitude from which it is hardly audible at ground level.

15. Other residential properties are much closer that the settlements detailed in section 1.6 of the Supporting Statement. How far are the nearest residents to the airfield? Where was the 0.6 miles measure from?

I believe the measurement is from a map and is from the airfield runway centreline. Our closest residents are adjacent to the airfield boundary alongside Fairfields Farm.

Best regards

**Mick Collins
Chairman
Wormingford Parish Council**