ARNAF meeting 11 August 2026 - Notes

Present:

Christopher Ford – Crofton RA
Andrea Stevens – Petts Wood & District RA
Andy Hardy – Woldingham Association
Peter Holbrook – Woldingham PC
Zoe Knight – Downe RA
Chris Deefholts – Chelsham & Farleigh PC

David Winstanley – London Biggin Hill Airport, Chief Executive Officer
Bob Graham – London Biggin Hill Airport, Chief Operating Officer
Matthew Amer – London Biggin Hill Airport, Head of PR & Marketing
Colin Hitchins – London Biggin Hill Airport, Head of Sustainability

Welcome and introduction from David W

Circling Approach to Runway 03 (David W)

- There is no such thing as a standard circling approach to Runway 03 as there is no prescribed track.
- The Circling approach to Runway 03 is a licensed CAA procedure. Pilots need to be given ATC clearance to fly it.
- Technically it is an IFR approach, BUT pilots fly a section of it visually.
- Chris F: The circling approach to Runway 03 is the most complained about procedure by my residents. Pilots fly it at under 2000 ft.
- David W: Pilots would be entirely within their rights to do so. Also, they do not need to avoid NSAs as they are following a specific ATC instruction/clearance. All pilots flying the circling approach to Runway 03 have been instructed to do so by ATC. The point at which the pilot turns away from the ILS is the pilot's decision and is based on when they can see the required visual references.
- Peter H: How are pilots briefed?
- David W: Briefing of pilots is derived by the use of published approach charts and entries in the UK AIP. The pilot in charge is legally responsible for flying the approach safely.
- Chris F: If a pilot is flying the circling approach to Runway 03, why can they not do it above 2000ft over an NSA?
- David W: The whole point of the procedure is to effectively 'break cloud'. The pilots are using the procedure to descend through cloud and then continue visually until they reach the procedure minimum.
- Chris F: But what about on clear days when there is no cloud?
- David W: We have to remember that the pilot can fly IFR in VMC. When flying in IFR conditions, each aircraft will have a procedure minima, this is the lowest point an aircraft can reach before making visual contact with the runway. When an aircraft pilot moves to VFR flight, they can proceed beyond the procedure minima as long as it is safe to do so and they are following the appropriate rules. In class G airspace, aircraft must

keep 500 feet from any obstacle or person. This can be vertically or horizontally. So, in theory, a person on the side of a hill could look down on an aircraft that was 500 feet away horizontally and it would still be compliant. However, the rule does not apply from the point that pilot begins the landing segment of their approach.

- It is important to remember that there have been no safety incidents in the entire history of the 03-circling approach, and nothing has changed about how that approach has been flown since it was introduced. London Biggin Hill Airport has never and will never compromise safety for commercial gain.

Not to turn before point (David W)

- The concept of a 'not to turn before' point on the 03 circling approach was suggested by a pilot, who is currently the chair of the Noise and Safety Sub-Committee. It was not previously thought possible, but he is one of the world's most respected test pilots and has a wealth of experience.
- It was thought we could add the 'not to turn before' point without an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP). Having now spoken to the CAA about it, they have said it does require an ACP. We have submitted the appropriate documentation. We hope to be able to pass it as swiftly as possible, but the speed of introduction relies on the CAA.
- The introduction of the 'Not to turn before' point means that a pilot flying the 03-circling approach would have to follow the line of the ILS to a designated point regardless of visual references. They would not, however, have to descend to a certain height on the ILS. This point would be based on specified distance from the ILS DME. This would not change the principles of the approach, but setting the 'not to turn before' point should assist with the procedure being flown without entering NSAs.
- There has also been a suggestion from the NSSC chair that a prescribed shortening of the downwind leg could be introduced to minimise penetrations of the Woldingham NSA.
- Chris D: How would this change affect Chelsham & Farleigh?
- David W: The alterations should see the swathe of tracks tighten, given the new restrictions. This should reduce the number of outlying aircraft flying over the Chelsham and Farleigh area.

New approach to Runway 03 (David W)

- We believe that there was an assumption by residents that when the trial of the new approach to Runway 03 started, the circling approach would immediately disappear. That was never the case and we have always stressed that not all aircraft will be able to fly the approach.
- The NAP refers to the new approach to Runway 03 'replacing' the circling approach. We don't know at this point if we can 'replace' the circling approach entirely as we do not know how many aircraft are equipped to fly the new approach and we do not know if we can mandate the procedure. However, we are still committed to trying to achieve the 30%-40% reduction stated in the NAP.
- We are trying to ascertain how many of the aircraft currently flying the circling approach rather than the new approach are equipped to fly the new approach. This is proving difficult as operators don't necessarily have that information easily to hand, and it is not

down to the type of aircraft, rather the flight management system (FMS) installed in that particular aircraft.

- Chris F: Does knowing the aircraft not tell you what the FMS is?
- David W: No, it could be different for each.
- Chris D: Have you asked operators to supply which aircraft have which FMS?
- David W: We have asked but not received many replies. We are still working on finding this information. We are expecting greater take up of the procedure in less favourable weather conditions as it offers a lower procedure minima.
- Peter H: Once an aircraft is flying the new approach to Runway 03, can they break away from it and fly visually.
- David W: No. They cannot convert this IFR approach into a VFR approach like the circling approach.
- Peter H: It appears to have happened as I've seen it.
- David W: Without seeing the example it is hard to comment, but it may not have been flying the approach or it may have aborted the approach. Air traffic or a TCAS might cause a break of approach, but that would more likely be a climb or descent alteration.
- Peter H: One of the aircraft flew in from the West
- David W: An aircraft cannot join the trial 03 approach from the West. An approach from the west will be flying VFR under different rules.
- Zoe K: How is the new approach affecting Downe?
- David W: Aircraft will be higher on the new approach (3000ft amsl) as opposed to descending on the ILS.
- Zoe K: I haven't received any complaints but have had verbal comments about being overflown.
- Chris D raises an issue about percentages and numbers presented regarding number of aircraft flying the new approach and circling approach. Airport agrees to go away and check.
- On checking it appears there had been a technical issue with numbers produced for ARNAF reflecting flights during the trial period to date. Having gone right back to source the correct numbers, according to ATC data, are:

Month	**Runway 03 trial RNP Approaches**	**Circling Approaches**	**Overall IFR Approaches to Runway 03**	**Percentage 03 RNP Approaches**
May	34	65	99	34.34%
June	14	32	46	43.75%
July	133	260	393	33.84%
August*	28*	65*	93	30.10%
Total	209	422	631	33.12%

* = August incomplete month – last flight on 03 RNP
Approach at time of compiling notes 15/08

NAP Review (David W)

- The airport is working in association with London Borough of Bromley to complete the NAP review. The airport has sent LBB 35 pages of data. This includes updates on actions from the Noise Action Plan, responses to LBB requests, improvements made over the last five years and other suggestions.
- We would like ARNAF to sign off all the ARNAF-related elements of the NAP review.
- With regards to KPI data, once Chris F, David W and Colin H have verified the KPI data, it will be published, including backdated data. We believe, as this is an ARNAF-led initiative, it should stay so. No-one else should get the right to set these KPIs – they are set by the residents through the ARNAF.
- Much of the discussion around the NAP review is private and confidential however, we are looking at creating illustrative pilot maps showing preferred VFR tracks. This would primarily be aimed at visiting pilots who do not know the area around the airfield as well. Homebased pilots are already incentivized with a landing discount that can be removed for not following the rules.
- Noise contour measurement will also be discussed. We believe this can be a confusing metric and there may be better alternatives.
- Topics such as Continuous Descent Approach will now fall under the control of the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS), which is working to revise the entirety of UK airspace, focusing first on the London area. We have asked UKADS about the potential of westerly arrivals as part of the redesign. This would stop westerly approaching aircraft flying unnecessary track miles to the north east of the borough before beginning their approach.

AOB

- Andrea S: April Biggin Hill Airport Consultative Committee minutes have not been published.
- David W: We will raise the issue of a more speedy publishing of BHACC minutes at the next meeting.

ACTION: Ensure April minutes published asap

- Would it be possible to publish simple information about safety on the website, height of flights etc

ACTION: Airport to consider ways to present simplified information for residents.

ACTION: Contact Cudham RA with renewed offer to join ARNAF