

ESHOTT AIRFIELD

Northumberland



Community Relations Policy

Eshott Airfield
Bockenfield
Morpeth
NE65 9QJ

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

Eshott Airfield is committed to being a good neighbour within our local community. However, if you live near an active airfield it's inevitable that you'll see and hear aircraft. We ask that pilots adhere to our procedures.

The Eshott Airfield Community Relations Policy (CRP) is a reference document for airfield operators, airfield members, communities, and local public bodies to help us maintain good relations. It contains information on published rules and procedures which are either regulated by the force of law (the Air Navigation Order) or applied by Eshott Airfield to balance the operations of the airfield and needs of the local community.

In order to mitigate the effect of operations on local communities, Eshott Airfield has voluntarily introduced this policy. This policy demonstrates that we are conscious of the need to fit into the wider community and be a good neighbour. However, it's not possible to address every possible operation, in the immediate vicinity of the airfield. This policy prioritises the safe conduct of flight and the management of risks to both aircraft operators and the local population.

This policy cannot replace published rules and procedures including, but not limited to, the Air Navigation Order (ANO) or the airfield's Flying Order Book (FOB).

1.2 Applicability

It is individual pilots' responsibility to ensure they fly in accordance with published procedures and adhere to Rule 5 of the ANO; in that an aircraft shall not be flown closer than 500ft to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure subject to the exceptions of Rule 6 of the ANO which includes landing and taking off from an aerodrome.

These published procedures apply to all aircraft using Eshott Airfield, other than emergency aircraft such as the police, air ambulance and military traffic.

As an unlicensed airfield we adhere to the Civil Aviation Authority's codes of practice, namely CAP 700 and CAP 793. We have our own safety management system in place.

1.3 Flying Activity

Eshott Airfield is operated by North East Aviation Services Ltd. It is home to North East Aviation Training, North East Aero Engineering, Northumberland Aero Club, Blackstone Aviation and Tiger Flights. It is a busy general aviation aerodrome serving a varied and diverse customer base.

Regular users are based here and visitors, are training onsite or are privately owned aircraft.

2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

All aircraft operating in the UK must comply with the UK Air Navigation Order (ANO), The Rules of Air Regulations and Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA).

2.1. SERA.5001 (VMC Visibility and Distance from Cloud Minima) and SERA.5005(a) (Visual Flight Rules)

The CAA has issued “Official Record Series 4 General Exemption E4073” to permit Visual Flight Rules (VFR) flights to operate in the following conditions:

- Fixed-wing – by day only; remaining clear of cloud with the surface in sight and with a flight visibility of at least 5km. If the aircraft flies at an indicated air speed of 140kts or less to give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic and any obstacles in time to avoid a collision.
- Helicopters – by day only; remaining clear of cloud with the surface in sight and with a flight visibility of at least 1500m. If the helicopter flies at an indicated air speed of 140kts or less to give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic and any obstacles in time to avoid a collision.

Other than specified above, aircraft must be flown at a height of more than 150m (500ft) above the ground or water, or 150m (500ft) above the highest obstacle within a radius of 150m (500ft) from the aircraft. There are some special exemptions to this rule for the purposes of displays and air racing.

The pilot in command of the aircraft is legally and solely responsible for operation of an aircraft, the safety of passengers, and for determining the flight path to comply with the Rules of The Air, ANO and SERA.

2.2. Approaches to Landing or Forced Landing

The CAA permits under SERA.3105, SERA.5005(f) and SERA.5015(b) an aircraft to fly below 150m (500ft) above the ground or water if it is flying in accordance with normal aviation practice and:

- practising approaches to land or procedures at an aerodrome
- practising approaches to forced landings other than at an aerodrome if it is not flown closer than 150m (500ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure.

2.3. Minimum Height

SERA.3105 states that, except when necessary for take-off or landing, aircraft shall not be flown over congested areas of cities, towns or settlements or over an open-air assembly of persons, unless at a height as will permit, in the event of an emergency arising, a landing to be made without hazard to persons or property on the surface.

Except for take-offs and landings the minimum height for VFR flights over a congested areas of cities, towns or settlements or over an open-air assembly of persons will be not less than 300m (1,000ft) above the highest obstacle within 600m from the aircraft. Elsewhere it will be 150m (500ft) above the ground or water or 150m (500ft) above the highest obstacle within a radius of 150m (500ft) from the aircraft.

Exemptions do exist where given by a competent authority. The CAA have given their permission under ORS4 1496 which allows for the provision of flight as long as certain conditions are met (you

can fly lower than 500ft provided you stay more than 500ft from people, vehicles, vessels or structures).

2.4. Manoeuvring Helicopters

The CAA permits, under SERA.3105 and SERA.5005(f), a helicopter to fly below 150m (500ft) above the ground or water or closer than 150m (500ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure if it is conducting manoeuvres, in accordance with normal aviation practice, with the boundaries of an aerodrome provided it is no closer than 60m to any persons, vessels, vehicles or structures located outside the aerodrome.

2.5 Prohibiting Over-flight of Specific Areas

We have no legal authority to prohibit aircraft from over flying specific areas. Pilots are requested to avoid certain areas whenever possible.

We publish our circuit patterns that seek to minimise the impact of airfield operations. These are guidance for all pilots that show the direction to be flown in and noise abatement areas. These circuits are not dedicated ‘lanes’ and won’t always be flown as shown as pilots need to ensure they are within gliding distance of the airfield for safety reasons.

2.6 Arrival and Departures

EASA Air Operations Regulations Part-NCO Annex VII states that a pilot shall take into account published noise abatement procedures to minimise the effect of aircraft noise while ensuring that safety has priority over noise abatement.

Routings for aircraft operating under VFR cannot be enforced by Eshott Airfield or North East Aviation Services Ltd as the pilot may need to deviate to comply with the Standardised European Rules of the Air as well as the specific conditions of their pilot’s licence.

3. AIRFIELD OPERATIONS

3.1 Circuit Patterns

At Eshott Airfield we operate a circuit height of 1000 ft Above Ground Level.

Pilots are requested to adhere to the published circuit patterns and procedures. All aircraft based at Eshott Airfield will endeavour to maintain the agreed circuit pattern and procedures as stipulated by the Eshott Airfield Flying Order Book.

Circuit training is an essential part of pilot ab-initio and continuation training. Part of this is the requirement to practise multiple take-offs and landings under varying conditions. Commonly termed “circuits and bumps” this results in multiple circuits by multiple aircraft at busy periods. Part of essential safety training includes practice engine failures. Single engine aircraft will be seen to manoeuvre, at idle power, toward open ground where a forced landing could take place but will climb away remaining above 500ft at all times.

Low level practice is used to simulate a lowering cloud base and worsening weather forcing an immediate landing. These manoeuvres are practiced on good weather days. These circuits differ in pattern and height from standard published circuits.

Pilots may deviate from the prescribed circuit pattern due to a number of factors including student pilots making an error, visiting pilots misidentifying the locations or the pilot maintaining the safe operation of their aircraft.

3.2 Departures

All fixed wing aircraft will depart from one of the two available runways dependent upon weather conditions. All departures are to be on the runway heading or via the published circuit for the nominated runway in use as required and to climb out until a minimum of 400 ft before turning.

Noise sensitive areas are stipulated and pilots are requested to avoid over flight of these areas.

3.3 Arrivals

All fixed wing aircraft are requested to conduct a ‘standard overhead join’ and will therefore approach the aerodrome at 1500 ft and descend to 1000 ft on the opposite side of the runway to the circuit. This ‘dead side’ join of the nominated runway in use follows recommended CAA procedures to ensure a safe environment.

Noise sensitive areas are stipulated and pilots are requested to avoid over flight of these areas.

3.4 Noise Abatement

Pilots are requested to follow the published circuit patterns in accordance with the runway in use.

Pilots are specifically requested to avoid flying over the villages of Felton and Eshott.

It is not possible to request pilots to avoid flying over all isolated or individual properties in the vicinity of the airfield as this is not conducive with the safe operation of an aircraft during a critical stage of flight.

3.5 Operating Restrictions

We have certain procedures and restrictions for the safe operation of the airfield and to minimise the nuisance caused to local residents. These include:

- airfield hours of operation are 09:00 until 19:00
- a weight limit of 5700kg

3.6 Enforcement

Eshott Airfield is not responsible for enforcing the regulations set out in the Air Navigation Order or the Rules of the Air Regulations.

We provide an Air Ground Radio service for the purpose of providing information to pilots to aid in the safe operation of their flights. We are not permitted for this service to issue instructions to pilots.

We will take appropriate action involving individual pilots or operators if aircraft operations are not consistent with the terms of the airfield's Community Relations Policy.

4. REPORTING OBSERVATIONS OR MAKING A COMPLAINT

4.1 General Policy

The airfield wishes to maintain good relationships with the community and particularly those living or working close to Eshott Airfield. By its nature the operation will result in some members of the public voicing concerns. These concerns will be dealt with in a constructive and helpful manner and if aircraft operations are not consistent with the terms of the Community Relations Policy, then appropriate action will be taken involving individual pilots or operators.

4.2 Submitting Observations/Complaints

The flight operations team at Eshott Airfield is primarily responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the airfield. This means that, on occasion, a direct response to an enquiry or to telephone calls may not be possible. As such we have provided additional ways to report observations or log a complaint of aircraft which may be contravening the policy.

The methods of reporting are:

- By telephone (01670 787 881)
- Online at www.eshottairfield.com
- By email to ops@eshottairfield.com
- By letter to the Director of Flight Operations, Eshott Airfield, Bockenfield, Near Felton, NE65 9QJ.

Reports about noise or flying operations on the airfield will be dealt with by the flight operations team. Wherever possible as many of the following details should be included in verbal or written reports:

- The point of non-compliance with the published Community Relations Policy.
- Type of aircraft, colour with registration letters, date, time and location.
- The name, address, email address and telephone number of the reporter/complainant.

We aim to respond to substantiated reports or complaints within 10 working days.

4.3 Recording Reports

All observations and complaints are logged by our operations staff.

This information is both used at the time of submission to address the concerns and used to enable us to gather statistical data on the numbers and locations of calls.

4.4 Eshott Airfield Procedures

Our procedures when taking a report are:

- 1) Observations or complaints submitted shall be entered into a log by the staff taking the call, retrieving the messages, recording from email or submitted via the website. Where required information has not been provided it should be stated when completing the record.
- 2) Staff should remain calm, polite, helpful and professional at all times.
- 3) Ensure you request all details required to complete the log. It is recommended that if you complete the log as soon as the practical after the call. Ensure details of the runway in use are recorded.
- 4) Where the operation is within the scope of normal operating procedures no action needs to be taken.
- 5) If the caller is unable to provide information that would enable follow up they should be advised that without such information it is unlikely we could take any action. The call should still be logged and you should note that this in the log.
- 6) Callers should be advised that all observations and complaints will be accurately logged for later review and discussion.
- 7) Threatening or abusive behaviour is not acceptable. Staff will terminate the call if threatened or abused. The call should still be logged and you should note that this occurred. A member of the management team should be informed.

Our procedures when investigating an observation or complaint are:

- Internal review by the flight operations team.
- If the observation or subject of the complaint is within the scope of normal operating procedures, no action will be taken.
- If a breach of the community relations policy is upheld, the observer/complainant will be advised within 10 working days and the pilot in charge will be subject to appropriate action.

4.5 Vexatious Observations/Complaints

A vexatious observation or complaint means one that is made or pursued without reasonable grounds or made to harass or annoy, to cause delay or detriment, or for any other wrongful purpose that may have a detrimental impact on the airfield's reputation.

The airfield may become subject to persistent complaints so has developed a policy to address 'vexatious' complaints, where:

- Complaints are abusive, threatening, or unacceptable in nature.
- Repeated complaints about the same movement are submitted.
- A person who makes more than five non-substantiated complaints (ie those where no deviation from flight procedures is found or where there were safety reasons for making that deviation) within a one-month period.
- A person makes repeated requests for information they are not entitled to.
- A person demonstrates a pattern of repeated communication where it is clear that they have not accepted the information given to them previously.

All vexatious complaints will be referred to the North East Aviation Services Board and if confirmed that the complaint is vexatious under this policy:

- Subsequent substantiated complaints from a person deemed to be vexatious will be processed in the normal manner, including a letter of response, however, unsubstantiated complaints by complainants listed as vexatious will not warrant a response.
- The airfield will notify the vexatious complainant in writing, informing them of their decision.