

Coombe Hill Soaring Association (CHSA)

<http://www.coombehillsa.org.uk>



Members Handbook and Safety Code

Affiliated to the  
British Model Flying Association (Club No. 2939)



**Coombe Hill Soaring Association (CHSA)**  
**Members Handbook and Safety Code**  
Revised September 2022

**1. Introduction**

This handbook documents the structure of the CHSA and the rules and regulations under which the CHSA operates.

It is a condition of membership of the Coombe Hill Soaring Association (CHSA) that you accept the Rules laid down in this Handbook so please read it carefully.

Many of the rules relate to safety and represent what is really common sense and good practice for all model flyers. When flying at other sites or competitions you must also observe local rules and therefore be a good ambassador for the CHSA.

Any questions related to this handbook should be directed the CHSA Secretary or Chairman.

**2. British Model Flying Association (BMFA) and the Importance of Insurance**

The Coombe Hill Soaring Association is affiliated to the BMFA as Club No. 2939. It is therefore a condition of membership to the CHSA that all members must also be members of the BMFA. If your membership of the BMFA lapses, so will your insurance cover and your membership of the CHSA. You must have BMFA membership to fly at Coombe Hill.

The BMFA Members handbook contains considerable useful information about 'best practice' and emphasises the importance of safety in all aspects of model flying. Please take the time to browse through the content.

**2.1 Changes to the Law affecting the Flying of Model Aircraft in the UK**

From the beginning of 2020 controls set out by the Department of Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority have become law. These apply to all aircraft over the weight of 250g except for control line aircraft. The BMFA have been heavily involved in consultations over the framing of these laws and have provided members with details of how these affect model flying in the UK.

All members of CHSA must read this guidance and adhere to the instructions provided by the BMFA.

The key points are:

(a) All flyers must obtain a Certificate of Competence by passing the on-line tests provided by the BFMA or CAA or by showing they have the relative expertise because of Achievement Certificates issues by appropriate organisations.

(b) For all models > 250g fliers must obtain CAA registration and the registration number must be visible or held in an easily accessible compartment.

In addition, new restrictions have come into place controlling flying in proximity of airports or aerodromes setting out specific no-fly zones.

Some useful web links are:

CAA (Civil Aviation Authority)      <https://register-drones.caa.co.uk/>

Drone Safe                                      <https://dronesafe.uk/restrictions/>

This has a map showing the no fly zones around all UK airports and aerodromes.

## **2.2 Membership of the CHSA**

The Secretary is responsible for keeping full records of all members including address, telephone numbers, date of birth and BMFA number. Members changing any details must notify the Secretary by email or in writing at the earliest opportunity.

Information on membership is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998. Members are deemed to have given consent to their address and telephone number being disclosed to other members of the CHSA unless they notify the Secretary in writing to the contrary. Members personal details will not be disclosed to any third party without the consent of the member concerned.

It will be the responsibility of the Treasurer to provide renewal forms to all members before December 31<sup>st</sup> annually and to collect subscriptions. Subscriptions are annual and due after the 1<sup>st</sup> January annually.

The CHSA Committee will set the annual membership subscription at the AGM. BMFA membership can be obtained through the CHSA, or a member may join the CHSA provided they show proof of current BMFA membership via another affiliated club or as a Country Member.

When the CHSA Treasurer receives your BMFA subscription, your BMFA insurance is valid.

## **3. Guests**

Non-CHSA members may fly as accompanied guests of the CHSA but they MUST have current membership of the BMFA. Guests must attend with a full member of the CHSA and must carry their BMFA membership card when flying at Coombe Hill. NT staff or a CHSA committee member may ask members and their guests to produce their membership cards and flying without BMFA insurance is strictly prohibited.

## **4. The National Trust Licence**

The CHSA hold a license to fly unpowered model aircraft and quiet electric assisted gliders ONLY from specific areas of Coombe Hill.

The license is valid for one year and is renewed annually in early December when the license fee is payable to The National Trust.

Remember that the public have the same rights of access as you to Coombe Hill and you must respect those rights. It is the responsibility of all members of the Association to comply with the National Trust byelaws and assist the Trust's staff as far as possible in securing compliance with such byelaws. Membership of the CHSA neither offers nor implies any rights or privileges on the use of Coombe Hill, neither does it remove any rights or privileges enjoyed by the general public.

It is worth noting that a large percentage of model aircraft flown in the UK are flown over National Trust property. In order that we may all continue to enjoy a harmonious relationship with the National Trust, it is essential we fly safely and responsibly at all times.

## **5. General Flying Procedures – The CHSA Safety Code**

You must always refer to the CHSA Risk Assessment, a copy of which has been sent to you.

In addition to the National Trust Bye Laws, the following rules must always be followed when flying at Coombe Hill:

### **5.1 Model Types Permitted at Coombe Hill**

Under the terms of the licence agreement between The National Trust and the CHSA, only UNPOWERED MODEL AIRCRAFT and QUIET ELECTRIC ASSISTED GLIDERS may be flown at Coombe Hill.

The definition of a QUIET ELECTRIC ASSISTED GLIDER is as follows:

- Have a single, quiet electric motor;
- Be of a tractor configuration (ie propeller at the front);
- Use a folding propeller of maximum 14" and minimum 7" diameter;
- Use a battery pack of no more than 13V at full charge (ie a 3 cell lithium based pack, 10 cell nickel metal hydride pack or equivalent future battery technology).

For the avoidance of doubt, specific examples of models that may NOT be flown include (but are not limited to):

- Any electric model that does not meet the criteria for a QUIET ELECTRIC ASSISTED GLIDER as set out above;

- Any model with a fixed (non-folding) propeller;
- Any internal combustion (IC) powered aircraft;
- Any electric ducted fan (EDF) aircraft;
- Rotary-wing aircraft of any type (multirotors, helicopters, autogyros etc);
- Control line aircraft of any type.

Any electric model flown must be capable of sustaining unpowered flight in the prevailing conditions. The power option should only be used to assist launching or to recover from a difficult situation – for example the need to suddenly abort a landing approach.

## 5.2 Establishing the Slope

The first flier(s) to arrive will establish the pits area for the day and must immediately set up a mechanism of frequency control (see section 7.3) if using 35MHz equipment. Later arrivals must go to the pits area and discuss any changes to the slope being used even if they are using 2.4GHz radio equipment.

Flying from a location other than the one already in use without prior arrangement is a breach of the Association's safety code. At the very least, it will cause disruption and inconvenience to flyers on 35MHz while frequencies in use are checked.

## 5.3 Frequency Control Procedures

The official frequency bands for model aircraft in the UK are 35MHz and 2.4GHz.

Only use approved channels (35MHz or 2.4GHz) with crystals (if required) that have been checked regularly and inserted correctly. If using 35MHz beware of interference from non-members with toy RC vehicles.

A table of 35MHz channel numbers and their frequencies can be found in section 8 of this handbook.

### 35MHz Procedures

- All members using 35MHz equipment must carry and use a frequency pegboard when flying on Coombe Hill. This is especially important when the hill is in use by a large number of pilots.
- A PEG OFF system is used at Coombe Hill.
- No 35MHz transmitter should be switched on unless a peg from the board representing the channel on which the transmitter is to be operated is clipped to the aerial.
- After each flight, replace the peg on the board after the transmitter is switched off as other people may be waiting to fly.

### 2.4GHz Procedure

Because 2.4GHz equipment is specifically designed to prevent interference between pilots, no pegboard or other means of frequency control is required. On arrival 2.4GHz users should still go to the location from which other pilots are flying to make their presence known.

## 5.4 Pre-Flight Preparation

- Always carry out thorough pre-flight checks to confirm that all controls move freely and in the correct directions, the model is mechanically sound, all electrical connections are properly made and that the model is in-trim.
- Check batteries are in good condition and monitor their state of charge between flights.
- If you have had a hard landing, check the model carefully before re-launching
- If you suspect any faults DO NOT FLY
- Novices MUST seek advice. If you are a novice flyer please ask an experienced flyer to assist you with launching, flying and landing. If in doubt DO NOT FLY.

## 5.5 Launching and General Flight

- Move the transmitter sticks one final time to check that all the flying surfaces are moving in the correct direction.
- Launch from a point >50m from the Monument.
- Before launching check there are no other people in front of you or are likely to be in your selected landing area. Be warned, people can appear in the most unlikely places.
- Be very aware of models already airborne, especially those that might be flying close to the slope to your left or right.
- Call out 'LAUNCHING' to ensure people and other flyers are aware you are about to take to the air.
- For models > 4m wingspan it is recommended that a second experienced person other than the pilot should launch the model.
- Do not deliberately overfly members of the public.
- Our license with the National Trust prohibits competition. There must be no racing and no combat flying.
- Very occasionally full-size gliders may fly close to the slope. If this happens whilst you are flying CHSA members must comply with CAA article 16 and maintain line of sight with model.

## 5.6 Additional Conditions for use of Quiet Electric Assisted Gliders

- All electric models must meet the criteria to be categorised as a quiet electric assisted glider.
- The electric motor may only be used to:
  - o Climb to sufficient height to contact lift, or;
  - o Enable a safe return to the landing area in the event that insufficient lift is encountered during the flight or when landing.
- The electric motor should be switched off as soon as slope or thermal lift is encountered that can sustain flight.

## 5.7 Approach and Landing

- Always aim to land > 50m from the monument.
- If members of the public are close to the proposed landing area, select another landing area.
- If all is clear, call 'LANDING'.
- Landing at Coombe Hill requires planning; be prepared to go round again when landing on top of the slope.
- In strong winds it may be safer to land on the plateau behind the slope. This needs care and vigilance and is easier to warn members of the public with a helper.
- Any accident or near miss must be reported immediately to the CHSA Secretary and an incident report form completed and sent to the CHSA Secretary.

## 5.8 General Points

- Please remember that we share Coombe Hill with other users and we are a very small minority group. Always be courteous to members of the public and help them to understand our sport.
- When several pilots are using the slope, stand together and co-operate with regard to landing and warning each other of approaching walkers, etc.
- Keep your CHSA and BMFA membership cards handy – NT staff or a CHSA committee member may request to see them.
- Always carry a basic first aid kit as part of your equipment.

## 6. Incident Reporting

Any incident where a model aircraft comes into contact with a member of the public or other flyers must be reported to a CHSA committee member and to the BMFA / CAA Portal. The CHSA Chairman or Secretary will advise the National Trust if necessary.

Do not admit liability or discuss insurance. Do not offer any information other than your name and address.

If you are unfortunate enough to be involved in an incident resulting in injury then your first action must clearly be for the welfare of those involved and to ensure that proper medical attention is available as quickly as possible. Gather the facts relating to the accident immediately and write them down; do not try to hold them in your head, you may suffer from delayed shock and forget, or recall details incorrectly. Record the date and time of the incident and obtain the names and addresses (plus phone number and email address etc.) of witnesses and those involved or affected. Retain all parts of your model.

Also note the location and weather conditions and be able to provide a description of what happened. Record the details of the model, radio equipment type and frequency used. If you have a camera, take photographs of the incident.

An Incident Report Form can be found on page 9 of this handbook. This form must be completed as soon as possible after any incident that might result in further action of a claim from the BMFA insurers. Members are requested to carry a copy of this form in their flight bag.

Remember, it is your responsibility to build and fly your models with proper care, failure to do this may result in personal liability.

The CHSA membership has an excellent record for safety so please help us maintain it wherever and whenever you fly.

## **7. Litter**

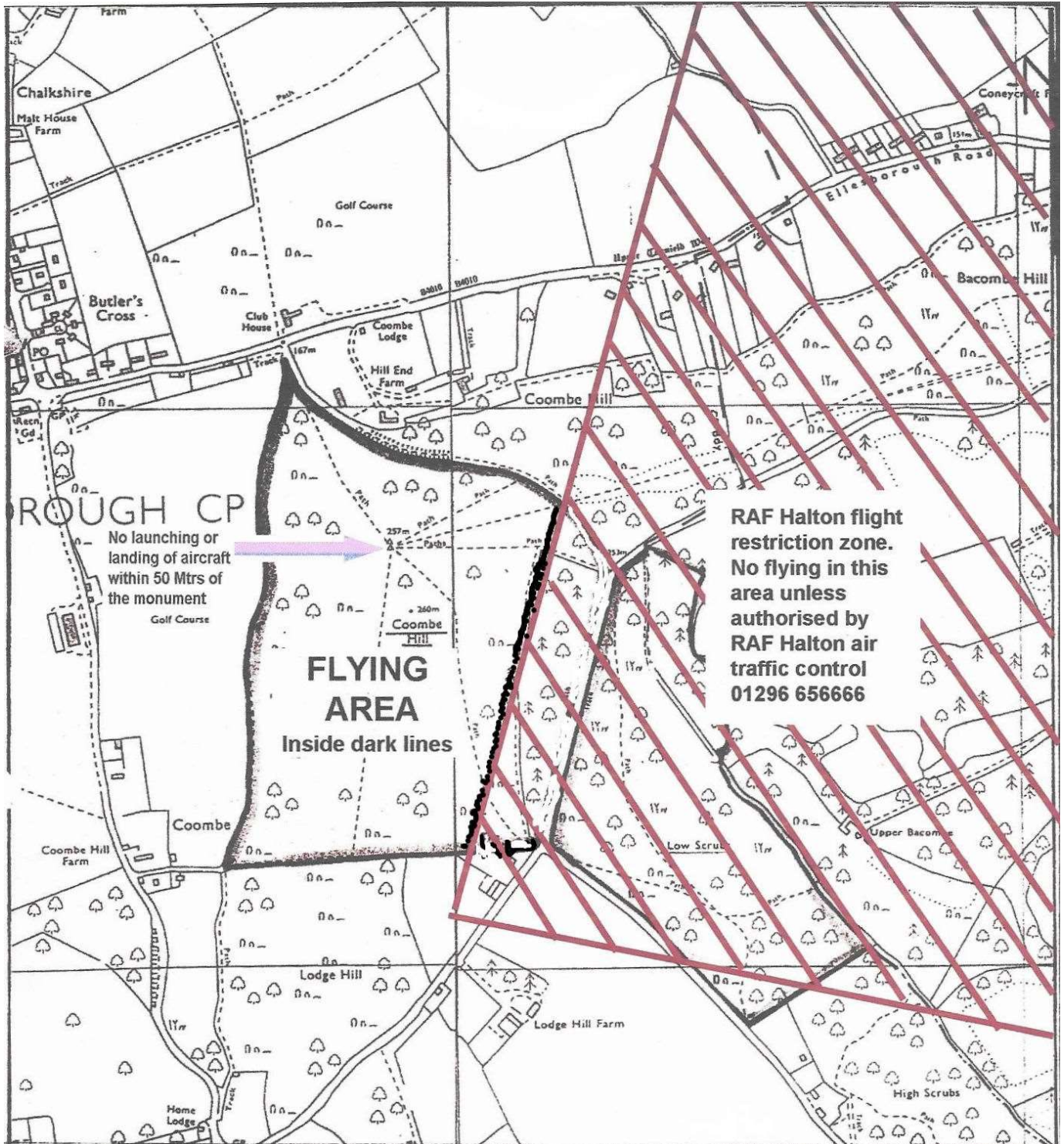
Do not damage the environment.

Everything you take to the site, take it home again, including rubber bands, PVC tape, bits of broken models, food, packaging etc.

If you find litter such as bottles, cans or food wrappers on Coombe Hill please be prepared to pick it up and take it home. This will be of enormous help to The National Trust and keep our flying site a pleasure to visit.

## 7. Flying Area

Please only fly within the area identified on the map as permitted under the agreement with the National Trust. Please note models must not be launched or landed within 50m of the Monument:



Regional Office: Hughenden Manor. High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4LA  
Phone: 01494 528051 Fax: 01494 463310

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**8. Table of Frequencies for the 35MHz band**

<b>Channel No.</b>	<b>Frequency MHz</b>	<b>Channel No.</b>	<b>Frequency MHz</b>
55	34.950	73	35.130
56	34.960	74	35.140
57	34.970	75	35.150
58	34.980	76	35.160
59	34.990	77	35.170
60	35.000	78	35.180
61	35.010	79	35.190
62	35.020	80	35.200
63	35.030	81	35.210
64	35.040	82	35.220
65	35.050	83	35.230
66	35.060	84	35.240
67	35.070	85	35.250
68	35.080	86	35.260
69	35.090	87	35.270
70	35.100	88	35.280
71	35.110	89	35.290
72	35.120	90	35.300

**Notes:**

Artwork for a 35MHz frequency pegboard can be downloaded as a PDF file from:  
<http://rc-soar.com/pegboard/index.htm> (Courtesy of Mike Shellim).



**COOMBE HILL SOARING ASSOCIATION  
INCIDENT & ACCIDENT REPORT FORM**



Incident & accident report form to be completed by the witness and sent to the Coombe Hill Secretary as soon as possible. Each CHSA witness should complete a form. Contact details are on the website; if a CHSA Committee member is present please hand the completed form to them.

Name of witness: \_\_\_\_\_ -

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile number. \_\_\_\_\_

Was a Pegboard in use at the time of the incident? Yes / No

Date and Time of incident / accident	Location <i>(be as precise as possible)</i>	Weather conditions	Names of participants	Model type(s) and name(s); Frequencies in use (Ch. Nos.)	Observation and comments <i>(Please state briefly what happened)</i>

The name of the witness given above will be treated in strict confidence and the information provided is for use by the CHSA committee only.

*FOR CHSA USE ONLY*

**CHSA Incident / Accident Progress Report Form**

Form No: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received by CHSA: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of CHSA Assessment	CHSA Committee Recommendation

Signature of CHSA Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of CHSA Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_