

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)



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Revised April 2020

1. Introduction

This handbook documents the structure of the CHSA, the rules and regulations under which we operate. This revised edition incorporates the safety code we have operated by for many years, but also reflects the changes in the way we fly today. It includes guidance on 2.4 GHz use and updated notes on safety. This latest update includes information regarding the laws controlling the use of model aircraft in the UK and restrictions imposed by no fly Zones surrounding Halton aerodrome.

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 study 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 of the CHSA.

Please remember the motto *S.I.P (Safety Is Paramount)*.

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. In addition, we strongly advise you not to fly at any other location until you have valid insurance.

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.

Changes to the law affecting the flying of all a model aircraft weighing over 250gm are now in force across the UK. These restrictions apply to Coombe Hill and members must be in possession of a CAA or BMFA Certificate of Competence and CAA registration number. These numbers must be displayed externally on models or in an easily accessible compartment. Members must take account of the flight restriction zone surrounding RAF Halton shown on the map at paragraph 8 and must seek permission from Halton Air Traffic Control before flying in the restricted area..

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

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

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

Membership of the CHSA

The Secretary is responsible for keeping full records of all members' addresses, telephone numbers, date of birth and BMFA number in a suitable form. Members changing their address must notify the Secretary in writing at the earliest opportunity.

Information on membership is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998. Member's personal details will not be disclosed without the consent of the member concerned. However, 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 membership secretary, in writing, to the contrary.

It will be the responsibility of the Treasurer to provide renewal forms to all members before February 28th each year and to collect subscriptions. Subscriptions are annual and due after the AGM held in February each year.

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-members may fly as accompanied 'guests' of the CHSA but they MUST have current membership of the BMFA. Guests 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 (NT) Licence

The CHSA hold a license to fly **un-powered model aircraft and quiet electric assisted gliders ONLY** from specific areas of Coombe Hill (see further details in section 7, General Flying Procedures – The CHSA Safety Code).

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. Moreover, 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 offers members the privileged of flying models at Coombe Hill provided they comply with limitations set out in Section 6. However, this does not override 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. Therefore 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. 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. The CHSA Chairman or Secretary will advise the National Trust if necessary.

Do not admit liability or discuss insurance. In fact, 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, 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.

A printable Incident Report Form is provided to all members on joining and periodically whenever it is updated. The 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. Copies can be obtained at any time from the CHSA Secretary.

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.

6. General Flying Procedures – The CHSA Safety Code

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

6.1 Models types allowed 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;
 - Use a folding propeller of maximum 14" and minimum 7" diameter;
 - Use a battery pack of no more than 13V at full charge (i.e. 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;
 - Rotorcraft of any type (multirotors, helicopters, autogyros etc);
 - Control line aircraft of any type.
 - Any aircraft that is not able to maintain soaring flight in the prevailing conditions

6.2 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 6.3) if using 35MHz or 27MHz 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 considerable disruption and inconvenience to flyers on 35MHz and 27MHz while frequencies in use are checked.

6.3 Frequency Control Procedures

The official frequency bands for model aircraft in the UK are 35MHz (FM), 27MHz (AM) and 2.4GHz spread spectrum. However, it is not recommended to use 27MHz at Coombe Hill because of the risk of members of the public operating other devices on this frequency band. A table of 35MHz channel numbers and their frequencies can be found in section 9 of this handbook.

35MHz/27MHz procedures – Any member using 35MHz or 27MHz equipment **MUST** follow the procedures below:

- All members using 35MHz or 27MHz equipment are **strongly advised** to 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.
- The first flyer to arrive who is using 35MHz or 27MHz equipment will define the method of frequency control for the day (either pegboard or verbal confirmation of frequencies in use on **EVERY** flight).

- **ALL PILOTS WHO ARRIVE SUBSEQUENTLY MUST USE THE METHOD CHOSEN BY THE FIRST PILOT** unless all pilots agree to change (i.e. from verbal confirmation to a pegboard).
- Approved methods of frequency control:

Frequency Pegboard

- o A **PEG OFF** system is used at Coombe Hill. Please ask if you are not clear about what this means.
- o When a pegboard is in use, no 35MHz or 27MHz 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.
- o After each flight, replace the peg on the board after the transmitter is switched off as other people may be waiting to fly. Peg 'hogging' is not permitted.

Verbal confirmation

Using this method **the onus is on the pilot to use his best endeavours to ensure that his frequency is clear:**

- o Whenever switching on their transmitter the pilot must loudly shout "Switching on xyz frequency" and wait for a response from other pilots.
- o If all pilots respond indicating they are not using your intended frequency you may switch on; **if it is in use you must not do so.**
- o If in doubt **DO NOT SWITCH ON** – it will be necessary to walk over to each pilot who is flying and double check whether they are using the intended frequency.

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. However on arrival 2.4GHz users should still go to the location from which other pilots are flying to make their presence known.

7.1. Pre-flight preparation

- Only use approved channels (35MHz, 27MHz or 2.4GHz) with crystals (if required) that have been checked regularly and inserted correctly. If using 35MHz or 27MHz beware of interference from non-members with "toy" RC vehicles.
- Follow the frequency control rules in section 7.3 of this handbook.
- Always carry out 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 that the batteries are in good condition, and monitor their state of charge between flights.

- If you have had "an arrival", check the model very carefully before re-launching
- **Do not fly if you suspect any faults.**
- Novices **MUST** seek advice. If in doubt **DON'T FLY.**

6.4 Launching and general flight

- If you are a novice flyer, then please ask an experienced flyer to assist you with launching, flying and landing.
- 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.**
- A second experienced person other than the pilot should ideally launch models with a wingspan over four metres.
- Do not deliberately overfly members of the public.
- Our license with the National Trust prohibits competition. As a result there must be **NO RACING and NO COMBAT!**
- Very occasionally full size gliders may fly close to the slope. If this happens whilst you are flying, **you must land as quickly as is safely possible without question.** Only when a full size glider/aircraft has cleared the area may you re-launch.

6.5 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 (see section 6.1);
- 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.
- The electric motor should be turned off as soon as slope or thermal lift is encountered that can sustain flight.

6.6 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 can be tricky at Coombe Hill; 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. However, this also needs care and vigilance, and is easier with a helper to warn members of the public.
- Any accident or near miss must be reported immediately to the CHSA Secretary and an incident report form completed (see section 6).

6.7 General points

- Please remember that we share Coombe Hill with other users and we are a very small minority group. Therefore, 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 pack a basic first aid kit as part of your equipment.
- Do not damage the environment and always take your litter home.

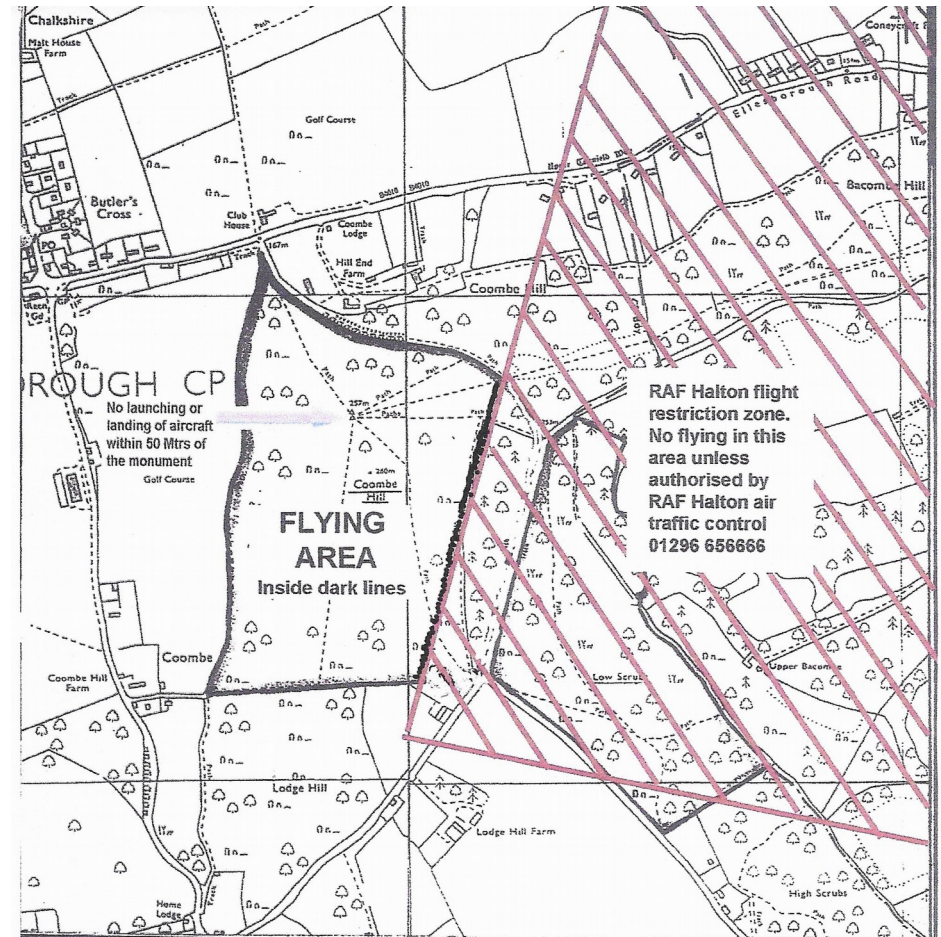
7. Litter

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.

8. Flying area

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



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:

- 2.4GHz spread spectrum equipment does not have channel numbers.
- The artwork for a 35/27MHz frequency pegboard can be downloaded as a PDF file from <http://rc-soar.com/pegboard/index.htm> (Courtesy of Mike Shellim).

9 Table of frequencies for the 35MHz band

Channel No.	Frequency MHz	Channel No.	Frequency MHz
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