

Notes taken at the SFTC ZOOM Meeting 4th Jan 2024 at 7pm

Present: Andy Symons, Steve Knowles, Nick Jackson, Greg Lewis, Jon Edison
Paul Robinson and Alex Maxfield joined as soon as possible
Pete Mitchell sent his apologies

1. Purpose of the Meeting

To meet with Andy Symons to discuss the implications of the CAA CAP2610 Consultation and the role the SFTC could play now and in the future.

2. Review of the Consultation Document.

AS offered to make the Site Data consultation paper and Site Maps available to the SFTC, such that non-club sites used for competitions by Silent Flight could be added.

The following notes were taken by SK and JE during Andy Symons address to the group. AS kindly added some additional clarification under the heading of "Remote ID".

Remote ID:

- If it goes ahead, earliest implementation would be 2028 and most likely to be required wherever a site exemption cannot be obtained, most regularly used model flying sites likely to be exempt.
- Would be better to have defined areas where RID is required (built up areas, areas with security concerns etc) rather than a blanket requirement with applied for site exemptions.
- Remote ID is primarily for security reasons i.e. linking airborne objects to an operator, rather than avoidance of airborne objects.
- The CAA is proposing to require both network and direct remote ID.
- Network RID – Uses mobile phone network data to transmit the information to a service provider, who collect the data and share it with the central government database.
- Direct RID – Uses short range radio (Bluetooth) to continually transmit the information to anyone in range who can receive and decode it.
- Network RID will require the involvement of the mobile phone networks and service provider(s), neither of which will do the job for free.
- Geo-awareness is used to alert UAS operators if approaching restricted airspace. Unlikely to be adopted for model aircraft.
- Geo-fencing used to prevent UAS flying into restricted airspace. Unlikely to be adopted for model aircraft.
- Expect greater use of apps that provide info on anticipated airborne activity e.g. for competition use on non-exempt sites.

Response to consultation questionnaire:

- The more our members response, the more likely the CAA are to take notice i.e. 30,000 individual response counts for more than the 1 BMFA submission even though this represents 30,000 members.
- Noted that many items in the questionnaire not applicable to our members, therefore can tick the "don't know option" and move on to other questions. Or can refer to or use BMFA answer.
- Questions numbers 20+ are most applicable to model flying.
- BMFA, conscious that individual members completing the questionnaire really does count - recent success with restricting CAA registration fee increases etc. a good example.
- Noted that BMFA should publicize their successes more often.
- Response to consultation can be made by clubs and representative organisations, such as BARCS and SFTC. We should decide who will do this for SFTC and BARCS, as well as take up with our local clubs if they haven't responded.

- Noted there are 300,000 registered operators compared to “only” 30,000 BMFA members- again highlighting need for individuals to complete questionnaire.

Why two consultation papers?

Original consultation issued approximately three months ago was a ‘Call for Input’ and an invitation to stakeholders (anyone who uses unmanned aircraft in the shared airspace) to express their views on the issues the CAA are trying to address.

Current consultation relates to CAA proposals that resulted from the original questionnaire.

Site registration

- BMFA currently focusing on sites used by affiliated clubs, circa 700 clubs many with multiple sites.
- In approximately two months’ time will go down to the next level and seek input from representative bodies such as SFTC and individual site users etc.
- At this stage BMFA prefer not to be “distracted by these” given their focus on the huge volume of club sites still to be logged and processed
- SFTC & BARCS should consider sites used by small soaring groups that are not necessarily registered by Clubs, and sites used for comps e.g. Wetlands (Alex following this one up).

Other points

- Initial focus should be on getting members to submit consultation response.
- AS expressed the view that the destructive doomsayers posting negative, disproportionate predictions and comments on the Forums is creating a lot of damage. Bottom line is that despite all the consultation etc. that has taken place following the proliferation of drone flying in recent years, the only bureaucracy and changes model flyers have had to incur are 1. CAA registration and 2. for some... taking a simple test.

AS was thanked for his time in addressing the meeting and JE hoped that the SFTC could be of assistance in future consultations and policy decisions.

Meeting closed at 20:15