

Welcome to The Knebworth Model Flying Club

This note is to assist new members to integrate into our club, particularly if you have not yet have passed the BMFA 'A' Certificate for Fixed Wing or Helicopters, required for unsupervised flying. It is to be read in conjunction with our Rules and Constitution, outlining how we operate as a club, and tenant of the Knebworth Estate. We are a small club with a nominal limit of 50 members, covering mainly fixed wing but with some helicopter enthusiasts.

The Knebworth Model Flying Club was formed after the loss of the BAe Bragbury End club site. We consider ourselves most fortunate to have now found better facilities, rented from the Knebworth Hall estate. It must be most strongly emphasised that we take every effort to maintain good relations with our landlord. Key features are causing no damage or litter and ensuring that only bona fide members, and guests under their control, have access to the site.

At the formation of the KMFC, which operates only radio-controlled models, we took the decision to become 100% affiliated to the British Model Flying Association: in order to gain its protection through third-party insurance and recommendations for safe and responsible conduct - try www.BMFA.org for more information. All models and their operation shall be compatible with the recommendations of the BMFA as contained in their Handbook and this is written into our licence from the Estate. Since we operate within near proximity to the flight path into Luton and a small private airfield, the height restriction of 400 feet is clearly important; keep completely clear of helicopters and light aircraft which do fly over the field from time to time.

Formal meetings: All members lead busy lives and meetings are poorly supported; so we try to keep things simple, with few meetings compared with larger clubs. We do run a Family Day in early September. The AGM is held late November/early December to deal with significant issues and to fix subscription renewals for the club. These, and the BMFA fees, are due at the end of December to maintain continuity of membership and insurance cover. The gate key code is changed shortly afterwards, to preserve the site and us from the consequences of unauthorised access. Each member, on request, can receive a copy of the KMFC Constitution and Rules - preferably by e-mail. We publish member contact and frequency lists. At the field, flying is from a peg board and the different types of model e.g. fixed wing and helicopters - must make arrangements to take turns so as not to infringe other flyers enjoyment!

Of course the weekend is the typical club flying time, but people do meet at the field at other times by arrangement: for instance, those at BAe do meet on Friday afternoons; some people fly, perhaps on Wednesday evenings. We have found that organised meetings apart from the Fun Day in early September are poorly attended, but are open to practical suggestions!

We can fly from 08:00 until dusk; with few restrictions on flying times - except as imposed by the Estate and posted on the gate - for 'pop concerts' but often on certain days, during November to February. This freedom and our limited membership does mean that those who have passed the BMFA category 'A' examination can come and go to suit their shift or other commitments, so the site is seldom crowded. This doesn't lead to sociability, but remember - we are in it for us; we all have constraints on our lives and cannot hope to provide a general amenity service.

If you are willing and able to fit in with all of the above, and there is a vacancy, you will be welcome. Newcomers may take some time to settle in, especially if they do not have the BMFA 'A' clearance. We do train novices using a Futaba-compatible 'buddy box' lead for fixed wing, and then can arrange examinations granting clearance to fly solo. It is however, necessary to limit the pupils/instructor ratio to avoid overload. New members who wish to join may have a trial flight with a club instructor. If satisfactory, on joining they may fly, but always with an instructor of recognised experience until they pass the 'A' certificate. When starting instruction, the instructor's judgement on the suitability of the model, equipment and general flight aptitude must be accepted. But even under instruction, a pupil can still get the model into a situation where even the instructor cannot avoid a crash e.g. landing practice, trees and the power lines. Consequent damage is a risk of learning to fly unfortunately, and must be borne by the pupil alone, although every effort and encouragement will be made to avoid this. Advice is freely available about suitable trainers, setting up the system and test flying.

Because of the way members choose to use the club, juniors can only join or attend the club activities if they are supervised by parent or acceptable guardian; this equally applies to vulnerable adults or other persons requiring special care.

To reduce the risk of accidents, through carelessly switching on when another flyer is on the same frequency, we allocate each member with a fixed, even-number frequency; perhaps shared by only 2 or 3 others. Use the pegboard and frequency monitor to check interference. Don't fly near the pits, people or outside the designated flying zone or you will be grounded, or if your general conduct is not compatible with the welfare of the club or the Estate!

Every member must respect the security of the Knebworth estate. Do not leave the gate open such that the general public can enter. Take care when closing the gate to scramble the lock code wheels; just closing the lock is not enough! Take away with you all debris and rubbish - yours and any other - we cannot afford to upset our landlord, Excess noise and other complaints from the neighbourhood have closed too many good flying sites; behave sensibly.

E-mail is a preferred method of communication and there is a website too: www.kmfc.co.uk