

# SAN NEWS

Together We Can Fly

December 2024  
Issue 3

## 132 AIRFIELDS IDENTIFIED AS STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT

139 SAN surveys have been completed to date. In addition, many airfields responded to the VFR 2025 mailing which also encouraged SAN participation. Of these, 66 SAN surveys and a similar number to the VFR mailing stated they are strategically important and wish to be recognised.

## SAN SURVEY RESULTS

As in our first two Newsletters, Issue 3 summarises all of the survey results so far in the side bars on pages 2 onwards.

But in this Newsletter, we wish to update you on the airfields that have said they consider that they are of Strategic Importance and to explain how we have categorised them into four groups.

## SAN AIRFIELD CATEGORISATION

We are delighted to announce that we have now collated all of the excellent information that 139 airfields provided in 2024, in response to the SAN survey. So far (and the survey remains open) 132 aerodromes have said that they are of strategic importance.

Our starting point was to use the factors that Lord Byron Davies set out in 2018 report that accompanied a Green Paper, Aviation 2050: The Future of UK Aviation, but then to include other features that can contribute to 'importance'. Lord Byron Davies focussed on the airfield infrastructure – runway characteristics, nav aids, hangarage, engineering support for example. The SAN survey includes all of his factors and also takes account of, for example, the role of an airfield in its community for sport, recreation and events and geographic factors – for example in a relatively remote area, an Aerodrome may have an important role in connectivity or provide support for the emergency services.

After analysis of the survey information, and discussion with colleagues, we have identified four groups of airfields. These are:

**A: Airfields containing elements of GA and elements of a commercial airport. They are:**

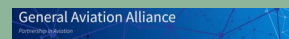
*Predominantly licensed and generally have higher aircraft movement levels, ATC services and ground support - in other words satisfying the aeronautical criteria highlighted by Lord Byron Davies and the work by York Aviation. Most have a wider range of activity, flight training, MET services and accommodate emergency and related services.*

Blackbushe, Blackpool, Caernarfon, Chichester Goodwood, Denham, Derby, East Midlands, Elstree, Kirkwall, Lydd, Manchester Barton, Old Buckenham, Oxford, Popham, Rochester, Sherburn in Elmet, Shodbon, Sleaf, Sumburgh, Teesside, Turweston

Supported by



AIRFIELD OPERATORS GROUP



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## Summary of Results

### So Far

#### Is the Airfield?

28 Licensed  
98 Unlicensed  
0 Military

#### Traffic Type

116 VFR only  
6 IFR  
4 VFR/IFR

#### Nav Aids available on the Airfield

1 VOR/DME  
2 DME  
7 NDB  
2 ILS  
4 Lctr

#### Does the Airfield have associated airspace?

0 TMA  
1 CTR  
1 CTA  
25 ATZ  
3 MATZ

#### Does the Airfield have ATC?

62 Yes  
70 No

#### What ATC services does the airfield have?

2 APP  
3 TWR  
1 GND  
3 RAD  
0 DEL  
2 ATIS  
11 AFIS  
25 A/G  
16 Safetycom

#### Types of Rwy lighting available

3 APP  
14 Thr  
21 Rwy  
7 PAPI

## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTED BY THE SAN SURVEY

The side bars in the Newsletter summaries the results so far. Each Newsletter will update the statistics and provide any analysis we think worthwhile.

In this newsletter we have drawn out comments made by the 139 to date that state that their Airfield is Strategically Important, not all of the 139 airfields wish to be listed at present

**Note:** Not all questions were answered by every airfield completing the survey

## SAN AIRFIELD CATEGORISATION CONT ...

### **B: These are larger regionally significant airfields. They are:**

*Mixed licensed and unlicensed, mostly VFR only. The sophistication of aeronautical services and levels of activity are less than category A. The range of maintenance services, activities on the aerodrome, flight training opportunities and environmental measures is comparable to category A, with some sites having a wider breadth and depth. Non-aviation activity and community engagement activity is also strong in this group.*

Balado, Bagby, Bodmin, Coventry, Compton Abbas, Cumbernauld, Duxford, Eaglescott, Earls Colne, Enniskillen, Enstone, Eshott, Fair Oaks, Fenland, Kemble, Lands End, Lee on Solent, Little Gransden, Manston, Perth, Scilly Isles, Strathaven, Swansea, Tibenham, Wellesbourne, White Waltham

### **C: These airfields are generally in more remote locations and therefore have a wider catchment in their sub-region: They are:**

*Runways are often only grass but may be mixed, there are fewer aeronautical services and non-aviation activity and community engagement is reduced for staffing reasons.*

Beccles, Bellarena, Beverley, Bicester, Bolt Head, Brighton, Cae Mawr, Castle Kenedy, Chirk, Clench Common, Clipgate, Cromer, Dairy House Farm, Eastbach, Eday, Eggesford, Farway Common, Fife, Full Sutton, Glenswinton, Kingstanding, Kirkbride, Kittyhawk, Little Snoring, Lundy Island, Membury, Milson, Movenis, Netherthorpe, Pembrey, Ripple, Shipmeadow, Tilstock, Walton Wood, West Wales

### **D: Airfields declared strategically important by the owner: They are:**

*They may not have a wide range of equipment and services but are highly valuable to users in often very remote locations, and so are of local value, often for recreational value but also local connectivity.*

Ashcroft, Aghrim, Berrier, Bognor, Chilbolton, Crowland, Deanland, Devizes-Coate, Easter, Errol, Fadmoor, Felixkirk, Glenforsa, Gt Massingham, Headon, Holmbeck, Home Farm—Ebrington, Insch, Ledbury, Longside, Main Hall Farm, Newport City, Oaklands Farm—East Tytherley, Pent Farm, Perranporth, Pitsford, Pocklington, Pointon, Rectory Farm, Rothwell, St Micaels, South Cave/Mount Airy, Stoke Golding, Strathallan, Strubby North, Talybont, Temple Bruer, Tibenham Priory Farm, Tiffenden, Troutbeck/Keswick, West Tisted,

## PROPOSED NEXT STEPS WITH SAN

The results of the survey were reported to the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Aviation in December and have been passed to the aviation team at the Department for Transport. We will be following this up with all relevant bodies to seek to improve policy protection for GA airfields as set out on page 5 of this Newsletter.' And, after 'this.' - 'See below an account of a constructive meeting with an MP.'

You may wish to get in touch with your MP to draw attention to the SAN results and highlight your involvement with this.

You may also use this opportunity to alert your Local Planning Authority. Sleaford has recently prepared a 'Membership Report' to assist its local Planning authority understand what happens at the Airfield. If you have not seen this, let us know and we can forward this to you as an example of an excellent means of communication.

## HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET POLICY CHANGES?

The APPG- Airfields Working Group, GAAC, AOG GAA and others will press for policies to better protect GA airfields but you can help too.

It is important that Elected Members and Local Planning Authorities get to know more about what happens at airfields.

Overleaf is an account of MP Aphra Brandreth's visit to Dairy House Farm. Many aerodromes have good links with local councillors but if you do not do so on a regular basis, the report on the MP's visit shows the value of establishing links and improving understanding of GA.

All aerodromes are urged to ensure their MP and other key elected members in your area are aware of you and the services and opportunities you offer.

And, in addition, if you are in the list of Strategically Important Airfields, you could say - in commenting on planning applications for example - that in a nationwide survey of General Aviation Airfields in 2024, carried out by the Airfield Operators Group and the VFR Flight Guide UK, supported by those organisations listed on the first page of this Newsletter, that you have been identified as Strategically Important.

The Civil Aviation Authority's Combined Aviation Safeguarding Team (CAST) urges all airfields to make sure they have a safeguarding plan and lodge this with the local authority.

A link to this guidance is [www.caa.co.uk/cast-advice-note-1-safeguarding-an-overview-apr-24](http://www.caa.co.uk/cast-advice-note-1-safeguarding-an-overview-apr-24)

And another example of ways in which to make sure politicians know about the value of airfields is demonstrated by Sleaford Airfield's 2024 Membership Report, an excellent document setting out all of the activities and initiatives the airfield takes to engage with and be a recognised part of its local community. If you would like to see this, please let us know.

### Summary of Results So Far

#### What are the Airfield operating Hrs?

7 H24  
34 SR-SS  
73 PPR only  
10 Out of Hrs cover

#### Is the Airfield Border Force designated?

72 Yes  
58 No

#### Fuel availability

6 Electric  
0 Hydrogen  
37 AVGAS 100LL  
25 JET A1  
6 Mogas  
13 UL91/94

#### Aircraft parking on Airfield

99 Grass  
26 Hard

#### Does the Airfield provide maintenance facilities?

6 Part ML  
3 Part CAO  
3 BCAR  
8 Part 145  
2 Part 21  
7 CAMO  
0 Part 147

#### Does the Airfield have compulsory handling?

5 Yes  
47 No

72 N/A

#### Airframe de-icing availability

9 Yes  
121 No

**Summary of Results  
So Far**

**Meteorological  
services available on  
the Airfield?**

8 METAR

8 TAF

6 ATIS Tel

5 ATIS Radio

26 Webcam

**Does the Airfield have  
noise abatement  
procedures in place?**

58 Yes

67 No

**Is there fire cover on  
the Airfield?**

33 Yes

89 No

**What type of ground  
support is available?**

7 GPU

12 Electric charge

12 Handling

13 RR refuelling

**Does the Airfield have  
heritage links?**

47 Yes

69 No

**Is your Airfield at risk?**

10 Short term

31 Medium Term

32 Long term

**Does the Airfield  
provide services for?**

16 SAR

27 HEMS

24 Police

32 Military

23 Utility companies

**Would you be interest-  
ed in the new Drone  
infrastructure?**

52 Yes

69 No

## AIRFIELD FOCUS—DERBY

BY MARTIN JONES



Derby Airfield is a small, grass, licensed aerodrome 5 miles south west of Derby City and 3 miles north west of Burton upon Trent. It has three runways in classic triangular configuration. It sits under the East Midlands Airport CTA and its ATZ is capped accordingly at 1500ft.

Immediately to the south west, west and north west is

the training area and capped only by higher airspace which gives ample training space. The aerodrome and operated by Airspeed Aviation Ltd.

Airspeed offer a complete range of GA services: flying training, aircraft maintenance, fuel, hangarage and parking. Flying training service caters for LAPL, NPPL, PPL, tailwheel difference, IRR, night and aerobatic certificates. Aircraft maintenance covers scheduled and unscheduled service, repair, engine overhaul to zero time, avionics inspection and installation including autopilots. Airspeed are Garmin, Trig and Powerflow dealers and is also a CAE diesel service centre.

Airspeed Aviation Ltd has been trading continuously for 42 years and is owned by the Jones family. Martin is the founding director and Managing Director, Margaret is Estates Director, Paul is the CFI and David is the Chief Engineer. The Derby Aero Club is a trading name of the flying training operation.

The land that is now Derby Airfield was purchased in 1990 as low grade agricultural land from more than one vendor. The main challenge was the acquisition of the necessary planning permission for this green field site. The local authority was minded to approve the application but felt that it was a matter of “national importance” and consequently passed it upward to Government for determination. This led to a four week public inquiry. As applicant we had to employ arboriculture, air traffic, road traffic, noise, pilotage, drainage, architectural, heritage and planning professionals. A site visit was necessary including a demonstration of aircraft flying around our “good neighbour” pattern (low approaches and go-arounds: no landings allowed). Protestors with placards had a field day. Total fees were then in excess of £100,000. The public doesn’t like aircraft!

In early 1991 that we had won! Tea, biscuits and beer. We had the permission for the whole site as an aerodrome. Since this planning approval had come from the relevant government department we regard this decision as a strategic recognition of our place in the nation’s airfield network.

[www.derbyaeroclub.com](http://www.derbyaeroclub.com)  
[www.cometracerproject.co.uk](http://www.cometracerproject.co.uk)

[www.theturbulent.co.uk](http://www.theturbulent.co.uk)

## AIRFIELD FOCUS—DERBY CONT ...

BY MARTIN JONES

All we had to do then was to build an airfield! This involved surveying, levelling, turfing, draining, culverting, fencing, marking out, mowing (lots of mowing), rolling, windsock, signage and much more. Water and electricity. All of this needed machinery and equipment. The only building was an agricultural building that needed modification for aircraft access. Sanitation needed to be installed and approved. Portakabins from various second hand sources provided office and club facilities (still do!). Most of the work we did ourselves but we had huge support from our fantastic band of volunteers without whom we could not have succeeded.

CAA licensing came shortly afterwards initially with only one runway. Green field to licensed aerodrome and we became, and remain, Derbyshire's only licensed aerodrome. We later added two more runways. We built hangars. The converted agricultural building became our CAA approved maintenance facility. We added more hangars and transferred maintenance to a brand new hangar in 2018 and that predicated key dealerships. In 2022 we added a 15,000 sq.ft hangar. We computerised our accounts and now have an electric robotic mower that mows all runways (and more) twice a week at night!

And to cap it all with Ann Bartaby's help we became a "statutory undertaker" as an "Airport" earlier this autumn. Green field to airport! We think that this is a very rare achievement because most airports have either military or municipal origins.

So what is our claim to be "strategic?" The dominant aspect of our business is the aircraft engineering. Aircraft owners are mandated to have their aircraft maintained and if necessary repaired, and their engines overhauled. Airspeed have an extensive range of approvals and a highly experienced young team of engineers. Many young people from a mechanical background have been trained up in house over the years. Across the nation there is a paucity of aircraft maintenance companies and away from the south east they are few and far between. So, our location in the middle of the country is important. Airspeed have customers from many parts of England, Wales and Scotland.

The other strategic aspect of Airspeed is that of flying training. Firstly, it brings in fresh blood to the world of aviation. We advertise to the general public. The taster "trial lesson" is the start for some of a career, a recreation and even a bucket list ambition. We take people to another world: the sky. Few people ever go there and when they do, they appreciate their environment so much more. Youngsters move onward and upward to fly the airliners that our societies rely upon. Again, location is key. Over 4 million people live within a 30-mile radius. The A38 and A50 are close by.

Our airspace is largely free from encumbrance and if pertinent we can call upon the radar services at East Midlands Airport. Our flying school aircraft need maintenance; our maintenance need aircraft and not just our own. The synergy is obvious. Many of our trained pilots go on to own, or share, a private aircraft and become lifetime customers.

To be continued in SAN News 4

### Summary of Results So Far

#### Activities on Airfield

50 Flight training  
86 Recreational flying  
20 AOC  
14 Flying displays  
26 Aviation related commercial activities  
12 Airshows

#### Does the Airfield have flight training available?

40 PPL  
34 NPPL  
6 MEP  
12 IR  
12 CPL

36 Ground school  
12 Aerobatics

#### Does the Airfield have environmental measures in place?

31 Habitat conservation  
23 Biodiversity  
22 Animal grazing  
29 Land cultivation

#### Does the Airfield have non-aviation activities?

70 Yes  
53 No

#### Does the Airfield engage with community groups?

46 School visits  
40 Cadets/scouts  
23 Aviation history clubs  
13 Social learning groups  
26 Voluntary groups  
36 Open days  
13 Flying displays  
13 Apprenticeships

## Airfields Stating Strategically Important

Ashcroft	Full Sutton	Strathaven
Aughrim	Glenforsa	Strathallan
Bagby	Glenswinton	Stubby North
Balado	Gt Massingham	Sumburgh
Beccles	Headon	Swansea
Bellarena	Holmbeck Farm	Talybont
Berrier	Home Farm - Ebrington	Teesside
Beverley	Insch	Temple Bruer
Bicester	Kemble	Tibenham
Blackbushe	Kingstanding	Tibenham -
Blackpool	Kirkbride	Priory Farm
Bodmin	Kirkwall	Tiffenden
Bognor	Kittyhawk	Tilstock
Bolt Head	Lands End	Troutbeck
Brighton	Ledbury	Turweston
Cae Mawr	Lee on Solent	Walton Wood
Caernarfon	Little Gransden	Wellesbourne
Castle Kennedy	Little Snoring	West Tisted
Chichester Goodwood	Longside	West Wales
Chirk	Lundy Island	Weybourne
Chilbolton	Lydd	White -
Clench Common	Lydeaway Field	Waltham
Clipgate	Manchester Barton	Whittles Farm
Coventry	Main Hall Farm	Willow Farm
Cromer	Manston	Wooburn
Compton Abbas	Membury	
Crowland	Milson	
Cumbernauld	Movenis	
Dairy House Farm	Netherthorpe	
Deanland	Newport City	
Denham	Oaklands Farm- East Tytherley	
Derby	Old Buckenham	
Devizes Coate	Oxford	
Duxford	Pembrey	
Eaglescott	Pent Farm	
Earls Colne	Perranporth	
East Kirkby	Perth	
East Midlands	Pitsford	
Eastbach	Pocklington	
Eastchurch	Pointon	
Easter	Popham	
Eday	Rectory Farm	
Eggesford	Ripple	
Elstree	Rochester	
Enniskillen	Rothwell	
Enstone	St Michaels	
Errol	Scilly Isles	
Eshott	Sherburn in Elmet	
Fadmoor	Shipmeadow	
Fairoaks	Shobdon	
Farway Common	Skegness	
Felixkirk	Sleap	
Fenland	South Cave/Mount Airy	
Fife	Stoke Golding	

## STRATEGIC AERODROME NETWORK (SAN)

We plan to issue this Newsletter 4 times a year.

Each Newsletter will highlight common issues and challenge faced by Airfields and alongside will identify potential solutions to managing those challenges. We can draw on the excellent information provided in the Survey. Please highlight any issues you would like to raise.

Each Newsletter will have a short description of the activities and issues at one Airfield – if you would like to follow Derby and be show cased please let us know!

We know how isolated Airfields can sometimes feel, but many challenges, innovations and experiences are faced by many and highlighting these will help to protect and sustain our Network of General Aviation Airfields.

***Together we can help protect GA Airfields!***

***Together We Can Fly!***

If you have not received a survey link by email, please email [louisesouthern@btinternet.com](mailto:louisesouthern@btinternet.com)

The survey takes 10 mins to complete

Thank you for helping to protect the UK airfields for the future generations

*Thank you for taking the time to read the SAN Newsletter*

*Merry christmas and a happy new year*

*Ann & Louise*