



New Members Guide

The Vale of White Horse Gliding Centre

Welcome

This guide is to help you get the most from your membership. It explains the basics of the way we operate and gives some details of club organisation. Many people enjoy seeing the world from a different viewpoint, and with so many different things we can do in the air, all the various challenges and fun that gliding offers - there is something for everyone!

Membership

As a member here, you fly at our standard club rates, which are significantly cheaper than the cost of a trial flight. You have full access to our facilities. Within the club, we have several different membership categories to suit different people. Below is a rough guide to these.

- **Full:** Open to those aged over 21 at the start of the membership year. Full members are allowed to keep private gliders and trailers (space permitting) on site.
- **Junior:** Open to those aged between 14 and 21 at the start of membership year. Junior members pay a reduced membership fee and are allowed to keep private gliders and trailers (space permitting) on site.
- **Temporary Day:** Open to guests of members and members of other UK gliding clubs. Temporary members pay a small membership fee for the day, and fly at standard rates (as full members).

Before you start

Medical declaration. When joining the Club, you signed a medical declaration stating that you are fit to fly. Before flying solo, you must provide the Club with a declaration counter-signed by your regular doctor. The doctor is merely confirming that there is nothing in your medical record which would invalidate the declaration you have signed. If you can supply the Club with this counter-signed declaration as soon as possible it will remove a possible delay when an instructor decides that you are ready to fly solo. The necessary form is available on the British Gliding Association website www.gliding.co.uk.

Life insurance. If you have life insurance, including mortgage protection policies, it would be sensible to tell your insurers that you have taken up gliding. Some insurance companies regard gliding as a high-risk sport.

Car insurance. Be aware that many standard car insurance policies do not cover your car while it is on an active airfield.

Alcohol limits. The blood alcohol limit for flying is 20mg per 100ml, much lower than that for driving. As humans process alcohol at very different rates, to be sure of being fit for flying after drinking you should ensure that at least eight hours have elapsed after drinking small quantities of alcohol.

Learning to fly

All of our instructors are experienced glider pilots and have undergone various training courses to ensure they meet the standards of the British Gliding Association. They are unpaid volunteers, so club members do not have to pay any additional cost for instruction: just the launch and glider hire.

When you arrive at the club, the first thing to do is put your name on the flying list. When flying starts, the instructor will take pupils in order from the list.

As a pre-solo pilot, you should be in possession of a Pilots Log book and Student Record Card. The pilots log book enables you to keep track of the amount of flying you have done and there is space for you to record your own comments for each flight.

The student record card allows you and your instructors to ensure that all aspects of flying are taught sufficiently and successfully. You will show this card to your instructor every time you fly, so that the instructor knows what stage of training you are at, and plan what they will teach you this time. You will progress through the training at your own pace, and our instructors adopt their teaching style to suit your individual needs

Your training will follow the BGA syllabus for trainee pilots. It usually takes between 25 and 30 flights to go solo, although this depends very much on your motivation and how often you fly. A couple of flights at least every two weeks is a good target. As well as learning to control the glider you will also develop your safety awareness both on the ground and in the air. Do not be discouraged if occasionally you seem to be getting nowhere, or an aspect of flying gives you particular trouble.

Paying for your flying

Your flying account is just like a bank account. You put money into it, and we take money out for your flights. The club rule is that your account must be kept in the black (positive) at all times. Before you go home you need to make note of the number of launches you take, and the minutes of each flight. Calculate the total (launch height plus minutes) and pay accordingly. Payment may be made by cash, cheque or online banking. Payments by electronic transfer is the club's preferred method. Our account details are:

The Vale of White Horse Gliding Centre, Sort Code 40-43-41, Account Number 70785474.

Log keeper

The log keeper is responsible for completing the log sheet ensuring the pilots surname, glider type and flight times are recorded accurately and legibly. The flight log is a legal requirement and also used by the club to charge members for their flying. Filling in the log is a good way to get to know everyone's name. After your flight, it is in your interests to check that it has been accurately recorded on the log sheet.

Gliding is a team effort

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Unlike powered flying we rely upon each other to get airborne. We normally expect members to commit to being at the airfield for a minimum of half the day they expect to fly, including arriving in time to unpack the hangar and get flying underway or being at the airfield at the end of the day to put everything away after flying. You won't be expected to do everything straight away, but by asking an experienced member to show you, you can quickly become a useful member of the launch point team. You should aim to be familiar with the following tasks:

- Log keeping
- Holding the glider wing for launching
- Hooking on the cable and signalling the launch
- Retrieving, moving and parking gliders

Wingtip holder

The wingtip holder is responsible for holding the glider wings level at the start of the aerotow. The wingtip holder must run with the wingtip as the glider accelerates until they are unable to keep up. Never hold on to the wing as dragging it back will turn the glider and make life difficult for the pilot

Moving a glider

When moving a glider, we always have someone holding the up-wind wingtip to steer and a person by the nose to prevent the glider rolling into the retrieve vehicle.

When turning a glider, you need to be aware that you may need to change the wingtip being held as the free tip comes into wind. When changing wings, the normal procedure is for the person currently holding the wingtip to shout "your wing" and the person taking the other wingtip to respond with "my wing". This ensures we always know who has control and we don't end up with two people fighting one another, or even worse, no one holding a wingtip. We rarely need someone on both wingtips.

Always

- Pull on the cockpit rim and on the straps (with the canopy open).
- Push on the leading edge of the wing.
- Hold a wingtip to rotate and steer the glider.

Never

- Push on the trailing edge of the wing
- Lift the glider by the tail plane.
- Lift, pull or push the glider on the control surfaces.

Retrieving a glider

After landing gliders need retrieving from the landing area. We either manhandle the glider back to the launch point or use one of the retrieve vehicles to fetch it depending where the glider has landed.

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Take care when walking or driving onto the landing area because other gliders may be landing. In very windy conditions we may have to stay with the glider continuously and hold it down ourselves.

Glider canopies can cost thousands of pounds. Never leave a canopy open or unlocked because the wind can easily slam it shut and break it.

Parking a glider

In light winds the glass fibre gliders are normally parked with the downwind wing on the ground. Wooden gliders are normally parked with the into wind wing down with a tyre on it. In stronger winds all gliders are parked with the into wind wing down with several tyres on the wingtip and a tyre on the downwind side of the tail wheel or skid to stop the tail blowing round

Safety

We take safety very seriously. An airfield can be dangerous if you are unaware of the way they operate. Aircraft have the right of way. Be sure to get a briefing on where you can go safely before you step onto the field.

Glider tugs and gliders can and DO land from ANY direction. NEVER assume that an aircraft has seen you. Do not assume that a glider or tug aircraft is going where it 'usually' does. If you are unsure where an aircraft is going it is usually best to stand still and watch it. Do not walk or drive in front of a glider after it has been hooked on to a rope for launching. Wait or go round the back

Powered aircraft and propellers. Walking into a stationary propeller can hurt. Walking into a moving propeller will kill you. Flashing lights on parked aircraft mean the engine is running or just about to start - avoid it

If you see something that looks wrong, tell the duty instructor. Sometimes people will assume that you know what to do. Do not guess, always ask for a briefing. Remember that by doing something incorrectly you could be putting a life in danger.

Member involvement

The club exists so that members can learn to fly and enjoy all the different aspects of flying. Like most gliding clubs, there are no paid staff, all of the work is done by members: the voluntary committee which runs the club, instructing, grass cutting, aircraft and vehicle maintenance, keeping the clubhouse tidy, marketing activities, website and IT support, – these are a few examples of the activities undertaken by members so that we can all afford to fly. If you have skills to offer, or would like to find out how you can get involved, contact a committee member. You will find it very rewarding and an excellent way to feel part of the 'family'

Club organisation

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The club is run by a committee elected by the club members annually at the Annual General Meeting. The committee consists of:

- Chairman
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Safety Officer

In addition, the Chief Flying Instructor is co-opted on to the committee.

Contact us

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