



CHAIRMAN'S BRIEFING – WINTER 2019

7 August 2019

Dear MFC Club Member

It has been awhile since I wrote to you about club matters for which my apologies but life, flying the Universe and all of that! This briefing is written in the midst of winter when the Cape is finally living up to its name and showing us the odd storm. As I write the dams are filling the Rand is falling, the economy is in free-fall and the politics leaves us more and more flummoxed. Not all bad though because the oil price is also falling so Avgas price is holding and we can get out there and fly.

I should like to update you on some important matters affecting the Club.

THE LEASE

The saga of the lease continues. The latest is that the Immovable Property Adjudication Committee has recently discussed our lease. This committee has the final say on leases for City fixed property and will determine the lease terms presented to the Club. We await with bated breath their judgement but note that the deliberations now are about the terms not whether a lease will be offered.

As our City Ward Councillor put it, *“we already agreed on a lease, we have not agreed on a price as yet”*.

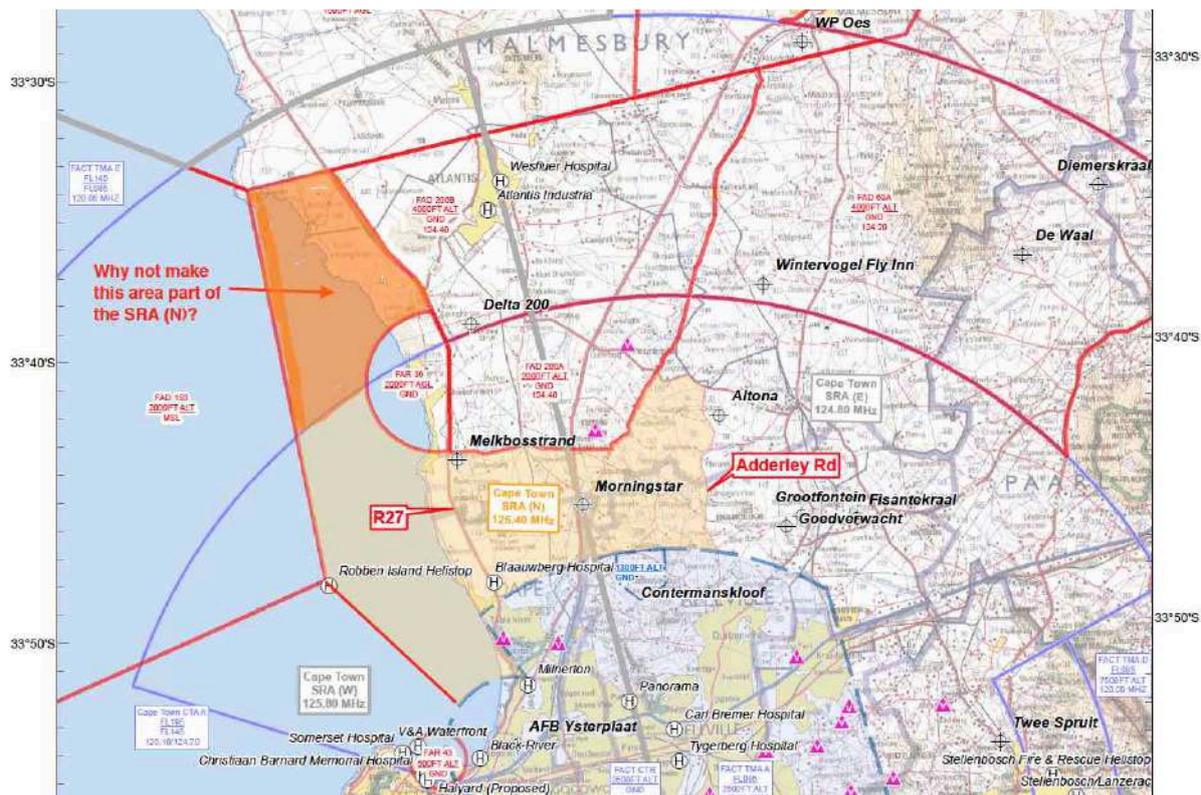
FREQUENCY CHANGE

Some of you who have been around at the Club for a while will recall the on going efforts to secure a frequency for the Morningstar Airfield, an effort that is now in its fifth year. This attempt started out as a simple request to allocate a unique frequency to the airfield to alleviate the strain on the 124.80MHz TIBA frequency but has proved to be living proof that a camel is a horse designed by a committee!

Overseeing all airspace and radio frequency is NASCOMM – National Air Space Committee – comprised of industry and government (SACAA & ATNS) representatives. Their remit is to manage airspace in South Africa. The Club applications have been made to NASCOM and twice been approved but SACAA has failed to implement. Finally, Aero Club acting on our behalf pushed hard at the NASCOM meeting in January 2019 and managed to get an agreement to amend the Cape Town airspace and create a new sector called Special Rules Area North with its own frequency – 125.40MHz. See diagram below.

The last minutes of NASCOM meeting held in April stated that, “ ATNS advises that the AIP Supplement has been drafted but the application and testing of the frequencies are going to take time. CNS is working with SACAA to get the frequency for Morning Star (sic) approved...”

We await a progress report after the NASCOM meeting this month. But complicating matters is the proposed realignment of the FACT runway that will result in a complete redesign of the Cape Town airspace to accommodate future growth in international arrivals. The effect of this redesign on Morningstar is unknown at this stage but it is doubtful that it will be drastic given that the Morningstar traffic operates below the TMA. I have been advised by Aero Club that the Morningstar frequency will happen despite these major changes to FACT airspace that are in the pipeline.



Note: The proposed SR North area is the lighter shaded one. Your club has pointed out that it makes sense to include the darker shaded area to as we will have to change back to 125.8MHz when routing to or from the FAR 45.

A late flash: I just received word that the latest NASCOM meeting saw broad agreement to our application to receive a dedicated frequency – even SACAA is on sides. The air space discussed above may turn out to be a temporary affair and could be amended when the FACT runway is realigned (18/36 is the proposed new heading) but NASCOM are in agreement that we shall have our own frequency in the meantime. So we wait with bated breath!

RECENT MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY

A recent survey was taken by Edge Bisset (Committee: Safety) to gauge the satisfaction of members with the current Committee and the state of the airfield. A lively club business meeting at the end of July followed this. The survey was designed to:

- To give all members a chance to have their say on how the club is being run.
- Identify areas of concern/frustration so that the committee can address them.

- To open a dialogue between members.

There are 267 full flying members, 87 students and 43 social and country members. There were a total of 124 responses representing 31% of members, which is a pretty good response rate for this type of survey.

A summary of the results:

Number of meetings attended in last 12 months?

76% had attended at least 1 to 3 meetings while 40% had attended 4 or more. Clearly those who responded are keen members who attend meetings. Good to hear but those of you who have not attended a meeting; we'd love to see you at one.

Have you or would you like to volunteer at the club?

56% of respondents answered yes showing true club spirit, while 24% said they'd like to but....

How do you like being based at Morningstar?

77% said it was awesome while a further 20% said it was just ok. Good to see that the majority of respondents rightly think the Club is awesome.

What do you think of the infrastructure and security?

Taxiways and runway – 85% gave it the thumbs up.

Clubhouse – same for this category 85%

Entrance and parking area – 74% seemed satisfied but 24% gave thumbs down.

Security – 34% were concerned about security while 60% seemed satisfied.

Comment: Security concerns are noted and will be addressed below.

What do you think of the committee?

How well they run the club – 77% gave a thumb up.

How well they communicate – 64% approved, 20% said it was average and the balance think it could be better.

Openness to suggestions – 60% approve while 21% said it was so-so and the rest thought it was pretty poor.

How transparent is the Committee – 56% thought so, 19% said it was so-so and the rest said it was opaque!

Comment: Well the approval ratings are way better than Donald Trump's but that's no comparison! The committee will attempt to communicate and listen more.

How do you think our fees compare with other flying clubs?

Membership – 35% said average, 27% cheaper and 30% said they did not know.

Hangar levies – majority of folk just did not know.

Electricity – similarly most just have no way of comparing.

Armed response – again a bit of problem for members to judge.

Comment: When comparing to our nearest competitor it turns out the Morningstar hangar levies are just under half those at FASH and our membership subscriptions a little under half of FASH. Interestingly Morningstar is the only club surveyed that offers armed response alarm service included in the hangar levies!

Looking further afield, Mossel Bay is cheaper than us on the levies but Kittyhawk costs more – their hangar levies for a hangar owner with one aircraft would cost R3780 per quarter while a similar owner at Morningstar (with a standard 240 sq m hangar) will pay R1584 plus VAT.

However, I have to sound a note of warning here. When the new City lease is finally in place, the Club will be required to pay rent and rates to the City. As noted above the cost of the rental is still in negotiation but the City rates quoted to the Club is R25,000pm. The total of the two will be an additional cost to the Club and the current revenue received from members will not cover this and the exiting operating costs. That means subs and levies will have to rise to cover the rental and rates increase.

One of the primary motivators of Morningstar has been to make the participation in general aviation more affordable. This was a consequence of the club's roots in microlight flying that attracted some pilots with more modest budgets. But it is still a worthwhile objective even in today's club that is filled with type certified, LSA and RV aircraft. We still have to offer an affordable home to all pilots. Initiatives such as waving the joining fees for ab initio students, allowing country members as well as social members goes a long way towards making the club as inclusive as possible.

How do you rate Sideslips' fuel bay service on price service and hours of operation?

It appears that most members are satisfied with the fuel bay with very few negative ratings.

Comment: Sideslip are price competitive with other local suppliers and offer a good service to members. That is reflected in the ratings. Some members have questioned why Sideslip has the contract to own and operate the fuel bay. "Why does the club not operate the fuel bay", is the cry from some. To put it simply: at the time of investigating the installation of a fuel bay by the club, several issues were encountered:

- The capital cost of the equipment and developing the site was more than the club could afford. A debenture scheme was explored where members could volunteer to loan money to the club to fund the deal; but
- Avgas is a low profit margin product; the potential losses through evaporation; and the question of who would manage and operate the facility made the Committee rethink the idea.

This led the Club committee at the time decide not to pursue the deal. The owners of Sideslip, Mark Bunning and Sean Curran, later approached that Committee and applied for permission to operate a fuel bay. This was agreed to, subject to the understanding that they bore all the development costs and met all regulatory requirements.

Quite frankly, it is my opinion that Sideslip should be commended for offering such an excellent service to members. Their prices are competitive and service levels generally good. The fact that Sideslip and its owners make money from members is simply just reward for the financial and business risks they have assumed. The only outstanding matter that needs to be

addressed is the levy contribution the fuel bay makes to the club operational budget and that is in hand.

Overall trends

The survey results as well as the written comments received with the survey suggest the following:

Most members are happy with the Club, except that those who have been members a long time are less happy than new members. Hangar owners seem the least happy.

Comment: Perhaps a follow up survey of hangar owners is needed to identify specific concerns.

The Club fees and levies are very competitive and it runs a very tight ship as far as finances go. But some complained about the amount of cash in the bank. Members would like to know about future development plans for the club.

Comment: Development at the club has of course been stymied by the delay in securing a lease. No new building plans have been approved because of this and as a consequence hangar right of use holders who are waiting to build are frustrated. Understandably!

However, the club has also been unable to develop areas that fall outside the original lease area until a new lease is signed both for legal and rational reasons – it will be remiss of the Committee to spend money until a lease is secured. As a consequence the club has slowly been building a capital reserve to tackle projects when the lease is sorted. Some of those on the Club wish list include:

- Provide infrastructure to the undeveloped hangar sites
- Development of the area south east of the Sideslip hangar
- Upgrade of the electricity supply
- Sort out the water supply including a filtration plant for the borehole water
- Improve storm water drainage
- Expand and renovate the clubhouse
- Improve and enhance security
- Acquire club aircraft
- Tarring of taxiway C
- Widen and resurface taxiway A
- Build a grass runway alongside the existing tarmac one. *(OK this is only wanted by the tailwheel pilots but they can dream!)*
- Remove or trim trees on the approaches.
- Rehabilitate the northern and southern areas with fynbos and other indigenous plants as contribution to the environment and pay-back for the unauthorised development

This list should give those who think the club should not have so much cash in the bank pause for thought for with what we have will hardly make a dent in the above.

A final word on the subject; a big thanks is due to Edge for designing, executing and analysing the results of the survey. It has really stirred up the club and made everyone think about club matters. Well done!

SECURITY

There has been a recent upsurge in criminal activity in our area. There have been break-ins on the airfield (Sideslip suffered a burglary; instruments were stolen out an aircraft locked in a hangar and almost a hangar invasion one evening) while neighbouring properties have experienced incidents too, with the Ostrich Farm next door suffering the most with a major robbery.

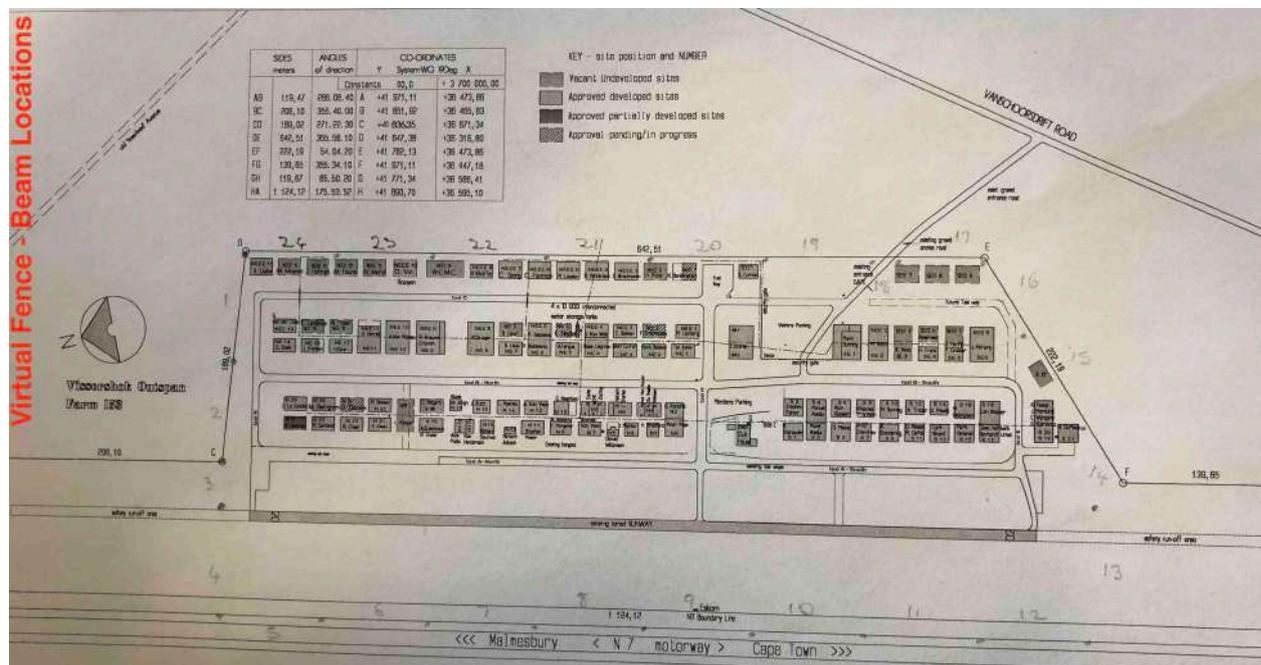
It is clear that in the current economic environment, high unemployment and the general poor service from SAPS it is unlikely that this situation will improve any time soon. So we have to fend for ourselves and start upgrading security.

Our armed response providers Atlantic Armed Response (AAR) have proposed a technological way of securing the airfield. This basically involves the following:

Virtual Fence

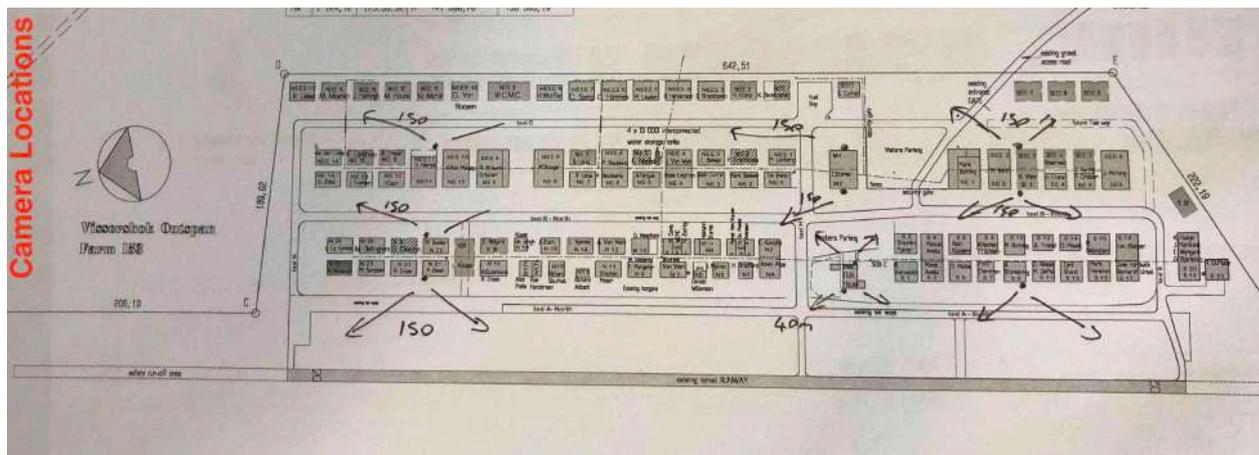
A “virtual” fence comprising 24 posts each with 8 IR beams surrounding the airfield. These beam posts will be self-powering with batteries (to be replaced annually) and will require any two beams to be broken simultaneously before an activation signal is sent. They will be 1,5m tall and positioned 150mm off the ground and each post links to the next ringing the airfield with IR beams linked wirelessly to a control computer.

See diagram below



Cameras

The next component of the upgrade proposed is cameras, 15 of them. Each camera is IR night capable and has a 150m range. These will be positioned in 100m overlap zones to enable remote viewing of the airfield 24/7. Each is wirelessly linked to the control computer.



Control and Monitoring System

The next element is the control system. There will be a computer-controlled system that will detect a zone breach and immediately move the appropriate camera to that zone. At the same time the control room responsible for monitoring the system will receive an alert. The operator will be able to judge from the cameras whether the trigger is human or other. If it is human the operator can judge the threat level and make a decision whether to activate the response procedures. These procedures will be:

- Sound a siren and switch on airfield floodlights
- Send the armed response team to the airfield

Costs

Obviously such a system does not come cheap and there are on-going monthly costs too. It is likely that the capital cost will be in excess of R400,000 while there will be an additional monitoring charge to the club of approximately R3000pm. Added to that will be annual maintenance costs and network charges. But when taken against the quote to install a traditional fence along the N7 of R750,000 that offers nothing other than a weak barrier, the cost seems better.

Your committee is currently working through the proposal to ensure that the technology is sound, that the service level agreements are acceptable and that the providers can do the job. Once we are satisfied that the system proposed is “fit for purpose” we will make a decision.

HAPPENINGS AT THE CLUB

I should like to give thanks to our willing staff members, Heather plus Freek and his two helpers. Their contributions to improving the efficiency of club operations have been immense. They have lifted a burden from Committee members and done a great service to all members.

The winter rains have been pretty good this year and the club drainage seems to have coped well. However, if you notice a storm water problem please do report it to Heather – info@morningstarflyingclub.co.za or 021 2001818. She will advise Freek of any problems.

EVENTS

There have been many fly aways to seek the \$100 hamburger, breakfasts at FASD, Riversdal and a new one Padstal, Tankwa. Recently some of the LSA crowd headed off to De Hoop for lunch and some whale watching on the return. All contributing the Morningstar Flying Club's reputation as one of the most active clubs in the country.

A small bunch of members, your Chairman included, trekked up to Namibia in May to attend the Brandenburg/Uis Fly In. Despite the difficulties in obtaining over flight approvals, the trip was a great success. Many adventures and incidents to recount but I am afraid what happens on tour stays on tour! However, cross border flying opens up a new world of adventure and excitement and I encourage all members who have the urge to give it a go. It does not matter how fast your airplane is, the group will always gather at destination. The benefits of group travel are obvious, shared adventure and someone to watch your back! So get out there and plan a trip!



Daisy does the desert



Ian's Sling looks insignificant against the desert....



Some formo work by the RV's with the Brandenburg as a backdrop.
First time Namibia has seen a 6-ship formation

Airventure Oshkosh 2019

A few members (myself included), endured the strain of a long international journey to visit the home of experimental aviation. From memory those that attended were:

Out of Dubai came Etienne & Erna Bekker, Etienne Bekker jnr, Elmarie Smith, Joseph Robertse
Local members were Mark Becker, Jonathan Starke, Ian Beere, Cyril Shand, Paul Grobler, Mike
Crawley, Alan Fergus, Donald Williamson and Johan van Wyk.

This was the 50th Anniversary Oshkosh and they certainly pulled out all the stops. I have been to several Airventure's but this was undoubtedly the best attended and busiest. Awesome military displays, thousands of aircraft, Warbirds aplenty, stands packed with goodies to buy and possibly the worst food. If you are an aviation nut, which I guess most of us are, then this is one to put on your bucket list. Simply the best!



Joy at Chicago Airport



The team's humble abode



The A Team

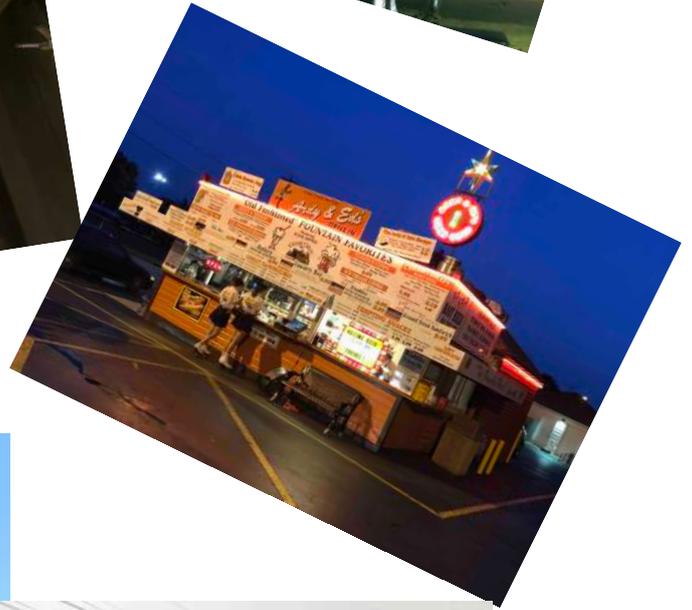
Now for the interesting photos. Enjoy!





LET'S MAKE OSHKOSH GREAT AGAIN





That's all folks, until the next briefing,
fly safe, blue skies, clear comms and
enjoy this great club!