

# BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## NOISE ABATEMENT PROCEDURES AND OVERFLYING OF TATSFIELD

I have recently had the unenviable task of taking over from Ian Mitchell representing Tatsfield Parish Council on the Biggin Hill Airport Consultative Committee. A massive vote of thanks is due to Ian for all his hard work on behalf of the Council over many years.

One of the first issues I faced, along with Martin Allen representing TDC, was the problem of aircraft flying low over Tatsfield, sometimes over the centre of the village which is not supposed to happen. This was raised at the July meeting of the Committee and discussed in some detail. Particular concerns I raised were that it appeared light aircraft pilots were not adhering to present rules, that there was a lack of clarity about what the rules were, that overflying had recently increased and that the airport's complaints procedure was not being managed effectively.

At that meeting, the new CEO of the airport, David Winstanley, was very sympathetic to our concerns and made a commitment to investigate and deal with the problem. As a result, Martin and I had subsequent meetings with him and some of his senior colleagues after which he produced a briefing note for Tatsfield residents clarifying the rules and explaining how they are to be reinforced. The document has now been finalised in conjunction with Martin and myself and is set out below. Although it is inevitably a bit technical I hope it is readable. It will also appear on the village website.

The CEO has been very supportive of the need to protect our village from excessive noise and low overflying and I do believe that as a result of his commitment and the work we have done there has been a marked improvement in recent weeks. Only time will tell, of course, and there will inevitably be incidents from time to time which will need to be reported. Do please use the complaints procedure referred to in the briefing paper. A summary of such incidents, follow-up investigations and outcomes will be presented to the Consultative Committee.

David Pinchin, Vice-Chair  
Tatsfield Parish Council  
davidpinchin@tatsfieldparishcouncil.org.uk

# LONDON BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT - NOISE ABATEMENT PROCEDURES

## BRIEFING NOTE TO TATSFIELD RESIDENTS

The purpose of this briefing note is to inform residents of Tatsfield of London Biggin Hill's Noise Abatement Procedures as they pertain to Tatsfield as a 'Noise Sensitive Area'.

### Current Noise Abatement Procedures

Aircraft operating from London Biggin Hill Airport are requested to comply with the Airport's noise abatement procedures which include nominal 'no fly zones' such as Tatsfield. These are programmed into the Airports Noise Monitoring and Track Keeping System (NMTKS). So, as Tatsfield is designated as a Noise Sensitive Area and, providing it is safe not to do so, the village centre should not be over flown. However, this only applies to aircraft operating from London Biggin Hill Airport which are the limit of the airports control.

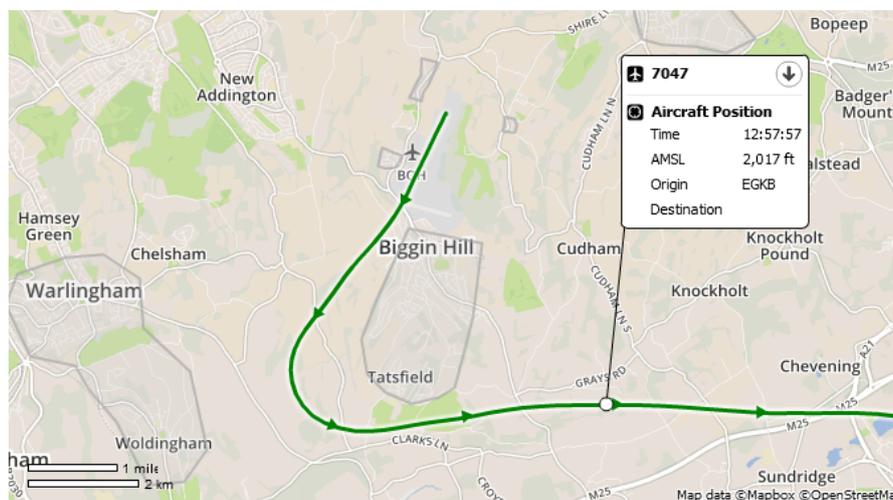
### Specific Instructions to Pilots (UKAIP)

Departures from Runway 21: If departing to the east or north via the Sevenoaks or Swanley reporting points, immediately after passing the upwind end of the runway, pilots are instructed to turn slightly right by 10 degrees to track 220 to a distance of 2 nautical miles before turning left and tracking to the south east. **In all cases, aircraft commanders should arrange their flight to avoid the Noise Sensitive Area of Tatsfield village.**

Pilots are provided with additional guidance regarding reducing power on departure to ensure they have regard to noise nuisance on the ground.

### The ideal departure profile

The diagram below shows an actual flight departing from Runway 21 and correctly following the noise abatement procedures. Additionally, whilst not exact, the diagram shows a digital representation of the noise sensitive area e.g. the area of Biggin Hill and Tatsfield within the grey boundary.



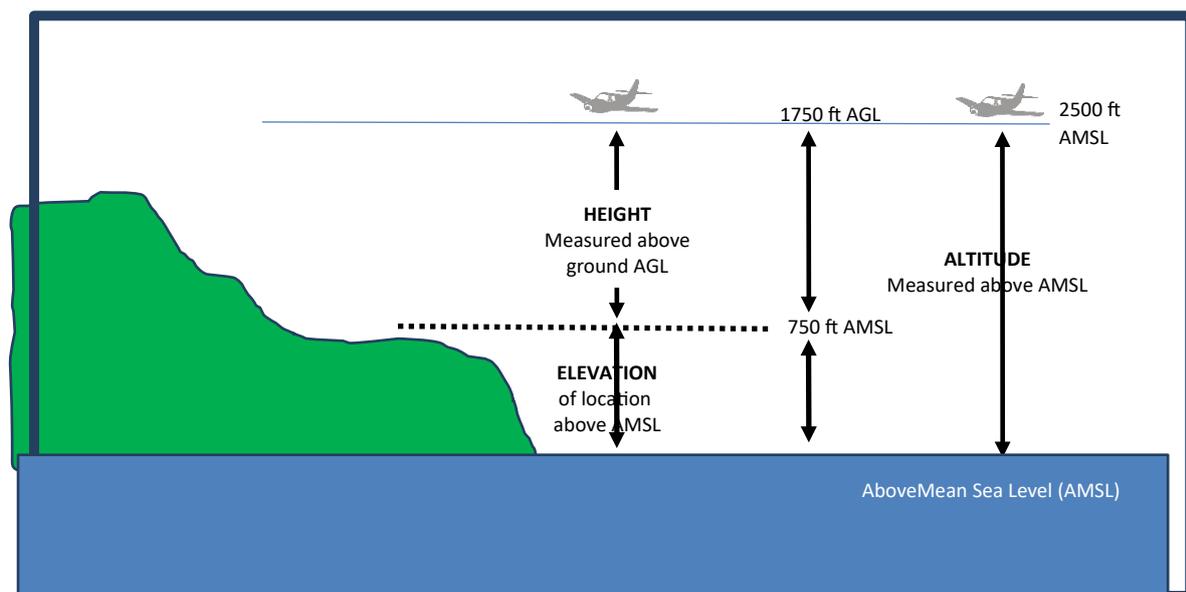
### Automatic tracking system

The Airport's Noise Monitoring and Track Keeping System (NMTKS) has an automated off-track warning system, which identifies aircraft that are 'off track' i.e. those aircraft that overfly Noise Sensitive Areas such as Tatsfield. These aircraft are identified as 'off track' whether an individual has made a report or not. These tracks will be recorded and reported through the airport's Noise and Safety Sub Committee and then to its Consultative Committee on which both Tatsfield Parish Council and Tandridge District Council are represented. Following investigation of individual incidents, appropriate action ranging from warnings to fines is taken. In the main, those responsible for such incidents are private pilots in small light aircraft.

### Difference between AMSL (above mean sea level) and AGL (above ground level)

Several complaints express some confusion regarding the altitude recorded by the Airport's tracking system and the height they estimate when observing an aircraft. The difference in height is as a result of the altitude of an aircraft being measured above sea level and the elevation of the point at which the observation is made. This is particularly relevant to Tatsfield which is approximately 750 ft above sea level.

The following diagram shows the difference between **Altitude, Height and Elevation**.



If an aircraft is correctly flying at an **Altitude** of 2500 ft amsl around the borders of **Tatsfield** ie not in the no-fly zone and the **Elevation** of an observer's location is 750ft above mean sea level, then by deducting the **Elevation** from the **Altitude** it will give the **Height** of the aircraft which may seem lower than the advertised 2500 ft.

$$\text{ALTITUDE} - \text{ELEVATION} = \text{HEIGHT}$$
$$2500\text{ft} - 750\text{ft} = 1750\text{ft}$$

## **Controlled airspace**

The challenges for aircraft operators around London Biggin Hill Airport are complicated by the proximity to other major Airports and the establishment of controlled airspace protecting such airports.

Airspace protecting airports starts from ground level and extends into the London Traffic Management area airspace which starts at 2500 ft amsl. This means that aircraft not wishing to enter controlled airspace must fly below 2400 ft amsl and avoid flying into airspace around certain airports.

The impact for Tatsfield and the surrounding area is that many aircraft including those from other airports are effectively funnelled south of Biggin Hill and north of Gatwick at below 2500ft. As a result, some aircraft not operating out of London Biggin Hill may fly over Tatsfield as they avoid Gatwick airspace.

## **Complaints Procedure**

Ideally, the Airport would prefer noise or track keeping complaints to be made via the Airport website [www.bigginhillairport.com](http://www.bigginhillairport.com) and by selecting the Noise & Aircraft tracking system - once at least 45 minutes has elapsed after the incident. The website provides step by step instructions regarding how to make a complaint. Alternatively, complainants can call the airport on 01959 578580. Arrangements have been recently updated to ensure replies and responses are routinely given.

Information required when making a complaint will include the following:

- Date and Time of occurrence
- Whether the complaint is regarding excessive noise or off track (ie the aircraft has flown overhead the village) or both
- Type of aircraft: light propeller aircraft or jet aircraft
- Approximate height if possible.

Any enquiries relating to this briefing note should be addressed in the first instance to the Tatsfield Parish Council clerk: [clerk@tatsfieldparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@tatsfieldparishcouncil.org.uk).

David Winstanley

David Pinchin

Martin Allen

CEO Biggin Hill Airport

Tatsfield Parish Councillor

Tandridge District Councillor

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