



I & C Newsletter Issue 30 2024

# Instructor and Coach Newsletter

Dear Instructors, Coaches and Dual Pilots

Welcome to the latest edition of the BHPA Instructor and Coach newsletter.

In this issue:

## Table of Contents

1. **Who can fly cross-country?**
2. **PG (Power) Student Training Record Book changes**
3. **FSC Trial reports**
  - Parallel (pulley) towing
  - Dual paramotoring (using a trike)
4. **Report on the 5-day instructor course**
5. **Poor visibility and Dual flying**
6. **Child Protection Policy**
7. **Course Diary**

## Welcome

The sport generally, and training in particular, has faced a tough weather year in 2024, and together with the general economic situation this has led to a difficult year for schools. Instructing abroad has also been challenging for various reasons, including the ongoing effects of Brexit. We can only hope that 2025 has some more settled weather in store, and that the potential pilots who did not manage to get trained this year will have another opportunity next season.

Articles & suggestions for I & C news can be mailed to: [office@bhpa.co.uk](mailto:office@bhpa.co.uk) **BHPA Technical department.**

## 1. Who can fly cross-country?

Following issues arising from members flying cross-country who did not hold the Pilot rating, the BHPA has issued the following guidance. This will also appear in Skywings in due course.

To navigate effectively around controlled airspace, and safely identify and set up a landing in a previously unknown location, a pilot requires a certain level of knowledge and skill. That a pilot has achieved this level is evidenced by the pilot holding the BHPA 'Pilot' qualification. Members holding a BHPA Pilot Rating or higher are authorised by the BHPA to fly cross-country.

***If a member, who does not hold at least a Pilot rating, flies cross-country, then (subject to the two exceptions set out at the end of this document) he or she will be operating in breach of Rule 9 of the Rules of the BHPA and will not be indemnified by the BHPA's Public Liability Insurance Policy.***

The BHPA Pilot rating is very accessible, and all Club Pilot (Novice) members are strongly encouraged to work toward achieving this rating and become qualified to enjoy the rewards of cross-country flight.

### What is a cross-country flight?

Any flight which cannot be characterised as 'local' is a cross-country flight.

These are the BHPA's guidelines of what constitutes a local flight. If you are not engaged in a local flight which fulfils these guidelines, then you are flying cross-country.

The principle behind these guidelines is that local flights take place within a known airspace environment and there is no risk of the pilot inadvertently infringing restricted airspace

What constitutes a local flight often depends on the launch method.

For all forms of towed and powered flight, flying locally means that the take-off and landing sites will be the same place or reasonably adjacent to each other, such as neighbouring fields. **The pilot must keep the launch and landing site within sight at all times.**

For hill soaring, a local flight will involve following a ridge line with the intention of landing back at one of the site's official landing fields, top or bottom. With the exception of the very few well known long ridge runs, the pilot will remain within sight of one of the official landing fields.

In all cases common sense must prevail. Pilots should fly within their proven levels of skill, knowledge and hence, rating.

If you are flying under power on a day with good visibility and can see the control tower on the airfield from which you took off from a few kilometres away, that is local.

A flight during which the pilot is never out of sight of his or her launch is local.

On some hill sites, particularly in mountainous areas such as the Alps, the normal, recognised, landing field for the launch point used may be some distance from, and indeed may be out of sight of, that launch point. Such a flight would still be considered local.

In all the above circumstances, the pilot's intention is to land at the nearby official landing field associated with the take off point.

An unintended intermediate landing, particularly when the pilot is returning to the official landing field, does not stop a flight being local.

However, if your planned landing area is unknown, well out of sight, or distant from the launch point, or your planned flight, however short, requires you to navigate around, or over controlled airspace, then it is not a local flight.

In preparing these guidelines, the BHPA is well aware that there is scope for a variety of opinions on whether a particular flight is local. Pilots should be aware that when considering this issue, the BHPA will take a very narrow, cautionary, view, and if a flight is open to question, it will be deemed not to be 'local'. There is no scope for fanciful interpretations of this guidance.

The above guidelines are subject to two limited exceptions.

1. At BHPA sanctioned events where the organisers have arranged a defined cross-country corridor to a goal, and every competitor holding a Club Pilot (Novice) Rating has received and understood a detailed briefing, which identifies any controlled airspace or hazards to aviation *en-route* and the briefing is documented by the organisers to the satisfaction of, and such documentation is lodged with, the BHPA Office, limited cross-country tasks may be undertaken by those Club Pilot (Novice) rated members.
2. Where an Instructor or Senior Coach is satisfied that a Club Pilot (Novice) is capable of carrying out a defined cross-country flight following a corridor to a goal, and they have provided the pilot with a detailed briefing in advance, which identifies any controlled airspace or hazards to aviation *en-route* and the briefing is documented by the Instructor or Senior Coach to the satisfaction of, and such documentation is lodged with, the BHPA Office, such a limited cross-country flight may then be undertaken by a Club Pilot (Novice) rated member.

In both cases, those supervising the Club Pilot(s) are taking responsibility for them and may be required to give detailed evidence, supported by documentation, in support of the assertion that the Club Pilot was properly briefed.

A BHPA pro-forma of the required briefing is available and will be supplied to event organisers and Instructors/Senior Coaches who wish to take advantage of these exceptions. These must be completed, signed by the pilot and the person responsible for the briefing. The completed documents must be returned to the BHPA office without delay.

All Instructors and Coaches are urged to encourage members to work towards and achieve the Pilot rating at the earliest opportunity. Don't forget that the online Pilot exams are easily accessible, there is plenty of revision material available, and these can be done on separate sessions. If a member does struggle to pass one or more sections, there are alternative re-take papers available.

[https://www.bhpa.co.uk/documents/index.php?doc=Pilot\\_Syllabus.pdf](https://www.bhpa.co.uk/documents/index.php?doc=Pilot_Syllabus.pdf)

## 2. Paragliding (Power) Student Training Record Book changes

In view of the guidance issued clarifying the definition of a cross-country flight, the next issue of the Student Training Record Book for the Power environment will be amended, and the existing limit of 2 nautical miles from the take-off point, specified in the Club Pilot Rating will specify local flights only.

Flying locally means that the take-off and landing sites will be the same place or reasonably adjacent to each other, such as neighbouring fields. **The pilot must keep the launch and landing site within sight at all times.**

This means that provided visibility is suitable and there are no controlled airspace restrictions, the CP or Student pilot can fly well clear of any circuit pattern, which should minimise noise or congestion issues.

## 3. FSC Trials

The Flying and Safety Committee occasionally receive proposals requesting a trial for a new activity or a change in the current regulations. At the conclusion of the trial the committee reviews the reports and determines whether the activity should be approved and integrated into the technical manual, requires changes, or is not approved.

In 2024, two trials have been concluded.

### A. Parallel towing

This is towing using a fixed length line routed through two pulleys and pulled by a vehicle, that allows the tow operator/ driver to be situated close to the person being towed at take-off and to remain close to them as the tow progresses. This was conceived as a training tool for Hang gliding; but has also developed into a very useful method for managing low level tows of both paragliders and parascenders.

This trial has been successfully concluded, and there is now an Operations manual detailing the equipment and personnel requirements and the operating method required. Several groups (including some overseas operators outside the BHPA) have expressed an interest. Parallel towing allows a simple and effective low level towing operation with a low capital expenditure and lower personnel requirements than conventional winching.

It is ideal for training situations.

### B. Dual powered paragliding using a sub-70kg trike.

This activity is not normally legal in the UK as powered two-person flight is normally limited to foot launched aircraft, or the aircraft must be a registered microlight with a Permit to Fly and the pilot must hold a CAA licence. The Sub-70 category of self-propelled wheeled hang gliders (which includes paraglider trikes) is specifically limited to solo flying. However, one member had obtained an individual exemption to the “solo” requirement on the grounds of a disability and the FSC approved a trial of dual sub-70kg operation to determine the effectiveness of this activity.

This trial has now been completed, but the report concludes that this is not a project that is presently worth pursuing, as the operation within a 70 Kg limit requires unacceptable compromises relating to the equipment. This reflects the situation overseas, where two-seat para-trikes are common, but all weigh-in at substantially more than 70Kg, putting them into the UK's Permit to Fly Microlight category.

There are other trials which are either still at the proposal stage or are ongoing but have not yet been concluded.

## 4. BHPA 5-day Instructor Course

In August, the BHPA ran a five-day instructor course, which was kindly hosted by Airways Airports at Darley Moor airfield in Derbyshire.

The programme was fairly intense with the first day covering most of the elements of the Club Coach Course, as some of the candidates were not current or had not previously attended a Club Coach Course.

Candidates had the opportunity to deliver a prepared theory lecture, and then have this de-briefed. Apart from the classroom work, candidates also had an opportunity to deliver practical lesson sessions, this was done at the airfield, (we had hoped to have a session on the hills, but this was precluded by the weather). Group de-briefing of these was a very valuable exercise; very often Trainee Instructors have experience at just one school (often the one they trained at themselves) and an insight into how other schools operate is a very helpful element of these courses.

Just when they thought it was time for a coffee break, the candidates found they had to deal with an unexpected accident scenario involving two casualties. There was a good deal of expertise among the candidates, and everyone took away valuable lessons in managing a situation. The trainers / casualties soon recovered sufficiently to deliver sessions on teaching flight theory and an air law quiz.

Towards the end of the course, each candidate delivered a second theory session, which incorporated the feedback they had gained earlier. This proved a very useful exercise, and a marked step-up in the standard of delivery was noted, with candidates actively encouraged to steal any good ideas from their peers!

The course covered a lot of ground, from pilot psychology to lesson planning, and liability and the duty of care, to administration and risk assessment skills. For some it was an early step on their journey to become an instructor, and for others it was the final polish required to prepare them for their examination. (Two of the candidates have subsequently been examined and are now licenced Instructors).

The next Instructor course will be held in April. If you or any of your team are interested, please let us know as soon as possible. This course is also suitable for any Coach who wishes to become a Senior Coach. Senior Coach candidates are only required to attend for days 2, 3 & 4 of the course.

## 5. Poor Visibility & Dual Flying

Hang gliders and paragliders are normally operating under VFR (Visual Flight Rules) and the VMC minima are well understood, (if you are unsure, this information is widely available; the Pilot handbook or the Skyway code are useful and authoritative guides). There are occasions when a pilot may be inadvertently caught in deteriorating conditions and find they cannot maintain the minimum separation distance from cloud for VFR flight and find themselves operating under Instrument Flying Rules. In such cases you should re-acquire VMC as soon as possible, e.g. by losing altitude or by landing. These rules exist for the safety of yourself and other air users.

For general aviation, flying at night is also possible under Night VFR rules, but there are ratings and restrictions that apply to this. For hang gliders and paragliders there is no night rating. We very often fly in close proximity to one another, we carry no lights, making us invisible to other air users, and unlike most aircraft we often land in areas that have no lighting and that may have hazards such as power lines which are not visible at night.

Flying at night adds very significant risks. Subjecting a passenger to this magnified risk is unacceptable to the BHPA. Just imagine for a moment you hit an invisible fence or power line, or just mis-timed your flare, resulting in a passenger injury; then being cross examined by a lawyer asking how you justified risking the safety of their client.

The prime responsibility of a dual pilot is the safety of their passenger. Any pilot who makes a decision that willfully compromises that, including flying at night or in poor visibility, is failing in that duty.

## 6. Safeguarding Policy & Code of Conduct

Steve Young, one of the members of the BHPA's Executive Council has generated a Safeguarding Policy and a Code of Conduct document for the Association. These are now available on the BHPA website.

These documents are useful for reference by members and are of particular relevance to licence holders who may be dealing with safeguarding issues, e.g. dealing with minors.

[https://www.bhpa.co.uk/documents/index.php?doc=BHPA\\_Safeguarding\\_CoC.pdf](https://www.bhpa.co.uk/documents/index.php?doc=BHPA_Safeguarding_CoC.pdf)

[https://www.bhpa.co.uk/documents/index.php?doc=BHPA\\_Safeguarding\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.bhpa.co.uk/documents/index.php?doc=BHPA_Safeguarding_Policy.pdf)

## 7. BHPA Events & Course Diary

<b>Club Coach Course</b>	<b>Cumbria Soaring Club</b>	<b>Jan 18<sup>th</sup> &amp; 19<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>BHPA AGM</b>	<b>BHPA Office Leicester</b>	<b>Mar 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Senior Instructor course</b>	<b>BHPA Office Leicester</b>	<b>Mar 12<sup>th</sup> &amp; 13<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Club Coach Course</b>	<b>Long Mynd Club</b>	<b>Mar 22<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 23<sup>rd</sup></b>
<b>Instructor Course / Senior Coach Course</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>Apr 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup></b>

Safe Flying