

Drone and Model Aircraft Policy



Contents

- 🏠 Introduction
- 🏠 Somerton Town Council Land Owner
- 🏠 References

Introduction

Somerton Town Council has introduced a drone usage policy relating to the use and occurrence of drones on council land including parks and public open spaces.

Traditionally unmanned aircraft have only been used by model aircraft enthusiasts for recreational purposes. However, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAV) are increasingly being used for professional applications such as surveying, surveillance and data-gathering. Such aircraft could be operated in a way that may pose a greater risk to the general public and property. The use of these aircraft is regulated by the **Civil Aviation Authority** (CAA) under CAP 722 Unmanned Aircraft System Operations in UK Airspace – Guidance and Policy and CAP 3939 Rules of the Air. All operators of small unmanned aircraft are now required to complete online training and be issued an operator's ID from the CAA. All commercial operations require a Permit for Commercial Operations (PfCO) from the CAA.

Furthermore, larger unmanned aircraft (greater than 20 Kgs) are now being developed. These aircraft are required by CAA and EASA law to be designed and manufactured to an approved standard, and very often require a deal more space in which to operate. Therefore, it is often necessary to take additional steps to ensure that the aircraft can be safely integrated with other airspace users - both in the air and on the ground.

A person operating a small **Unmanned Aircraft System** (UAS) is fully responsible for the safe operation of any flight in line with CAP 722, which outlines the safe operating distances from persons and property not under direct control of the operator.

It is the operator's responsibility to ensure that he/she has the requisite insurance cover for the type of flight that is being undertaken. The operator is also responsible for permissions to land and take off from private land, ensuring the minimum distances from people and property is maintained, inform local air traffic control (ATC) agencies, obtain all flight planning data to ensure a safe flight and ensure the aircraft is not flown beyond line of sight (500m) and not above 400 feet above ground level. For commercial operations a full risk assessment must be carried out.

The operator of a small unmanned surveillance aircraft must not fly the aircraft:

- (a) over or within 150 metres of any congested area;
- (b) over or within 150 metres of an organised open-air assembly of more than 1,000 persons;
- (c) within 50 metres of any vessel, vehicle or structure which is not under the control of the person in charge of the aircraft; or within 50 metres of any person.
- (d) during take-off or landing, a small unmanned aircraft system must not be flown within 30 metres of any person.

The regulations in CAP 722 are intended to protect people and / or properties that are not involved in the activity. They are also aimed at being as 'light touch' and proportionate as possible, so there is a great deal that can be done (especially for private or recreational flights) without the need to approach the CAA at all.

Somerton Town Council Land Owner Stance – Drone Usage

Zero tolerance/permission will be enforced/granted by Somerton Town Council, as land owner, to any request to fly drones on Somerton Town Council land for recreational or commercial purposes.

Exemptions will only be granted where usage of drone device aids risk reduction in the work place eg working at height, building survey work or undertake a professional service eg Festivals/Events Media
Reasons behind our zero tolerance or permission policy for recreational or commercial requests :-

- Somerton Town Council granting permission could leave the council liable for subsequent actions brought about by drone activity when operated from land under our ownership.
- The close proximity of many of our sites to neighbouring residential and business properties and the potential risk of causing alarm, distress or harassment to occupants.
- Potential risk of accident, injury to other site users or property as a result of user or drone error.

Somerton Town Council Land Owner Stance – Model Aircraft

Zero tolerance/permission will be enforced/granted by Somerton Town Council, as land owner, to any request to fly model aircraft on Somerton Town Council land for recreational or commercial purposes. Exemptions will only be considered where users are part of a formalised model aircraft flying club that can demonstrate all health and safety and insurance measures are in place. A licence agreement must be made with Somerton Town Council and the formalised club before site usage can be established.

Reasons behind the zero tolerance or permission policy for recreational or commercial requests :-

- Somerton Town Council granting permission could leave the council liable for subsequent actions brought about by model aircraft activity when operated from land under our ownership.
- The close proximity of many of our sites to neighbouring residential and business properties and the potential risk of causing alarm, distress or harassment to occupants.
- Potential risk of accident or injury to other site users or property as a result of user or model aircraft error.

References

Unmanned Aircraft System Operation UK Airspace – Guidance and Policy CAP 722.

Air Navigation Order CAP 3939.

For a full copy of CAP 722 Unmanned Aircraft System Operation in UK Airspace – Guidance and Policy and CAP 3939 Air Navigation: The Order and Regulations please visit www.caa.co.uk alongside further information and guidance on operation, safety, formal permission request etc.

For matters concerning operations or approvals, contact :-

Shared Service Centre (UAS) CAA

Aviation House

Gatwick Airport South

West Sussex RH6 0YR

Telephone: 03300 221908 email: uavenquiries@caa.co.uk

Somerton Town Council
Policy Documents
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