

Guidelines for Flying Model Aircraft at Agnes Head.



South West Area

Introduction

Natural England has informed The National Trust that they have no objection for Unpowered Model Glider Flying to continue at St Agnes Head outside the Bird Breeding Season, 1st September until 31st January.

Therefore, BMFA South West Area (SWA) members may continue to fly model gliders from St Agnes Head during this period. However, this activity and its continuation still remains very much on probation, let alone extending the period of permission and depends completely on whether or not our activities are seen to be and are perceived to be acceptable.

In 2021 Chris Morton set out some guidelines derived mainly from the previous agreement established by the Cornwall Slope Soaring Association with the National Trust. Due to the passage of time and continued discussions with the National Trust there have been some minor changes reflected here.

Guidelines

1. Birds of Prey are known to frequent these cliffs, they are a protected species and it is illegal to disturb either them directly, their nesting area or their natural habitat.

Whilst flying a model, if a Bird of Prey approaches, maintain a minimum distance of 200m between your model and the bird. If this cannot be achieved, fly a landing circuit away from the bird. Once the bird has left the area you may relaunch. It's advisable to adopt a similar approach to any bird as anyone watching may not know the difference and report you anyway. Observing this guideline is extremely important. Seen or just perceived to be interfering with Birds of Prey (or any other bird) is the single thing most likely to bring model flying at St Agnes to an end.

Therefore, it remains crucial that this guideline is strictly observed.

2. Drones or any Powered Models on any National Trust land including St. Agnes is without exception strictly prohibited. This also includes motor assisted gliders and EDF.
If even if a stationary propeller is seen, the assumption is that it has been or will be used and is impossible to prove otherwise, therefore all propellers must be removed. The consequences could be a total ban.
3. The rules within BMFA's Article 16 Agreement must be observed at all times, i.e. maintaining a safe distance from people and property. St Agnes Head is a public site, un-involved people can suddenly appear on paths below and behind a pilot without warning. Keep flying models well away from all people, involved or otherwise. Examine the area before flying to determine where people could be, there are paths well below the flying area at all locations.
If more than one member is present, then each member should take a turn (lets say 15 minutes at a time) to be Safety Marshal to advise those flying of approaching people or birds and to make the decision to bring proceedings to a halt before potential conflicts develop.
4. Do not fly persistently low or close to the clifftops to do so would not only present a danger to unseen people but will also be observed and perceived by some as a threat to nesting birds. Flying should take place as far as possible over the sea.
5. Do not overfly or make landing approaches over car parks or other areas where cars are parked. The minimum safe distance is 50m from car parks, the coastguard hut, and any members of the public at all times.
6. Paragliders share these areas, allow them time and space during their launch phase and in the air at all times.
7. In general landings should be performed to the right-hand (facing out to sea) side of the hump on the Northern slope, to the right-hand side between the coastguard hut and the car park away from any parked car, and over the heather to the left-hand side on the West slope. Do not land unless the landing area is clear of people. Ask the Safety Marshal or do a visual check before you start your landing to avoid an emergency landing-out.

8. BMFA or equivalent insurance should be carried by all modellers along with proof of their current Operator's registration. All models should carry their Operator ID number.
9. If you come across an "out of Area" modeller seeking to fly, please ensure they are acquainted with these guidelines.
10. Do not leave any litter onsite, take it home. If you find any other modelling related litter, yours or someone else's, please take it home as well.
"Will there be not a trace left behind"? [Tom Paxton], Let's hope not.
11. Finally, we should all remember that we only fly by the generosity of others. The National Trust owns St Agnes Head and we need their permission to use their land. The National Trust observes the requirements set out by Natural England which is a very powerful organisation, please do not upset them. If you are approached by a National Trust Ranger, or a Natural England Official, simply explain what you are doing and why you think you can do it and if they persist to question you refer them to the Chairman of the SWA. Follow their instructions and report everything to again the Chairman of the SWA. The same applies if you are approached by a member of the public or a paraglider concerned about your activities. Explain what you are doing and why in a polite and considerate manner but do not get into an altercation. If problems arise again contact the Chairman of the SWA who will take it up with the appropriate authority on your behalf.

Do not give others any cause to become upset, however if others do start to give any verbal or physical abuse then don't hesitate to call the Police.

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