

BMAA News



Dear BMAA Member

In these extraordinarily turbulent times, it's more important than ever that we stay in touch. So, we'll be sending out this weekly member email with a round-up of the latest news, including any changes at the BMAA. This first email is rather packed, so please read on to hear important information about licence validity extensions, the increase to 600kg MTOW, training in amateur built microlights and the latest from the BMAA office and council.

BMAA Staff

As many of you will know, most of the BMAA office staff started working from home from 18th March in line with the guidance from the Government. Thanks to our recent investment in digital systems, routine tasks such as membership renewal, Permit to Fly revalidation, and general enquiries were unaffected.

On the 1st and 6th April, we decided to take advantage of the funding offered by the Government furlough scheme to reduce overheads at a time when members cannot fly and the number of Permits and NPPL applications was temporarily reduced. Our thanks go to those staff that are on furlough, and so on reduced income, and to Karen Judd who is continuing to hold the fort and keep services as near to normal as possible. As CE, I am continuing to work to assist Karen and cover all the other aspects that continue, such as representation with CAA and DfT, although I shall be dropping to four days a week in May.

Microlight Flying magazine

Geoff Hill and Norman Burr continue to produce a fantastic magazine for us to read in the rather more than wanted free time that many have now. An appeal for member's stories to help keep the magazine full when there is no flying has reaped a veritable avalanche to fill the May issue and most of June and July too. I'm passing on their thanks - and "keep it coming" is the message!

Licence validity extensions

We asked the CAA for a few things in March.

1. *An extension to the validity of a certificate for pilots who have not been able to have a flight with an instructor to maintain the privileges of the NPPL by experience.*
2. *An extension to the instructor certificate for instructors whose revalidation test falls before the end of June 2020.*
3. *An extension to the validity of student pilots' exams which may otherwise lapse before the end of June 2020*
4. *An extension to the C of V of an aircraft unable to have an inspection before the end of June 2020.*

Although commercial, police, and rescue aviation naturally take priority, the CAA has now released an exemption which extends the privileges of pilot licenses, instructor certificates and examiner authorities. The detail is in a CAA document found simply enough by googling CAA ORS4 1378. We have been in close touch with the CAA and will be releasing guidance to help those without a degree in legal speak to grasp the meaning of the text.

Also, the extension to the validity of student exams is on the way.

It doesn't look likely that the validity period of Permits will be extended, however guidance on whether check flying can take place is referred to in a notice published by the CAA on Friday 17 April.

The notice refers to maintenance flights, ferry flights and engine health flights. Some owners are taking the opportunity to use this as a permission to conduct check flights. We advise owners to carefully consider whether a permit check flight can be considered as "essential maintenance". The

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BMAA has no procedures for engine health flights for its fleet and so unless there is a manufacturer's requirement this would not fall into the range of flights permitted by this notice.

Although there has not been an outright ban on recreational flying the Government position is clear that it does not consider travelling to an airfield for a flight one of the essential reasons to leave home. We must also be aware that any accident would put a load on the emergency services which at this time is most unwelcome, and lastly think of the effect on the public view of recreational aviation of those families confined to house and garden as an aircraft flies overhead.

Ultimately the decision whether to fly or not is down to the individual, but any non-essential flying at the moment is not generally supported.

BMAA Council

The BMAA Council met twice in April using a web-based conference meeting tool. Significant topics discussed included the effect of coronavirus on the BMAA's financial position and ways of reducing costs where possible without impacting our ability to provide a good service to members. This is ongoing, helped by the March financial reports that showed we were on course before the coronavirus hiatus to break even this financial year as planned. This is good news.

The AGM has also been the subject of much discussion once the planned event at Popham had to be cancelled, with other times and places reviewed. Popham is planning a post coronavirus event, which is one possible option, while the BMAA SDDR/Freedom Rally at Enstone planned for the end of July is another. Obviously, everything is fluid at the moment as we start another three weeks of lockdown but we will update you as things evolve.

Ahead of the AGM, it's usual to publish an Annual Report. This was a casualty of the sudden exodus from Deddington but a Treasurer's report will be published soon. This should have come out before the membership were asked to vote on financial matters, but it was unavoidable in the circumstances.

The election for places on the BMAA Council is on at the moment. It closes at 1200 hours on the 30th April. Please use your vote: so far only about 5% of ballots have been received and another 95% would be great. Ballot papers were included in the last magazine and you can vote by post or online.

600kg

We have been encouraging the CAA to complete the work in order to make recommendations to the DfT to allow changes that will enable an increase in microlight weight limits. This week I understand that the CAA has held internal meetings prior to going to DfT and that will happen fairly soon. The working group that we are part of will then meet to see what the outcome of the consultation has been and what the recommendations are.

Training in amateur built microlights

This consultation and response are at a similar stage to the 600kg one. We expect it will be another few weeks before any further detail is known. As soon as we know anything it will be passed to members.

Finally

It's good to talk. We are trying to make sure that members get to know everything that happens as soon as it happens. I will be writing these weekly emails to round up the news but please keep a watch on the news on the BMAA website, bmaa.org, and the BMAA Facebook pages (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BMAA1/?ref=bookmarks>). We also use Twitter BMAAUK (<https://twitter.com/BMAAUK>), and the BMAA Forum linked from the BMAA website (<https://forums.bmaa.org/forum>). Don't forget Microlight Flying magazine and the electronic newsletter eMF. You can sign up here for eMF <https://www.bmaa.org/publications>

If you have any questions for us please email, best to use general@bmaa.org, or call. Questions and comments directly to us are simpler and less often missed than on the social media platforms.

Stay safe

Geoff Weighell

CE BMAA

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