

Gentlemen and Lady,

You may recall that at last night's meeting the proposed CAA regulations governing our hobby were discussed and at that meeting I promised to distribute a letter written by Martin Lynn the chairman of Pontefract Club to Baroness Vere of Norbiton who is the aviation minister at the Department of Transport. The letter itself is quite self-explanatory and I would urge all members to fill in the CAA consultation regarding the above and to contact their MPs expressing our grave concerns over these regulations.

A link to the consultation follows:- <https://consultations.caa.co.uk/finance/drone-registration/>

Regards

Richard

***Dear Baroness Vere of Norbiton,***

***I am contacting you in your capacity as aviation minister at The Department of Transport (DfT).***

***I am a long-standing model aircraft flyer (over 50 years) and wish to raise some serious concerns about the new drone legislation and registration scheme your government is trying to impose.***

***I am also a director of the British Model Flying Association (BMFA) and chairman and member of 3 of the biggest model aircraft flying clubs in West Yorkshire.***

***My first concerns are about the legality of what the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) are doing and their methods. They seem to be in breach of all the current rules and guidelines (details below).***

***In principal, I personally, have no problem with a small charge for some sort of registration scheme. However,***

***you have to realise that it will make no difference to the perceived or real problems with illegal drone flying. The law-abiding flyers will register, the illegal ones will not and neither the CAA or the Police, appear to have the resources or staff to do anything about it. The registered flyers will continue to fly legally and safely, as they have done for many years and the illegal flyers will continue to break the law with no likelihood of prosecution.***

***The projected number of registrations of 170,000 are widely optimistic. If there are 50,000 registrations, you will be lucky. The BMFA have around 33,000 members and other model flying organisations including multi rotor organisations, less than 5000. Many of these members are in more than one of these groups which equates to less than 40,000 people. Not many other people are going to even bother about registering. This means the projected charge of £16.50 is totally inaccurate and it will be most likely to be 4 or 5 times this amount. This will deter even more people from registering and reduce any projected income even more.***

***The projected costs to run the scheme of £2.8 million a year are extortionate. There is some serious wrong doing if the CAA are going to pay these sorts of sums for what today, is a relatively simple computer data base system.***

***As a matter of urgency, you need to look at the consultants the CAA are employing (both IT infrastructure and the data research team who obtained your projected registration figures). The sums they are***

***obviously charging, are criminal and one must question whether there is a strong element of mal practice. This is public money they are spending.***

***The BMFA have already offered the CAA access to their computer data base system, but the CAA have failed to respond. It would not be difficult to link into that and the costs would be only be a few thousand pounds not millions.***

***My understanding is that the CAA operates within the government's Better Regulation framework and its Regulators' Code, to which all UK regulators must comply. I will address each core principle in turn and explain why I believe that the CAA has failed on every count of that: The Code's core principles are:***

***Proportionality – Regulators should intervene only when necessary; remedies should be appropriate to the risk posed, and costs identified and minimised.***

***I contend that the CAA regulations being imposed on BMFA members do not comply with this principle. It has previously been acknowledged by the DfT/CAA (and recognised by EASA in their regulations) that the model flying community has established an excellent track record over almost a century of operations and this situation has not changed with the advent of the 'drone'. The remedy proposed is entirely disproportionate to the risk posed by established model flying and maximises rather than minimises cost. It represents 'gold plating' of regulations which the CAA is committed to avoid.***

**Consistency – Government rules and standards must be joined up and implemented fairly.**

*The proposed regulations are not consistent with the requirements imposed on other forms of aviation (some of which do not have the excellent safety record achieved by the model flying community). No other recreational aviation activity requires the pilot to register annually or repeat a theory test every 3 years.*

**Transparency – Regulators should be open and keep regulations simple and user-friendly.**

*The CAA have not been ‘open’ with the development of the regulations proposed in CAP1775. They have repeatedly evaded answering questions posed by the UK model flying associations seeking clarification of what they have in store for its members. The recent requirements for Flight Restriction Zones and their proposals for registration fees in CAP1775 were sprung on model flyers with no prior notice/discussion. In CAP1123 (the response to the ‘Red Tape Challenge’), the CAA emphasised the “value that we place on an open and meaningful dialogue with the general aviation community. We have many areas of work and options to explore but we recognise that it is critically important that we fully engage with stakeholders to determine their priority and appetite and to incorporate their ideas as well”. It is unfortunate that along with the DfT they have employed a ‘high handed approach’ resulting in a lack of engagement with the UK model flying associations (established model flyers will ultimately be the largest single stakeholder group captured by their regulations and they have been effectively excluded from any consultations).*

**Targeting – Regulation should be focussed on the problem and minimise side effects.**

**The ‘problem’ is widely acknowledged to be unlawful multi-rotor drone operation and not established model flying (or multi-rotor operation such as FPV drone racing) within the framework of a model flying association. The EASA regulations acknowledge this by removing model flying within the framework of associations from their regulations (other than registration – which EASA state may be carried out by model flying associations on behalf of their members). EASA only mandate online testing for model flyers operating within their ‘Open Category’ (outside the framework of Associations) and my view is that the tests should not be imposed on those members operating within the framework of affiliated clubs or those with existing ‘Achievements’ and repeat testing should not be required every 3 years. The CAA proposals apply blanket regulations with no targeting whatsoever, disregarding the concessions granted to model flying within the EASA regulations and ignoring the excellent Achievement Scheme and track record established over many decades.**

**Accountability – Regulators should be able to justify decisions and be subject to public scrutiny.**

**The CAA must be able to account for its spending (it is public money) and actions. The sums they have spent / propose to spend, on this scheme are extortionate and they now seem, to have closed the door to any negotiation or consultation process.**

***The DfT have disregarded the concessions made within the EASA regulations for model flying in their own policy development. They have previously commented on our excellent track record for safe operation but have not recognised this by granting any concessions to us whatsoever, in the policy decisions contained within CAP1775 (unlike EASA!). In their 'Taking Flight' document published in January, the DfT referred to some matters which would be 'subject to further discussion between the model aircraft flying associations and the Department for Transport'. However, I can confirm that the promised discussions did not occur and the DfT have subsequently evaded any further meaningful engagement with the BMFA at all so far 2019.***

***It therefore seems entirely reasonable to me, to ask you as Aviation Minister, for an explanation for the poor treatment that I personally and the BMFA as a whole, have received from your Department and why you broke your publicly stated promise of further discussions.***

***I look forward to a prompt response and explanation in relation to the matters raised above.***

***Yours Faithfully,***

***Martin Lynn.***

***BMFA Director.***

***Pontefract Model Aero Club Chairman.***

***Dewsbury Model Aero Club Membership Secretary &  
Treasurer.  
Huddersfield Model Aero Club Member.***