



# An introduction to gliding at the Midland Gliding Club for Young Pilots

Gliding is the art and science of flying unpowered aircraft, staying aloft by taking advantage of rising air from thermals, hills and mountains.

At Midland Gliding Club (MGC) we can train you to fly gliders, and open the door to a multitude of opportunities, whether gliding is your ultimate ambition or whether you eventually hope to be a commercial power pilot. Modern gliders are highly efficient designs. Pilots regularly take these gliders cross country on flights of hundreds of kilometres. 300km would be a fairly standard jaunt for a good summer's day and 500km flights are not uncommon. This is mostly done by flying from cloud to cloud, circling in the rising air underneath. In Wales & Scotland other forms of lift can be found when the wind blows up and over the hills and mountains.

Gliders are also capable of aerobatics, and there are several instructors at the club who can teach basic aerobatic manoeuvres such as loops and chandelles.

Some glider pilots enjoy competitions -most commonly cross country distance/speed comps but there are also glider aerobatics competitions and a specific junior national championship for pilots under 25. We have current members who fly this competition and previous junior members who have been part of the British Junior Gliding team and full national teams. Other pilots just enjoy flying for pure pleasure.

Midland Gliding Club is a famous, long established members club situated in the beautiful Shropshire Hills. We fly seven days a week (weather permitting) from April to September and every weekend and ad hoc weekdays over the winter. We have professional instructors to lead courses during the week, but club volunteers share all the tasks including instructing and maintenance. We expect all members to get involved with making flying happen.

Normal Club operation is slightly different and members who help set up in the morning then stay all day to clear up and put the aircraft back in the hangar tend to progress faster. As such when coming out to fly, expect to spend either a half or a full day on the airfield.

## Getting Started

You can go solo at age 14 – soaring alone in the skies, before your friends can even learn to drive.

Commonly, individuals start learning to fly with a trial lesson or introductory flight. But booking a week's course is a very good way to get started if you are confident that you want to get going. There is no specific lower age limit, but young people should be mature enough to understand and comply fully with instructions. They must be heavy enough for the safe operation of the glider and they must be big enough to be strapped in safely and to see out.



They would need to be close to 5 feet (1.5m) tall and weigh at least 98 lbs (45 kg). This often makes twelve years old a minimum age.

Children under the age of fifteen are normally only allowed on the airfield and premises if they are in the continual supervision of their parents or an adult nominated by the parents. During the 'flying hours', usually 8.30 am to 6 pm, the Club will agree to no parental presence for children between the ages of 12-16, provided the course/duty instructor agrees, the young person accepts s/he stays with the course group, and the office has a contact phone number.

### **Membership for Young Pilots & Costs**

Gliding is a totally weather dependent and not inexpensive sport. That said, the cost compares very favourably to other forms of flying (powered aircraft for example) and when combined with the savings and opportunities brought to you by the various MGC Junior Membership schemes, becomes considerably more affordable.

The cost of gliding comes in several parts:-

- Membership
- Launch cost
- Aircraft Hire
- Instruction (free)

There are two classes of membership for young pilots: '18-25' and 'Junior associate membership for those under 18'. Full details can be found in the "Statutory Rules of the Club." Both classes of membership have substantially reduced membership fees and launch fees.

There are different charging rates for membership subscriptions, launch and flying fees depending on age. An up to date guide of these and the price list is available on the club website at: [midlandgliding.club/prices/](http://midlandgliding.club/prices/)

### **Help with the Costs of Flying**

There are several bursaries and grants that Students and Juniors can apply for. The club assists in helping young pilots to secure funding from these third-party organisations such as the Air League, The Honourable Company of Air Pilots and the Royal Aero Club Trust to name a few.

Applications to the club for membership will have to be approved by the Junior Coordinator and the club's membership secretary; membership is then re-approved annually based upon the young person's performance over the year.

Currently, MGC does not offer its own bursaries.



## **Flying in Non-Club Aircraft at MGC**

There are also coaching opportunities, whilst at the club, to fly in privately owned aircraft. Generally, we feel that these flights compliment the training that club members get and are very worthwhile, but we would encourage parents to discuss such opportunities with the pilot of the aircraft and seek the advice of senior club instructors prior to their son/daughter embarking on such a flight.

## **Club Camping/Accommodation and Catering Facilities**

The club has B&B accommodation, two 4 bedded bunk rooms and camping facilities. The Club has no staff on duty at night. Although the airfield has gates and fences, unauthorised public access cannot be prevented. Parents must satisfy themselves that any overnight arrangements their children make are sensible and safe.

### Note:

1. Under 18's staying in club overnight accommodation are given single rooms where possible and are not allowed to share double rooms or bunk rooms with an un-related adult.
2. Under 16's cannot stay at the club overnight, unless accompanied by a parent or nominated guardian.
3. No alcohol is supplied to anyone under 18 in the bar.

## **Behaviour**

Whilst the club is entirely realistic about young adults, we do expect young pilots to understand and obey the club rules. Persons who feel that rules do not apply to them or who do not follow the reasonable directions of those in responsible positions will simply be asked to leave the airfield and the club. Flying cannot tolerate such behaviour. Junior pilots are expected to sign up to the Junior code of Conduct as recommended by the British Gliding Association (BGA).

## **Activities that young pilots can expect to get involved in**

All pilots are expected to fully participate in most of the operations inherent in running the Club on a daily basis, and so whilst this list is not exhaustive it illustrates the type of activities that we all get involved in whilst training.

- Learning to fly
- Helping to take the aircraft and other equipment out of and back into the hangar at the beginning and the end of the day's flying activities
- Helping to perform Daily Inspections on gliders and Ground Equipment – including making sure that they are washed, dried and polished as necessary



- Hooking on and wing tip running
- Radio calls
- Cable pulling
- Glider recovery
- Driving the retrieve winch
- Log keeping at the Winch Launch point
- Assisting the duty pilot
- Helping rig and de-rig private and club gliders
- Showing visitors the Club's facilities

Note:- Several of the above activities do require specialist training (e.g. driving any of the club vehicles or the winch) and there are age limits associated with them. All instruction on these activities is strictly controlled by the club.

**Anyone without a full UK driving licence, therefore by definition anyone under the age of 17, is not allowed to drive any vehicle on the airfield. This prohibits young people driving the Club's vehicles.**

R Johnson February 2022