

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB

Strategy 2025-2030



Version 2 – May 2026

MGC Strategy 2025-2030

Introduction

The Midland Gliding Club with its unique geographical location on top of the Mynd, illustrious history in the gliding movement and enthusiastic members, many of whom travel long distances passing many other gliding clubs on the way, remains a vibrant busy club but will need to adapt and change to remain at the top of the sport.

This strategy was developed through a series of face-to-face and online consultations with members between October 2024 and April 2025. The general consensus was that it does most things very well and doesn't need radical change. But short-term incremental improvements in some areas, while exploring more substantial changes in the longer term are necessary to ensure it continues to thrive. The strategy is reviewed and updated annually, most recently in early 2026.

The strategy is in two parts. The first provides a brief history, a vision for what we want the club to look like in 2030, the progress we have made so far and the most important issues we will focus on and improvements we will make in 2026/27. The second part provides more detail of specific actions we will take on these and other longer-term issues.

History

The Midland Gliding Club is one of the oldest gliding clubs in the UK. It was established in 1934 to serve the midlands area and has been at the forefront of gliding in the UK ever since. Sited on top of the Long Mynd mid-way along a 5-mile Westerly ridge the club enjoys spectacular views and unrivalled ridge, thermal and wave flying all year round. It has always been one of the premier training clubs in the UK and as smaller clubs withdraw from training the MGC has focused on that, runs professionally led 5-day courses from May to September and provides onsite accommodation and catering. With a modern fleet and 7-day operation from April to October it remains one of the leading gliding clubs in the UK for pilots at all stages. But with public rights of way across the airfield, an increasing number of walkers, cyclists, and horse-riders on the Mynd and visitors to the club cafe, and ageing infrastructure, ensuring safety on and off the airfield is increasingly challenging. A generous bequest in by Eddie Humphries - a long-term club member - will enable us to make substantial investments in our infrastructure in 2026/27.

Vision

In 2030 the Midland Gliding Club will be a thriving friendly community supporting the full range of members' ambitions including training to solo, progress towards BGA achievements, cross-country and competitions, and instructor training and an important member of the UK gliding movement. Its unique geographical location with easy access to large areas of unrestricted airspace and ridge, thermal and wave lift provides one of the best soaring sites in the country. Its training fleet of 2-seaters and single seaters, efficient 7-day operations, a full-size glider cockpit simulator and professionally led 5-day courses from April to September will make it one of the leading gliding training centres in the UK attracting trainees from all over the world. Safety will underpin all of our operations. We will have professional maintenance and repair expertise on site and will provide training and access to maintenance facilities for private owners. With homely on-site catering and accommodation, the club will frequently host visiting groups from other clubs, will facilitate expeditions to other gliding sites, will engage with the local community and will have a vibrant social programme. MGC's diverse and inclusive members will all actively contribute to the flying, maintenance and management activities necessary to keep the club running.

Priority areas for action in 2026/27

The priority areas for action in 2026/27 are:

- 1. to maintain the fleet:** A serviceable fleet is absolutely essential for training club members and our intensive training courses. Our current maintenance arrangements will finish at the end of the 2026 flying season and securing new arrangements thereafter is a priority. We also need to make more use of club single-seaters for early XC training, service the club trailers, work with the CFI to identify clubs with a spinnable 2-seater and acquire a replacement motorglider.
- 2. to maintain the launch equipment:** Similarly, reliable winches are absolutely essential for club flying and courses. Our 2 main and 2 retrieve winches are getting old and need intensive maintenance. In 2026/27 we will service and if necessary, refurbish the winches and develop a winching strategy. We will also ensure we have 2 serviceable 4WD vehicles to tow the winches, maintain our new electric buggies and retire our old LPG glider retrieve vehicles.
- 3. to increase the number of flying members:** By 2030 we are aiming to have over 150 full active local, regional, and national members. We attracted nearly 20 new introductory members in 2025/26, most of whom have become full members. In 2026/27 we will continue to market the introductory offer, develop a new member induction process and improve communication to existing members to improve retention.
- 4. to increase and diversify income:** By 2030 MGC we are aiming for a stable income of c.£400k p.a. and pricing mechanisms which are aligned with the market and deliver good value for money for members. Discounted pricing led to good sales of courses and first flights in early 2026 and we will explore increasing prices for 2026/27. We will use Kaizen analysis to optimise member recruitment and retention, explore the financial benefits of becoming a CASC and continue to explore other potential revenue streams from non-members which align with the club's main purpose which is to foster and promote gliding.
- 5. to improve safety systems:** Continuous improvement in safety standards across all our operations is our highest priority. By 2030 we will have developed our reporting, analysis and communication processes to ensure members are promptly updated on safety improvements. In 2026/27 the emphasis will be on improving the airfield signage, centralising incident reporting, data collection and analysis and establishing a single location for all incident reports.
- 6. to improve our infrastructure:** By 2030 we are aiming to have improved the hangar and glider maintenance facilities, and access and parking for the clubhouse. In 2026/27 we will clear out the old MT shed and make this into a temporary clean and safe maintenance facility that members can use for maintenance and small repairs, resurface the access road and make a plan for other more substantial improvements to the hangar, other structures and car park, using Eddie's legacy.
- 7. to increase involvement:** All members are expected to contribute to the wide range of activities essential to support gliding. More members contributed to working weekends in 2025/26 and in 2026/27 we will conduct a survey to identify members' skills and implement the involvement policy which commits all post-solo pilots who can to be involved in one airside and one land-side activity.
- 8. to improve the clubhouse:** The clubhouse with its spectacular views, long tables, and historic features is a key feature attracting members and visitors to the club. In 2026/27 we will keep it tidy internally and externally to improve the appearance to visitors and develop a plan for more substantial improvements.
- 9. to improve the accommodation:** Decent comfortable and affordable accommodation is essential to support courses and general club activities. In 2026/27 we will continue to ensure it is well maintained and comfortable, establish an online booking system, and develop a plan for longer term and more substantial improvements to the clubhouse using Eddie's legacy.
- 10. to improve management:** In 2030 MGC activities will be efficiently and effectively managed by an appropriate and economic mix of professional staff and committee and club members. There was a substantial change in the committee at the AGM in March 2026, so the emphasis in 2026/27 will be on clarifying committee roles and improving support and coordination and improving IT systems.

Progress in 2025/26

Progress in 2025 was reviewed by the committee and discussed at the members' forum in March 2026. The consensus was that we are making good progress, but with 21 strategic objectives the original strategy was rather over-ambitious. We simply don't have enough human and financial resources to make big changes quickly. Good progress was made:

- **on improving field operations:** Field operations improved in 2025/26. The average first launch time of 10.38 was 30 minutes earlier in 25/26 than in 24/25 and there was more mid-week flying, though launches continue to be held up by people walking, cycling, and riding horses across the airfield on the public rights of way.
- **on training:** A new SPL-based training system was established in 2025/26. There was more use of simulator, ground school and SPL exam revision and tests established on non-flying days. Bookable simulator slots were also introduced on weekends and weekdays
- **on increasing the number of members:** Increased effort on recruitment contributed to 30 new introductory members in 2025/26, most of whom have joined as full members in early 2026/27. The café has raised awareness of the club locally, has brought lots of people into the clubhouse. Table promos were used to direct people to FF's and Courses, and leaflets in the dining room, and main gate have been disappearing, so there is definitely interest.
- **on improving the airfield:** While not feasible to re-route the permissive path to reduce interruptions for launches by walkers and cyclists, the fencing has been extensively improved and gates repaired and there is much less incursion of horses than previously reported.
- **on improving our infrastructure:** Good progress was made in maintaining our existing infrastructure in 2025/26. Much junk was removed from the old MT shed, though it is still not fit for use as a workshop for private owners. The access road was patched. The hangar was professionally inspected and a manual LPG pump installed in case of electric pump failure.
- **on maintaining the accommodation:** Some rooms were redecorated and beds and other furniture fixed. Many small items were replaced with new or donated items. Carpet tiles were replaced in Room 1 and the bunk room.
- **on maintaining the clubhouse:** The entrance hall and dining room have been redecorated and the barometer corner tidied up. New lighting and hand dryers were installed in the toilets and broken taps were replaced. Blown render on the exterior wall was repaired, and the car park flood lights were replaced.
- **on increasing involvement:** The winter working weekends were well attended and a database of member involvement was established.
- **on increasing income:** A reduction in price point for First Flights has seen a complete sea change for the revenue from this source. We will put the price back for next season, partly to slow down the rate of purchase, having already beaten the target for the year.
- **on improving management:** The Executive committee roles were clarified. Coordination was improved through adoption of the strategy and coordination of working weekends. A new staffing structure for office and staff training following Martin's departure was established. A new IT role on committee has been established supported by an IT working group with the necessary networking hardware and software, and applications expertise.
- **on club culture:** The club culture remains good with many social events. The new caterers in 2025/26 encouraged more non-club visitors, some of whom became interested in flying.
- **on catering:** The new caterer in 2025/26 provided an excellent service but left in March 2026. A new caterer was identified and started in April 2026.

But little progress was made on maintaining the fleet; private owner glider maintenance, youth engagement and support for juniors, establishing a centre for disability gliding, safety systems, communication, improving launch mechanisms, mentoring, expeditions.

Strategic areas in detail

1. Maintain the fleet

A serviceable fleet is absolutely essential for training club members and our intensive training courses. In 2030 we will have an appropriate fleet of dual and single seat gliders and a motor glider and a full-size simulator to support regular instruction and post-solo development up to silver, courses and experience flights. Our current maintenance arrangements will finish at the end of the 2026 flying season and securing new arrangements thereafter is a priority. We also need to replace our motorglider which was damaged beyond repair in 2025/26.

In 2026/27 we need to:

- Ensure the club fleet maintenance in the current season.
- Service the club trailers to ensure they are useable for the current season and in the future.
- Purchase a motorglider asap and/or hire one as necessary for early season training,
- Encourage SS usage for XC.
- Work with the CFI to identify clubs with spinnable 2-seaters.
- Ensure long term maintenance of club fleet is secured beyond Oct 2026.

In the longer term we need to develop a fleet replacement strategy.

2. Maintain the launch equipment

Similarly, reliable winches and field vehicles are absolutely essential for club flying and courses. We need 2 reliable winches and retrieve winches and 2 heavy vehicles to tow them and 3 reliable glider towing vehicles with radios. Our 2 main and 2 retrieve winches are getting old and need intensive maintenance.

In 2026/27 we need to:

- Service and if necessary, refurbish the main and retrieve winches and develop a winching strategy.
- Ensure we have 2 serviceable 4WD vehicles to tow the winches.
- Maintain our new electric buggies and retire our old LPG glider retrieve vehicles.

In the longer term we need to:

- Expand our aerotow options.
- Develop a winch and launch equipment replacement strategy.

3. Increase the number of flying members

In 2030 MGC will have over 150 full active local, regional, and national members and an annual turnover of less than 15%. We attracted nearly 20 new introductory members in 2025/26, most of whom have become full members. Increasing the number of flying members remains a priority for 2026/27.

In 2026/27 we need to:

- Streamline/automate more of the FF voucher process and follow-up.
- Continue intensive marketing of the introductory offer.
- Develop a new member induction process.
- Improve communications to existing members to improve retention.

In the longer term we need to:

- Encourage more members to post on social media.
- Develop a dashboard to visualise membership trends and assess the effectiveness of marketing.
- Develop reciprocal relationships with other clubs whose members might be interested in hill flying.
- Explore the value of reaching out to less obvious audiences

4. Increase and diversify income

In 2030 MGC will have a stable income of c.£400k p.a. and pricing mechanisms which are aligned with the market and deliver good value for money for members. Discounted pricing led to good sales of courses and first flights in early 2026 and we need to continue this in 2026/27.

In 2026/27 we need to:

- Increase FF price to £119 and evaluate to inform marketing in 2026/27.
- Undertake a kaizen analysis and optimise the member recruitment and induction process to maximise retention.
- Explore the potential tax and other benefits of becoming a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC).
- Continue to explore whether we want to raise income from non-members which align with the club's main purpose and if so how. MGC is a private club and the primary purpose is to foster and promote gliding.

In the longer term we need to:

- Use results of kaizen analysis to improve affordability for younger and senior members.

5. Improve safety systems

Continuous improvement in safety standards across all our operations is our highest priority. By 2030 we will have developed our reporting, analysis and communication processes to ensure members are promptly updated. We didn't make as much progress on this as hoped in 2025/26 due to lack of human resources, so it is a high priority for 2026/27.

In 2026/27 we need to:

- Improve the airfield signage.
- Improve our incident reporting, data collection and analysis system.
- Establish a single location for all incident reports and decisions and improve communication about our operations.
- Broaden members' involvement in 'task groups' to cover different element of club safety processes to ensure reliable oversight of safety critical estate.

In the longer term we need to:

- Develop a central system to notify inspection and service requirements and record their completion.
- Develop maintenance schedules of essential services such as water and drainage.

6. Improve infrastructure

By 2030 we will have improved infrastructure to support flying including hangar and maintenance facilities, and access and parking for the clubhouse. We were able to maintain our infrastructure in 2025/26 but lacked the financial resources to improve them. Eddie's legacy will enable us to make more substantial progress in 2026/27.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Resurface the access road.
- Make a plan for other investments which could include re-roofing the hangar, refurbishing the old MT shed and other buildings and resurfacing the car park.
- Continue clearing out old MT shed, organising shelves, clearing work benches and acquiring a basic set of tools for members to use
- Improve the LPG compound and equipment.
- Establish low-power overnight charging points for EVs.
- Provide individual metered power supplies to north trailer hitches

In the longer term we will:

- Look for other infrastructure improvement grants.

7. Increase involvement

By 2030 all members will be expected to contribute to the wide range of activities essential to support gliding, with an established rota for running the field and clearly defined other tasks which members can own. More members contributed to working weekends in 2025/26, but we need more members to be more substantially involved in running the club in 2026/27 and beyond.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Ensure all post-solo members who are able to are contributing to one air-side and one land-side activity
- Establish and use a member skills database and encourage members to take ownership of areas of work for which they have the necessary skills.

In the longer term we will:

- Explore other options to strengthen involvement eg reduced fees for those who contribute a lot and/or reduced expectations for those who don't have time.

8. Improve the clubhouse

Our clubhouse with its spectacular views, long tables, and historic features will continue to be a key feature attracting members and visitors to the club. We were able to maintain the clubhouse in 2025/26 but lacked the financial resources to improve them. Eddie's legacy will enable us to make more substantial progress in 2026/27.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Keep it smart and tidy internally and externally to improve appearances for visitors.
- Keep the flat roofs in good condition.
- Develop a plan for longer term and more substantial improvements to the clubhouse using Eddie's legacy.

In the longer term we will:

- Set up a small 'kitchen area for club members.

9. Improve the accommodation

Decent comfortable and affordable accommodation is essential to support courses and general club activities. We were able to maintain the clubhouse in 2025/26 but lacked the financial resources to improve them. Eddie's legacy will enable us to make more substantial progress in 2026/27,

In 2026/27 we will:

- Ensure the accommodation is comfortable and well maintained.
- Develop a strategic plan for investing Eddie's legacy in improving the accommodation.
- Establish an online booking system for the accommodation catering and general administration.

In the longer term we will:

- Tidy up the camping field.

10. Improve management

In 2030 MGC activities will be efficiently and effectively managed by an appropriate and economic mix of professional staff and committee and club members. There was a substantial change in the committee at the AGM in March 2026.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Clarify committee roles and improve support and coordination.
- Review professional staff structure after 2026 flying season.
- Improve IT systems.

11. Maintain efficient field operations

In 2030 we will aim to fly on every flyable day throughout the year! We will have flexible flying times including morning or evening slots. We will maximise launch rate through efficient management of launches. And we will continue to ensure the safety of members and visitors and walkers and cyclists.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Recruit and train more volunteer winch drivers.
- Recruit and train more Launch Directors.
- Use the new launch point bus.

In the longer term we will:

- Extend the successful launch director system to ensure safe and efficient flying.

12. Maintain effective training

In 2030 MGC will be recognised as one of the country's leading gliding training centres offering high quality training to members up to cross-country level, and for trainees on introductory days and 5-day courses, with volunteer and professional instructors (up to SPL examiner level). Our instructors will develop a personalised structured training program including flying, simulator and ground-school for each trainee, supported by MGC's own and BGA and other clubs' printed and online resources. We will have specialised training programmes for juniors and for cross-country flying and advanced flying levels.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Continue to implement the SPL-aligned training system established in 2025/26.

In the longer term we will:

- Record ground-school lessons and develop an online library of training sessions.
- Explore interest in live online training sessions.

13. Maintain the airfield

We will ensure the Mynd remains one of the UK's premier hill-top gliding sites with well-maintained runways and we will work with the National Trust to preserve its unique geology, flora and fauna. Much work was done in 2025/26 to maintain the runways and repair gates and fencing and this needs to continue in 2026/27.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Repair fencing as necessary and develop a plan for replacement.
- Decide whether to sell land and negotiate with NT as appropriate.

In the longer term we will:

- Replace the fencing
- Explore other ways of generating income from the unique geology, flora and fauna on the airfield.

14. Support the new caterer

We will have decent wholesome all-day catering on site 7-days a week April – October, and on flying days November – March to serve members, course participants, people doing experience flights, visiting pilots, and other visitors to the Mynd.

We have just (in April 2026) commissioned a new catering provider and in the short term need to encourage club members to make use of this facility.

Over the next few years, we need to explore the legal, cultural and security issues around increasing catering to non-members as a way of ensuring that providing catering for members is economically viable for the caterers.

15. Improve facilities for private glider maintenance

In 2030 we will have professional onsite maintenance and repair services for both club and private gliders, and space for members to maintain their own gliders.

In 2026/27 we will improve workshop space and facilities for members to maintain their own gliders (linked with improvements to the hangar, clubhouse and other buildings).

In the longer term we will organise glider maintenance classes and workshops for members.

16. Maintain support for youth engagement and juniors

In 2030 the MGC will be a recognised centre supporting junior gliding with over 20 18-25 and over 10 under 18 members, providing tailored training and support.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Ensure we have the mechanisms and culture to support junior members.
- Continue to provide an excellent experience for young people on HCAP courses.

In the longer term we will:

- Explore other methods to attract and retain juniors eg through GoGliding, partnerships with universities and reaching out to home-educated groups.

17. Maintain the club culture and atmosphere

In 2030 the Midland Gliding Club will continue to have a friendly, collaborative and inclusive culture welcoming diverse members from all walks of life and making them feel at home.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Support the new caterers to expand the range of events and attract new people to the club.
- Maintain the club's vibrant range of social events like Saturday dinners, Christmas dinners and other social gatherings, and excursions, which foster a sense of community.

In the longer term we will explore how greater use of the club facilities by non-members is possible within the club rules and legal requirements and can support and strengthen the club's primary activity which is gliding.

18. Maintain good communication

In 2030 MGC will continue to have effective two-way face-to-face and online communication to maintain the club culture and atmosphere and support management and operations which will attract and retain members and contribute to enjoyable flying.

In 2026/27 we will:

- Add an additional member forum in June.
- Recruit 2 flying members to contribute to social media.
- Review and revise the members area of the website to make club information more easily accessible