

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Chair: The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

Heritage Working Group

Minutes from the Inaugural Meeting (21/03/2018)

Present

Grant Shapps MP, Robert Courts MP, Matthew Bolshaw, John Brown (IWM Duxford), Nigel Price (Key Publishing), Robert Fleming (Aviation Heritage UK), Tom Cunningham (Fly Navy Heritage)

Grant Shapps in the chair.

Grant Shapps began by outlining the APPG and the working group's place within it. The APPG's role is to support GA by securing legislative reforms and by educating parliamentarians on the importance of GA jobs and growth to the aviation sector. Thus far, it has secured the appointment of Byron Davies as GA Champion at DfT and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. This working group shall aim to support heritage aviation which is essential for inspiring young people to pursue aviation careers but is presently suffering from serious difficulties. Robert Courts had been planning to set this up as a separate APPG but felt it best to pool our efforts in this APPG.

Grant Shapps opened the floor to suggestions for the work programme.

Robert Fleming stated that there is a real lack of airworthy 20th Century Jet Aircraft. Nigel Price suggested that recent bad publicity had led to a hostile regulatory climate. There was need for real urgency on this issue as more and more of Britain's aviation heritage is now being sold off abroad.

John Brown briefed the Group on the work the IWM has been doing with HMRC. Plans to make it easier for people to sell aircraft back to the nation are at the early stages. IWM is pushing for the establishment of a body to ensure these 'nationalised' planes keep flying. Grant Shapps suggested that the APPG could support this through the use of Parliamentary Questions, letters etc.

The issue of CAA Regulations on jets and swept wing aircraft was raised and discussed extensively.

Robert Fleming said that the CAA's stringent checks on jet engines were now a significant issue restricting the sector.

Matthew Bolshaw said overturning the CAA's ban on swept-wing aircraft without manufacturers support should be a key aim. Robert Fleming pointed out that safety is a

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product of training, practice and currency. The present climate makes practice and currency very expensive to gain. Tom Cunningham said it is difficult to make a case for deregulation as we have no statistics on the economic benefits it could bring.

Grant Shapps said the CAA's stance was a legacy of Shoreham. There was consensus in the room that Shoreham could have involved any aircraft and that the CAA's focus on swept-wings was unfair.

John Brown informed the Group that 40% of airshows have been stopped. This was because of the CAA restrictions, lack of training and the chilling effect of Shoreham. Robert Fleming added that Military involvement has decreased. The public pay for these aircraft, they should see them.

The need to support the role heritage plays in inspiring young people and developing jobs/skills was also discussed

Tom Cunningham said a significant amount of Navy recruitment came as a result of airshows. John Brown outlined how heritage museums often go beyond inspiration, helping young people attain the STEM skills and contacts required to get into aviation.

Robert Courts MP suggested the group emulate the campaign run by the Community Transport Association. This got the attention of MPs by tying the Campaign's aims to the needs of constituents.

Grant Shapps asked what the specific issues facing aviation heritage museums were

Robert Fleming said museums were suffering because of ageing volunteers, expiring leases and issues around MOD disposals. The MOD now charges for disposals and often only sends them to national museums. John Brown expressed the IWM's willingness to partner with smaller museums and agreed disposal fees are now often very high. Grant Shapps questioned why fees were charged at all when most disposals would not sell on the open market and instead would be sent to scrap.

John Brown and Robert Courts said a list of disposed aircraft worthy of saving should be compiled.

Tom Cunningham pointed out that the UK's community of heritage aviation engineers is lacking a voice and in need of real assistance

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Grant Shapps suggested a campaign to give heritage aviation engineers OBEs and other honours.

The Group agreed with John Brown's argument that the lack of an actual list of individuals/groups involved in heritage engineering makes it easier for the CAA to dismiss them as "men in garages".

The Group agreed that a Government study of the direct and indirect economic impact of heritage airshows, museums and engineering should be conducted. Terms of ref should be set by the Group.

Administrative Business

Nigel Price moved that Robert Fleming be elected sector chair and this was carried unanimously. Grant Shapps moved that Robert Courts be elected parliamentary chair and this was carried unanimously.

All agreed that contact details can be shared between members for future communications. It was agreed that Robert Courts and Robert Fleming would work to create a draft working plan that would be shared with the group within 10 days of the receipt of these minutes.

The meeting was adjourned.

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