

RAFSA FORMAL INFORMATION NOTICE (FIN) 2025-04

SUBJECT: New RAFSA Chair



RAF Sport Aircraft RAFSA FIN 25-04

Date: 22 September 25



For: RAFSA Flying Schools and Clubs, OICs & Committees

Issued by: Chair, Wg Cdr Dave Hall

All RAFSA Chairs, OICs & Committees

ROUTINE

FIN 25-04 New RAFSA Chair

I am delighted to write to you as the new Chair for RAFSA, having been formally appointed by AOC 22 Gp and ratified by RAFSA at the AGM on 5 Sep 25. I thought I might take the opportunity to write to our members to introduce myself more fully to those who do not know me, and to lay out some thoughts on where the next few months and years might take RAFSA.

I have had the pleasure of being a member of 6 clubs in our family, since first joining the (now closed) Pathfinder Flying Club at RAF Wyton back in 2003. Every club is slightly different, based on its own history and current context, and I won't pretend to fully understand the complex detail of each without your advice. Most of my own flying is outside of the RAFSA schools/clubs due to the types of aircraft I like to fly and type of flying I like to do, although I do remain a current member of two RAFSA schools. Putting all that together, I hope that my breadth of experience across and outside of RAFSA will enable me to provide a perspective from the Chair that is not overly focussed on any one circumstance.

At the AGM, I summarised three roles for RAFSA on behalf of the clubs as Support, Govern and Facilitate. I think that's a great summary and I see this as:

1. **Support.**
 - a. **Financial.** Support the clubs through gaining central financial grants for distribution to support unforeseen costs or larger purchases. We can act on behalf of all the clubs in gaining RAF Central Fund grants, and last year secured an additional grant from the Nuffield Trust towards ground equipment costs. We also administer the JROPSS scheme family, which receives very generous funding from the RAF Charitable Trust, and we will continue to seek to grow our relationships with other sponsors such as the Royal Air Squadron, as well as potential commercial sponsors.
 - b. **Engagement.** While the day-to-day relationship of each club is with its host Unit and HoE, RAFSA is able to advocate on a school/club's behalf both with HoEs where necessary, and across the wider sport family. Through some of our members we also have sound links into the CAA to advocate across several issues.
2. **Govern.** While many aspects of RAFSA's individual flying school operations remain fully governed in law by the CAA through the Accountable Managers and Heads of Training, additional to that RAFSA is responsible to AOC 22 Gp for all RAFSA activity since it falls within the RAF Sport envelope. Through this, we provide an assurance wrap on behalf of AOC 22 Gp which enables us to support HoEs in ensuring that school and club operations are safe, and RAFSA risk is ALARP. Without that, schools/clubs would need to each need make the case wholly and fully to their HoE. While this sometimes may feel like an additional layer of governance compared with operating civil registration aircraft privately, it allows us to

be reassured that activities are safe and is a small effort which gains us the huge benefit of operating within the RAF Sport envelope.

3. **Facilitate.** RAFSA facilitates activity so that the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts. The growth of the Junior Ranks' & Officers' Pilot Scholarship Scheme (JROPSS), both at its inception and what it has become, is a great example of this. We continue to aspire to facilitate a range of wider activity for whole-of-RAFSA benefit, from fly-ins to competition events and more.

At its core, RAFSA's stated aim is "*Promoting air mindedness throughout the RAF by affording Service personnel, regardless of rank or trade, the opportunity of learning to fly and compete at the most economical cost*". However, as part of the wider RAF Sport family it is worth remembering that sport is a vital component of the RAF and is a critical element of how the RAF builds operational capability and more specifically warrior spirit. It is about improving the efficiency of the whole force. In other words, the primary aim of RAFSA exists *in order to* develop our people to be more resilient, more efficient, to be better team members and leaders, and in turn to make the RAF overall better at what it does.

That 'in order to' is a really important part of RAF Sport's direction of travel as a whole – I have received that message loud and clear from a number of recent engagements with RAF Sport seniors - and within RAFSA we must provide opportunities for all of our people to continue to stretch themselves, within controlled environments, so that the offer is not 'just' about learning to fly. Some of our members will be content with the baseline offer of affordable flying within a Service environment – and that is more than OK too – but what I would really be delighted to see over the next few months and years is for us to grow our offer to our members, and to the wider RAF family, beyond 'just' economical flying.

Building slightly further on that theme, RAFSA has aspired for some years to really build the 'competition' offer. Having an aerobatic competition background myself, and having competed in TopNav, I absolutely want to see that part of our activity grow. However, we also need to find a middle ground which is achievable for the less experienced new licence holders. That's why I need schools/clubs' help in developing a range of opportunities which can develop and stretch those who wish to participate, without throwing in at the deep end those who are not yet ready. That could be a mini-exped, or a local TopNav style event, but the message is very clear – we need to have more on offer than just gaining a licence and private hiring of aircraft.

I'll close by thanking Gp Capt Steve Wetton for his huge efforts during his tenure, and for entrusting me with RAFSA through his recommendation of my appointment to AOC 22 Gp. I know he will still be around, and hopefully able to enjoy his own flying some more!

{Original Signed}

D E HALL
Chair

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