

Drone Industry Action Group
13 October 2020 – Minutes
By video conference

Attendees:

Chair: Iain Gray Cranfield	Gary Cutts Future Flight
Aleks Kowalski Skypointe	Craig Roberts, PWC
Simon Ritterband, Moonrock	Jonathan Legh-Smith, BT
Iain Williams-Wynn, Blue Bear	Daniel Wilson, BT
James Cranswick Deloitte	Fred Harbottle, Drone Major
Owen McAree Aerofirm	Samantha-Lea Wooton BSI
Graham Brown ARPAS	Matt Ridley, Regulatory Horizons Council
James Dunthorne ARPAS	Sophie O'Sullivan CAA
Craig Lippett, Animal Dynamics	David Tait, CAA
Richard Nichols, Airwards	Nikos Pronios Innovate UK
Neil Watson, Thales	Mark Westwood CPC
Mark Watson, NATS	Andrew Chadwick CPC
James Matthews, PA Consulting	Dan Sumner, ORE Catapult
Scott Biddle, PA Consulting	George Nicola SA Catapult
	Officials from BEIS, DFT and Home Office

1. Welcome

Iain Gray welcomed all to another virtual meeting, focused on sharing information from government and businesses, including a focus on Future Flight, seen as a real opportunity for the drone sector.

2 Government updates

DfT updated that it has been working on correcting deficiencies in two unmanned aircraft EU Regulations (Delegated Regulation 2019/945 and Implementing Regulation 2019/947), in time for their retention in UK law after the end of the Transition Period (31 December 2020). These deficiencies arise as a result of EU exit and using the powers in the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, a statutory instrument has been drafted to correct them. The SI has now been laid parliament for debate and approval before the end of 2020. The Delegated Regulation covers product standards for unmanned aircraft and the Implementing Regulation covers rules and procedures for operating unmanned aircraft.

Home Office updated that police counter-drone capability was expected to be fully operational by end of the year. Applications for the recent £3m DASA [counter-drone calls](#) were being assessed. The Connected Places Catapult had developed technology roadmaps to help police understand and prepare for emerging risks.

CAA: Sophie O'Sullivan updated that CAA were supporting applications to the Future Flight COVID-19 call (incl UK Space Agency grants). Future Flight consortia applications are going through due diligence. An update was expected 10 December. Further [updates](#) would follow, in particular to guidance on forthcoming regulatory changes associated with EU Exit.

NOTE: Following the discussion, CAA provided this clarification: *Dangerous goods could be carried in the specific risk UAS category as long as the operation does not pose a high safety risk to third parties. This is in addition to the certified risk category where an application can also be made. The*

application procedure is owned by the CAA Dangerous Goods team, but CAA UAS Unit remain available to provide UAS advice in its delivery. UAS operators should refer to the [CAA dangerous goods approvals webpage](#) for the information and to ensure all application requirements are met. Key steps are to:

- Complete CAA Form SRG 2807
- Pay using form SRG 2812 and send to the Dangerous Goods Office (see [CAA Scheme of Charges - Air Operator and Police Air Operator Certificates](#))

Connected Places Catapult: Andrew Chadwick updated on the Pathfinder programme. The Maritime & Coastguard Agency had [successful trialled](#) Elbit's 1.2 tonne drone. CPC expect a handful of new pathfinders in the coming months and an exciting programme of activity for 2021. CPC host a [Community Webinar](#) on 5 November, when they will outline a Future Air Mobility Centre ambition and a 2040 roadmap on the future of aviation technology (incl drones and larger hybrid).

CPC's Open Access UTM framework is progressing: it has mapped ASTM (technical) standards, defined UTM specifications and established test scenarios. Initial sprints are planned to test flight planning and situational awareness, with field demos in early 2021. A white paper will follow.

Andrew concluded by informing the group [S-TRIG future aviation](#) winners would be announced soon and by encouraging all to be aware of their extensive current recruitment programme.

Regulatory Horizons Council: Matt Ridley was one of 6 new members appointed by the Secretary of State for Business to this [new independent council](#) to ensure regulation is compatible with innovation. They are currently scoping exam questions for a six-month deep dive focused on UAS regulation. The RHC explained who they were and how they intend to work as well as their current short list of questions (**see slides**), which had received input from government officials and regulators. They welcomed insights from drone operators into these and to priority regulatory reform which might safely realise innovative commercial opportunities. In response, individuals committed to provide their perspectives, and the chair agreed to consider whether a DIAG response was appropriate.

3. Industry updates

Richard Nichols, Airwards: Airwards is a new entity proposing a recognition system for the drone sector (**see slides**). They were working closely with ARPAS and reaching widely across the sector for input. They sought partners and contributors to help make this happen: <https://www.airwards.online/>

James Matthews and Scott Biddle, PA Consulting: PA is a broad ranging technology and management consultant and tech innovator. PA has experience in both the use of drones for commercial use as well as counter-drone detection and disruption technology development and associated strategy. PA is working with CPC and the MoD (among others) and supported [NaviAir](#) to design Denmark's national drone infrastructure. They are developing a 'Safer Skies' perspective to support investment in traffic management systems that deliver for both drone and counter-drone needs.

Fred Harbottle Drone Major Group (and Drone Delivery Group): Fred outlined the work of Drone Major Group (DMG), an advisor on autonomy solutions across air, surface, sub-surface etc. Clients included logistics, police force and others looking for unmanned solutions. He introduced [Drone](#)

Delivery Group (DDG), a newly created not-for-profit entity that draws on wide cohort of industry experts to produce white papers on key sector issues. **(see slides)** Their first one was published earlier in 2020 and DDG seek sponsors for new challenges. Going forward, DDG would be overseen by Evoke Management (CEO Steve Read) and operate independently of DMG. It was still establishing a senior advisory group and selecting the focus of forthcoming papers and members. They welcomed participation of DIAG members with DDG and would welcome suggestions by DIAG for potential areas they could look to work up with their members in more detail.

DMG also offered the support of their software company to develop and host a dedicated DIAG website and support the group's outreach.

Jonathan Legh-Smith and Daniel Wilson, BT: Jonathan (Head of Scientific Affairs) and Daniel (Policy and Public Affairs Director) outlined BT's broad interest in UAS. They have a counter drone function and provide high-grade connectivity including to the UK's emergency services. Their focus is on how connectivity enables BVLOS and delivers capacity and resilience. They were exploring new solutions for commercial drone operators.

Neil Watson, Thales updated the group on the varied activities of Thales **(see slides)**

Graham Brown, ARPAS outlined recent ARPAS activity including

- Attended various working groups and advisory councils including various CAA meetings, meetings with the DfT and the NPCC Counter Drone Advisory Forum with discussions on education, guidance, enforcement and counter drone activities.
- Working group on the communication of new regulations due from January 2021 aimed at different target audiences.
- Raising awareness with Future Flight of common sector issues, including connectivity and 4G/5G approvals, transportation of dangerous goods, UTM, insurance and standards.
- Representing the drone SME community challenges with Covid furlough, bounce back loans and the new kickstart schemes; including the consolidation scheme that enables young people to enter the drone sector.
- Raising concerns with CAA that OSCs are taking too long to process, for regular routine business and this was affecting member businesses
- Updating that trade shows continue globally (virtually) including in UAE, India and Germany. The [World of Drones](#) in Brisbane, 12-13 November, includes a DIT-supported virtual UK stall.
- Upcoming UK shows include the Commercial UAV on November 10th/11th. Dronex in March 19-20th 2021 and GeoBusiness on May 19-20 2021.

4. Future Flight

Gary Cutts updated that Future Flight was underway with due diligence for [phase two](#), expecting to fund up to £30m. Announcement of winners was expected within a month across the two strands (1: £150k - £500k; 2: £500k - £10m). Gary apologised that timing had slipped from their 1 November aspirational start date. The team would aim to bring all winning bidders together for an event early in the programme to set a tone of working together and sharing across the whole programme to help resolve problems.

The Covid-19 mini-programme would soon announce winners. Allocation would be above the original proposed £5m due to the large number of high quality applications received.

5. AOB

Iain Gray had written a letter on behalf of the Drone IAG to welcome Sir Stephen Hillier, the incoming chair of the CAA. **(see letter)**