

GLIDEPATH



The Journal of Wessex Soaring Association. February 2026

From the Editor

Welcome to the first Glidepath of 2026. Those of you who have been watching the winter Olympics may have noticed that many of the races are now largely filmed by drones rather than fixed cameras. This includes downhill races where the skiers can exceed 80 or even 90 mph, so you need a pretty fast drone to keep up. This got me wondering whether it would be possible to film a race from a glider instead, as obviously the flight is downhill all the way! As the racers come down in quick succession they must need a series of drones to film everybody. I do not know if the drones fly back to where they started, which due to the height gain would use a lot of battery power, or if they land somewhere at the bottom and get sent back up in a cable car. A e-soarer could in principle fly back up to its launch point but landing a glider in a small area is obviously more difficult than it is for a drone, so I cannot see that the idea of using a glider will take off (pun intended). Anyway enough of my strange thoughts and on to the rest of Glidepath

From the Chair

New WSA account

Thanks to Iain Medley Rose for his perseverance in setting this up. NatWest have been difficult to work with, and thanks to Iain's justifiable complaints, the WSA have been awarded £250 compensation, which will certainly help the club. If you have not yet paid your subs, please do so.

The account details are;

Account Name: Wessex Soaring Association
Account Type: Business
Account Number: 82816123
Sort Code: 51-81-01

IMPORTANT - Please include your initial and surname in the payment reference. The other important info is the subs are still **£30** for 2026. Please note it is now expected that all members pay their BMFA and CAA subs themselves via the BMFA website, which is very easy to do.

AGM

This went ahead with no hitches or hiccups, and I am very pleased to tell you we now have two slope reps, Martin England and Rob Newbury, who will be sharing the post. I am sure they will be promoting regular fly-ins wherever possible.

Winter Warmer

This will be held this year at THE HORTON INN on Sunday Feb 22nd. Meet at 1pm eat at 1.30pm. There is a chance we may get some flying in at North Farm beforehand.

If you would like to come along, please email me martinburr9@gmail.com .At the moment I have 7 chaps coming, if we get to 10, I will need to pre order food, so if you are thinking of coming along, please let me know.

Slope Tour

If you are new to the club and uncertain where to park and fly, this event is for you ! Each year I have run the tour to help new members, (or members who need a memory jog) to know what's what on our slopes. I usually run this in March or April when the weather improves. If you would like to come along, PLEASE email me as above.

Slope Gratuities Run

I am pleased to report that this went ahead with the combined help of Danny Van M, Rob Newbury, Iain Medley Rose and myself. Some amendments have been made to the route (a house move, and a house name change) other than that it was pretty straightforward. Everyone we met was positive about our continued use of the slope sites.

WMAC have offered to contribute to the cost of the gratuities for Death Valley/Sutton Hill which we will be pleased to accept as we share this site.

Best wishes all, and happy flying.

Slopeside by Rob Newbury/Martin England

The list below shows what I believe the situation to be at all our sites. Please use your own common sense and apply the countryside rules. Therefore if things look different at a site, particularly if it involves crops or livestock, please do not enter and contact Rob Newbury/Martin England

- 1) Winklebury (W to NE wind) - Available.
- 2) Norrington Down (S to SW wind) - Available.
- 3) Donkey Valley (SE wind) - Available.
- 4) Swallowcliffe (NW to NNE wind) - Available. We can again park where we used to (on the track down to the slope) but be very careful of soft ground this time of year.
- 5) Quarry (W to WNW wind) - Available. Access to the original quarry slope is from the main westerly slope by hopping over the fence and walking to the 'quarry corner'. You may encounter some paragliders as they also have permission from the farmer to fly there. In this case it is best to have a friendly chat with them and see if you can agree separate airspaces for models and paragliders.
- 6) Oxo (WNW to NW wind) - Available. We can again park where we used to (on the track down to the slope) but be very careful of soft ground this time of year.
- 7) Horses/Barbara's Field (WNW to NW wind)- Available.
- 8) Daltons 1&2 (NW to NNW wind) - Available.
- 9) Crockerton (NW to NNW wind) - Available subject to rules in slope guide.
- 10) Death Valley (SW wind) - Available
- 11) Stony Down (ESE to SE wind) - Available. Please do not overfly the parked cars on your landing approach at Stony Down, and land from the right hand side. Code on gate padlock is 5823.
- 11) Berwick St John (SW wind) - Available. Code on gate padlock is 5823 .
- 12) East Bowl (NEE to E wind) - Available. There is a gate with a keycode, which is 7850. The shepherd is Mr.Fletcher (red Toyota pick-up) and he has asked that anyone parking on the track put a little note on the dashboard of their car, letting him know that they are a WSA member.
NB At Berwick and Quarry there is a new(ish) fence line that splits the main field and restricts the landing area to approximately 50m wide, as opposed to the whole field. Parking may also be different to before, subject to sheep being in a new fenced area. If in doubt, park before the main field and walk to the slope.

There are also a number of public slope sites, particularly in the Purbecks that anybody can fly from. A list of these is maintained on [Christchurch Club's website](#) so please have a look there for details.

GPS Light Class - Next Generation Glider Racing. By Iain Medley Rose

What would it be like to race gliders for twenty minutes? What would it be like to have to use the full performance of your glider? What would it be like to have to thermal soar for height and duration so that you can fly your glider for up to twenty kilometres? This year is the year to come and find out!

Light Class GPS Triangle Racing is a class of self launched electric soaring that explores distance flying. We use a triangular course that is defined with GPS waypoints. We use some technology that helps us pilot our gliders around the course. Racing is a mix of cunning, working the air and full on speed! Stay in the air and fly as many laps as you can!

This year there are three opportunities to come and have a go including one at our very own site at North Farm. There will be expertise and equipment at the events to get you started. Never tried GPS racing before; this is the perfect opportunity. Taken the first steps and want to improve; this is also your chance.

All you need is a glider between 2.7 and 4 metres in span. It can not weigh more than 3kg and the surface loading cannot be more than 33g/sq.dm. If you have an electric self launching glider for F5J, F3J, or even F3G, you are almost ready to race!

18th/19th April 2026 - Cruckton, Shropshire. (One day event. Weather call in the run up to pick the best day)

30th/31st May 2026 - Horton, Dorset. (One day event. Weather call in the run up to pick the best day)

27th June 2026 - Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

The events will need people to pre register. There will be some learning resources available before the events to help pilots. In addition there will be loan equipment on the day for pilots to use. More detail can be found on the BARCS GPS Triangle Racing forum. BARCS Forum is a great free resource for all things soaring. You do not even need to be a BARCS member! Also look on Facebook for the UK GPS Triangle Racing Group.

Items for sale

By Pete Carpenter

After a good few years as WSA member and slope rep (about 12 I think!) I am looking to sell some of my fleet for personal reasons. If anyone is interested please email me pete.carpenter12@gmail.com and I can send photos and price thoughts. My hanger contains....

My faithful Graupner Swift 2.1m
Luna 2
SAS Wildthing 46
Weasel Evo
Plan-built Mick Moore Lunak 2.9m
Pitchler Super Sinbad 2.9m ish (only flown once!)
Top Model Swish

By Nigel Bennett

Spectrum 9300 9 ch receiver plus Spectrum telemetry unit. £10 for charity. If interested phone me on 07787 707327

Minutes of WSA AGM. Tuesday 2nd Dec 2025 Horton Village Hall

Apologies Alan Butterworth, Geoff Crew, Chris Williams, Roger Crickmore, Pete Carpenter, Charles Simpson, Gary Blandford-Hull, Jeff Smith, Mark Deverall, Pete Hatchett

Present at meeting Doug Bowman, Bill Ebdon, Martin Burr, Nigel Bennett, Bill Parkin, Iain Rose, Martyn Brake, Phil Ford, Rob Newbury, Martin England, Dave Press

Minutes of last AGM Accepted. **Proposed NB, Seconded MB**

Matters arising None

Chairman's Report for the Year

Martin started by mentioning thanking Alan Butterworth for his 9 years supporting the club as Treasurer and for Daniel von Mutius for his year as Slope Rep and for the introduction to North Farm. He also thanked the rest of the committee.

Martin explained that Daniel von Mutius is stepping down from the Slope Rep position due to work and other commitments but thanked Rob Newbury and Martin England for expressing interest in the role. Martin also thanked Ian Rose for volunteering to take on the role of Treasurer.

Martin explained the transition of flat field flying from Chalbury (which became unavailable due to inheritance issues with the farmer) to North Farm. The Snells who run the farm have been very accommodating and this has worked out very well. A few fly-ins have been held and we are hopeful of more flying in 2026 including a GPS triangle racing event.

Martin ran a Slope Tour for just one person for a run round our most popular slopes hoping to end up at a flyable slope depending on wind direction.

The What's App group for the club which has seen good use this year and members are encouraged to use it to advise when they intend to fly so that they have company and to advise of any information which may affect others wishing to fly.

The Winter Warmer was held earlier this year, 7 chaps met up at Drusillas Inn for some nosh and chat, it was an excellent friendly event. The club will be asked if they have a preference for this or the Horton Inn for 2026. Martin will organise this event again at probably on a Sunday in mid-February, so make a note in your 2026 diary. The pub will be booked and Martin will send around menus so we can choose what we would like beforehand to help the kitchen staff.

Treasurer's Report

IR (on behalf of AB) reported that the club's financial position was essentially as planned with a small reduction in capital at year end. Membership is at 45. **Proposed NB, Seconded DP**

The year's accounts show that the club reduced our capital from £1884.41 at the end of last year to £1638.43 now which was felt to be a reasonable buffer level considering the potential eventualities. The fees for North Farm are the same as was being paid to Chalbury at £300 a quarter.

There was discussion about the effect of a possible reduction in membership but it was felt that, for 2026, the fees should remain at £30. A figure of £30 was proposed and agreed on by a clear majority of those present. Therefore, the subscription for 2026 will be £30. **Proposed PF Seconded DP**

Fees Payment

For fees payment the account name is **Wessex Soaring Association**

Account type: **Business Current Account**

Account number: **82816123**

Sort code: **51-81-01**

BACS payments are preferred if possible using your name as reference. Please email to alert treasurer to your payment : Iain Rose email address swalleau@aol.com

Please note it is now expected that all members pay their BMFA and CAA subs themselves via the BMFA website.

Glidepath Report

Roger was not present but it is understood that the issue of Glidepath every other month has been successful although more contributions would be welcomed.

Event Reports

Slope

The WhatsApp group seems to be getting used actively and is an effective way of organising sessions. People are to be encouraged to use it to let others know that they intend to go to a slope.

Martin expressed the need to ensure that the process for distributing the Slope gratuities was passed on and not lost in the hand-over of Slope Rep roles. **Action DvM/MB** As both Rob Newbury and Martin England expressed an interest in the Slope Rep role it was suggested that they might consider sharing the role as it might benefit from having two people's availability. They agreed to liaise and propose a way this could work.

Flat Field

DB advised nothing much to report. He suggested that we revise the level of gratuities to the farmer given the change to North Farm. This was agreed at £50 on good quality wine plus a glider for the children as an extra gesture.

MB reported that North Farm is working out well as a flat field venue and he will plan to organise some events based on fixed dates rather than opportunistically based on weather forecasts. It was noted that members **MUST** be in and use the Flat Field WhatsApp group in order to fly as a requirement of the farmer.

Winter Warmer

MB will organise a lunch for mid-February 2025 at the Horton Inn or Drusillas depending on a poll of members' preferences.

Motions Received

None

Committee positions for 2026

All committee members apart from Daniel van Mutius and Alan Butterworth are prepared to stand for 2026 and were block nominated and seconded.

Proposed IR, Seconded NB

New positions Iain Rose for Treasurer and Rob Newbury/Martin England for Slope Rep.

Proposed Martin Burr, Seconded Martyn Brake

| <u>Position</u> | <u>Nominee</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Chairman | Martin Burr |
| Secretary | Bill Ebdon |
| Slope Representatives | Rob Newbury/Martin England |
| Glidepath Editor | Roger Crickmore |
| Membership Secretary/Treasurer | Iain Rose |
| Flat Field Representative | Doug Bowman |

Any other Business

It was discussed that we should encourage all members to make use of the club WhatsApp group and that the Google group should be phased out – **Action DB/MB**

IR volunteered to update the club's website and include improved site location details, access to recent Glidepath issues and essential club information.

IR proposed running a GPS triangle race to try to encourage participation by offering an easy and cheap way for club members to experience it. He proposed the 30/31 May for this and it received endorsement from the members present.

Meeting closed at 21:30. Next AGM will be 1st December 2026.

Calendar

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|-----------------------|--|
| Sun 1st March | Slope Flyin |
| Sun 5th April | Slope Flyin |
| Sun 3rd May | Slope Flyin |
| Sat 30th/Sun 31st May | GPS Triangle Racing event , North Farm |
| Sun 7th June | Slope Flyin |
| Sun 5th July | Slope Flyin |
| Sun 2nd Aug | Slope Flyin |
| Sun 6th Sept | Slope Flyin |
| Sun 4th Oct | Slope Flyin |
| Tues 1st Dec | AGM |

Contacts

The committee members for 2026 are

Chairman- Martin Burr, 0777 850 1110, martinburr9@gmail.com

Secretary - Bill Ebdon, 01258 861612, bill.ebz@gmail.com

Treasurer and Member Secretary- Iain Rose 07879624409 swalleau@aol.com

Glidepath Editor – Roger Crickmore, 01929 550680, roger.crickmore@btinternet.com

Flat Field Representative – Doug Bowman, 01202 416664, dougbowman@hotmail.co.uk

Slope Representatives – Rob Newbury 01747 812149 or 07984 763679 rob.newbury@nes-ltd.com

– Martin England 07952 675113 menglan2@btinternet.com

Flat Field Competition Director – Martin Burr, 01202 773144, martinburr9@gmail.com

Member without Portfolio - Nigel Bennett 01258 861863, nigelcbennett@googlemail.com