

## **RAF Wittering Update to Wittering Parish Council**

RAF Wittering continues provide essential support to the RAF to enable it to undertake some 15 missions on 4 continents in 22 countries. Lead elements from the Station are currently enabling the deployment of RAF Typhoon FGR4 aircraft to Estonia on Operation AZORTIZE to augment NATO's air policing role in the Baltic States. Other personnel are deployed on a wide range of other operations and exercises across the globe. Closer to home the Station continues to play a key part in training the next generation of RAF pilots through the 4 resident flying Squadrons.

### **Drone Flying Restrictions**

On 13 March 2019 the drone flight restriction zones around airports and airfields changed. The government introduced a new rule replacing the 1km restriction from the airfield boundary with a restriction using the airfield's existing aerodrome traffic zone, which has a radius of either two or two and a half nautical miles and then five kilometres by one kilometre zones starting from the point known as the 'threshold' at the end of each of the airfield's runways. Both zones extend upwards to a height of 2,000 feet above the airfield. It is illegal to fly any drone at any time within these restricted zones unless you have permission from air traffic control at the airport or, if air traffic control is not operational, from the airport itself.

A map of the UK showing each airfield's restriction is available at <https://dronesafe.uk/restrictions/>

If people are thinking of flying a drone near to RAF Wittering or would like to know more, they can send an email to [WIT-OpsWgStnOps@mod.gov.uk](mailto:WIT-OpsWgStnOps@mod.gov.uk)

### **RAF Aerobatic Team, The Red Arrows**

The closure of RAF Scampton and the relocation of the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows, which was announced in the Better Defence Estate Update to Parliament on 24 July last year.

The Red Arrows are considered to be the world's premier aerobatic display team and thus their relocation has, understandably, generated significant interest. Work has been ongoing to determine the most suitable future home and to ensure that they can continue their vital work in showcasing the skills and values of the RAF, supporting British industry, assisting in defence diplomacy and aiding recruitment for the Armed Forces.

The Ministry of Defence has currently identified three sites that could be a potentially suitable future location for the Red Arrows. RAF Wittering is one of these sites, along with RAF Leeming and RAF Waddington.

The Ministry of Defence will now be carrying out detailed studies to assess the suitability of the sites as a potential basing solution. In tandem with this work, the RAF are liaising with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) with a view to designing and allocating the airspace that the Red Arrows require in order to conduct display training. I can assure you that the RAF will be collaborating with key stakeholders in the local area to further refine the design of this airspace, as part of the formal CAA Airspace Change Process. It is not possible to say where this airspace will be located until this process has concluded.

There will be an opportunity to discuss and feedback on the proposed Airspace Change Proposal Design Principles for the relocation of the RAF Aerobatic Team, The Red Arrows on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April

2019 between 2:30 and 6:45pm at the Community Learning Centre on St Georges Road. The event will be run in a drop-in style and is freely open to the public. No booking is required.

## **Estate**

The work to refurbish 3 of our playparks is now complete following a very generous grant from the RAF Benevolent Fund. The park in St Georges Road, which will be named Centenary Park, opened last week. Lots of usage. Will be a Grand Opening late April. The parks have been well received by parents, children, and young people. Since, the St Georges playpark reopened there has significant increase in those attending the Youth Drop In. We will now look to secure funding to refurbish the remaining MOD-managed playparks.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation is undertaking a significant project to repair drainage and resurface two car parks in Parker Road. This work will now start mid-April car park can be used by both service and civilian community. Work will take approximately 6 weeks.

## **Community Activities**

Airplay Youth Team & RAF Wittering Community Support received a Quality Assurance visit and pleased to advise that the service delivered at Wittering received an Advanced Grading, which is the highest grading. Only two RAF stations received this grading in the country. As a Station, we are pleased that our children and young people are receiving the highest level of support and activities the RAF.

Ben Club activity sessions for 5 to 7 years of age are continuing and we have secured funding to deliver more sessions over the summer holidays.

Relate – Cambridge have secured £20,000 from the Armed Forces Community Covenant and this is now being delivered across three schools/academies to deliver children counselling sessions for 5 to 17 years of age. This includes any child who lives in Wittering both from service and civilian families. This project has been very successful and supporting a number of children both service and civilian children and young people.

We have been successful with another application of £6,000 from the Armed Forces Community Covenant to deliver Childminding Courses in Wittering to service and civilian community members. This will commence on early-May and will be £50 to register and the course is heavily subsidised. This is the only place in Peterborough area where residents will be offered a subsidised course. This course is being delivered in partnership with Early Years & Childcare team from Peterborough City Council.

Makaton course has been delivered in last few weeks and the Sugarcraft course had very good attendance.

RAF Wittering are trying to secure funding from the RAF Benevolent Fund to continue to deliver weekly outreach clinics from Citizens Advice Rutland. If we are successful, we are planning to deliver some of those Citizen Advice sessions from the CLC+ building on Thursday mornings. We will advise Parish with dates and timings.

Following on from our successful Families Day, *WittFest*, last year, we plan to run the event again this year on Saturday 13 July 2019. A number of Service charities have been approached for funding for

the event and we will be trying to raise funding from other sources too. This will again be open to residents of Wittering village.

The Royal Air Forces Association, which supports the RAF family, will be staging Colour Chaos at RAF Wittering again this year to raise money for its vital work to improve the wellbeing of serving and former personnel, including war veterans. A limited number of early-bird discounted places for the event, which will take place on Sunday 1 September, are available now and the charity is encouraging families, in particular, to sign up and raise funds. More details are available at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/rafa-colour-chaos-2019-raf-wittering-registration-55898156892>

Our Community Activities will continue to be publicised through RAF Wittering's community-facing Facebook page – *Wittering View*. Members of the community can receive these updates by 'liking' or 'following' the page.