

Helicopter Liaison Group Newsletter

**ROYAL
AIR FORCE
SHAWBURY**

Edition 2
2025

**RAF Shawbury Helicopter Liaison Group Newsletter for
Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Parish & Town Councils**

Introduction from the Station Commander RAF Shawbury, Wing Commander Paddy Durnin



Welcome to the second of this year's Helicopter Liaison Group Newsletters. I hope that you continue to find these useful for your Parish and Town Council Committees and also to help keep the communities you represent informed about RAF Shawbury's activity over the past 6 months. As previously, this edition provides an update on our flying operations, through which we provide trained aircrew for the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force as our core UK Defence task.

I hope you also find the broader news interesting as this shows how we try and contribute to communities and groups across the County. For example, you may have seen one of our helicopters supporting different events over this Summer? We managed to drop Science Technology

Engineering and Maths teams and helicopters into schools in Baldwin's Gate, Baschurch, and Market Drayton; as well supporting Sleapkosh, Three Counties Fest, Church Stretton and Weston-under-Redcastle shows. It is always a pleasure to be able to support the hard work of schools and event committees and it is a great way for our personnel to meet their communities and neighbours.

The 80th Anniversary of VE Day also provided us with a wonderful opportunity to recognise and connect with our local veterans. We visited 104-year old Syndey Knott DFC, a Lancaster Rear Gunner who flew 65 operational missions in World War II. The Station also hosted Colin Cole who turned 106 in July and who served with the RAF Air and Sea Rescue Services, including on D-Day and VE Day.

Finally I'd like to reiterate that we rely on the support of civic organisations such as yourselves and the leadership you provide within your communities to fly with the freedoms we require to deliver our UK Defence task. I very much welcome any feedback that you have on this Newsletter, or on how the Station operates and contributes to our neighbours across Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. Our email and telephone contact details are detailed at the end of this newsletter.



A Juno helicopter supporting Weston-under-Redcastle Community Event.



RAF Shawbury Rear Crew trainee meets Sydney Knott DFC on the 80th Anniversary of VE Day.

Did you know?

As well as helicopter aircrew training, RAF Shawbury is also home to the Defence College of Air and Space Operations (DCASO) and, as such, provides Defence's next generation of military controllers, surveillance officers and air operations specialists. These personnel will provide Air Traffic Control wherever the military operate aircraft around the world, as well as provide the country's UK's Quick Reaction Alert in the event of any threat to UK Air Space. On 11 July 2025, one hundred and fifteen DCASO



The Central Band of the Royal Air Force leads DCASO personnel onto the Air Operations 75th Anniversary Parade at the National Memorial Arboretum.

personnel paraded at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to mark the 75th Anniversary of continuous Air Operations training being delivered at RAF Shawbury.

Safety Campaigns

RAF Shawbury's 'Be Seen Be Safer' horse rider campaign reached its 10th Anniversary in May 2025. The campaign is run in liaison with the British Horse Society and provides high visibility clothing to anyone who rides in our Low Flying Area. Alongside this, we run an education programme on the importance of our aircrew being able to see riders as early as possible, such that safe distances between helicopters and horses can be maintained. We were pleased to announce on the 10th Anniversary that all Defence helicopter units have now adopted RAF Shawbury's rider safety principles and are running their own 'Be Seen Be Safer' campaigns.



We have also started a Drone Awareness Campaign through our social media channels, which aims to inform individuals who are considering buying a drone about the regulations they must adhere to when flying in and around Shropshire. We have been really pleased to see Drone groups supporting this and helping us spread the message. Professional and recreational drone users are requested to give our Air Operations Team 24hrs notice of their intention to fly anywhere within Low Flying Area 9 (LFA9). Please see map opposite. This is very important to ensure that we can keep everyone as safe as possible. The Air Operations Team can be contacted on 01939 250351 Ext 7163.

RAF Shawbury Flying Operations

Flying Statistics

Both Juno and Jupiter aircraft continue to deliver Aircrew training for tri-Service personnel. For the period 1 Mar – 1 Sep 25, the following overall hours were flown:

Day Flying Hours	7839
Night Flying Hours	527
Total Flying Hours	8366

Low Flying – Why?

The MOD has an enduring requirement to low fly within the UK. This is to ensure that military aircrew are current and competent to fly the operational missions they might be asked to undertake in their front line roles. All military low flying takes place within the UK Low Flying System. This aims to minimise disturbance to the public, whilst ensuring military requirements are met and air safety risks are managed. RAF Shawbury sits within LFA9, where the majority of flying training delivered by No.1 Flying Training School takes place. All activity is regulated by the Military Aviation Authority (MAA) and conducted in accordance with procedures and restrictions contained within their Low Flying Handbook.



Low flying is a highly perishable skill which can only be maintained through rigorous training and continuous practice in a realistic environment. Although the majority of our flying training is undertaken at a normal operating height, RAF Shawbury aircraft are authorised to fly at 100ft above ground level (agl) and in some cases 50ft (agl) within LFA 9.

Airfield Upgrade



RAF Shawbury is currently nearing completion of major airfield refurbishment under contract with Lagan. The project is on track to be completed by 5 December 2025. All runways and taxiways have been resurfaced as part of the project, as well as the completion of drainage works, lighting and hangar floors. Lagan is now close to the stage where landscaping and finishing touches are beginning to take place. RAF Shawbury has continued to run its training programme throughout the refurbishment programme. The limited space available on the airfield has meant some increased activity at the relief landing grounds, Tern Hill and Chetwynd, and other areas around Shropshire (i.e. Sleep airfield). From 2026 this will return to normal levels, depending on our training throughput.

Our Contact Details

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Engagement and Media General Enquiries:
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