



Dear Member

**Thank you for joining or renewing your membership and welcome to one of the largest, oldest and friendliest free-flying club in the UK.**

The SEW Club is all about supporting each other in our passion for free-flying.

**Club Website - [www.flysouthwales.co.uk](http://www.flysouthwales.co.uk)**

Here you will find information on flying sites, club competitions and leagues, club records, policies, documents, weather links and other useful resources.

### **Membership Admin, WebCollect and Helmet Stickers**

Membership administration is now fully online using the [SEW WebCollect](#) service. At WebCollect you can manage your membership, book your place on events (like the annual club reserve repack), buy club merchandise and register for sites which require a 'day pass'. Moving electronically has allowed the club to reduce postage costs, simplified the process and helped reduce the club's carbon footprint.

Membership is renewed annually in the month you originally joined. The members list is checked once a year to ensure that members are also current members of the BHPA and therefore insured for the benefit of other pilots, site owners and the public.

If you are a new SEW member you can request a helmet sticker to be posted to you. Please wear it with pride and be part of our flying community! We assume all existing (renewing) members already have a sticker but if you have lost yours or would like another you can order a one with either a WHITE or CLEAR background for free though [WebCollect](#). Just send @Stuart311 a message via telegram when you have requested one.

### **Club Communication Media – Telegram, Facebook and email**

To get the most from your membership you should ensure that you join the Club's social media networks.

The Club has a **Communication Policy** document available on the [Club Website](#) that details how to access and use Telegram, Facebook and email within the Club. It is an essential read for all members.



Telegram

The Telegram app is used mostly for Club communications and connects all of our members. You can get information on the current flying conditions reports, help planning your flying days, coaching advice and assistance and general chat. If you are not a social media user it is really worth taking the plunge to get all the benefits from your membership. Topics are organised into separate groups so you can select what you find useful. Download it for iPhone [here](#) or for android [here](#).

As well as the practical topic Telegram groups, the SEW club also has a ladies group which is designed to welcome women in what is often a male-dominated sport. The group aims to provide support to female pilots in general discussions, meeting up and flying together, with an emphasis on the SEW club sites. We are also actively involved in recruiting women from BAME groups to participate in the sport. For further information contact @Stuart311 on Telegram.

Once you have read the **Communication Policy**, then download Telegram, create an account and set a username under settings (e.g. @JohnJones), then send a message to **@ChrisBegly** or **@RicHarwood** requesting to join the groups.

We also have a member's only Facebook page – '[South East Wales Hang Gliding & Paragliding Club](#)'. Send a "Join" request on the page to be accepted.

### **Club Social Meetings**

Club socials are often held in [The Kings Arms, Abergavenny](#). A wide range of speakers cover some fascinating topics each year and the meeting is where we also give out any medals and trophies. Telegram is used to publicise upcoming meetings and other events.

### **Coaching**

Low-airtime pilots (less than 50 hours) or those returning to the sport are advised to contact one of the Club's coaches via the SEW Low Airtime Group on Telegram or any member of the committee for advice. Please also let us know if you would like assistance towards gaining your BHPA Pilot or Advanced Pilot rating too as we support pilots achieving this.

### **Social Responsibility and Club Involvement**

The SEW club tries to put something back into the wonderful natural environment we are lucky to be part of. Each year at least one litter-pick takes place and we encourage all SEW pilots to pick up litter on the way to and from the hill, or when walking back from a cross country flight (tip – it helps to carry a spare carrier bag or bin liner in your backpack).

The club raises money for the [Wales Air Ambulance](#) and [Woodland Trust](#) – so please support these charities. You never know when you'll need help on the hill following an accident and we all should be doing our bit to fight climate change.

The Club has proudly owned [the Bloreng](#) since 1998. It is an SSSI of approximately 1000 acres and we are considered an important stake-holder in the Brecon Beacons National Park. Many of the Club's sites are regularly used for hosting competitions such as the [British Open Series](#) (hanggliding), [British Club Challenge](#) (paragliding), the [Dragon Hike-and-Fly race](#) and the SEW club's [3 Peak's Challenge](#). Please feel proud if you choose to represent the SEW club in the [British hang-gliding](#) or [paragliding \(XCL\)](#) Leagues.

If you're lucky to go cross country and are also lucky enough to get a lift back from another pilot, try and 'pay it forward' and pick up another pilot who is struggling to get home! Working together is what the Club is all about.

The SEW Club's sites are popular with pilots from all over the UK and people who are part of the SEW Club are very much part of our flying community. With your continued support we can continue to keep our sites accessible and look forward to securing new sites in the future.

Please support the elected Club Committee in whatever way you can. We are all volunteers who give up a lot of personal time and we are dedicated to keeping the Club running for the benefit of everyone who flies our hills. Feel free to step forward and apply to join the committee as we always need more help – don't feel you have to be an elite pilot (most of us on the committee are not) – don't hesitate to email [sewchairman@gmail.com](mailto:sewchairman@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining the committee.

South East Wales really does have the best flying sites in Britain. We look forward to flying with you over our majestic and stunning landscape and maybe enjoy a drink with you after an epic day flying!



## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

This section hopefully answers many of questions pilots new to the club may have. It is continuously updated - if there is something missing let us committee know via Telegram or email.

### **Does the club have any weather stations?**

We run a weather station on the Blorengne and one in Cardiff that report live wind speed and direction. To access the Blorengne station download the Holfuy app to your phone ([iPhone](#) or [Android](#)) or visit the [Blorengne station website](#). There is also a [Cardiff weather station](#) and [webcam](#) which is useful for the southernmost sites and the app PWS monitor works well (add ICARDIFF23 and IABERGAV8) for both weather stations.

### **How does the Club police member's only sites?**

Member's only sites have been imposed on the Club by the site owners and it is important we respect these rules – sites have been lost before because of non-members behaviour.

### **I am a new pilot just out of school. What can the Club do for me?**

You no longer have an instructor telling you when and where to fly so you need to learn to make those decisions for yourself. The Club has a number of club coaches available to help so you can become confident. Start by contacting one of the Club's coaches via the SEW Low Airtime Group on Telegram or any member of the committee for advice.

### **How can I take my BHPA exams, does the club have a coaching system to help me?**

The Club very much supports pilots progressing through the BHPA Pilot Rating system. There are coaches who will sign off the necessary tasks in your logbook. The Club will help you study for the Pilot and Advanced Pilot exams and when the time comes a coach will invigilate when you are read to sit the exam papers. Once a year the Club runs study sessions to prepare pilots to take the exams. Join the club's Telegram groups and ask if you would like support for this.

### **How do I know the best place to go flying on a certain day?**

First familiarise yourself with the club's sites join the SEW Planning group on Telegram and monitor it - particularly if the forecasts are looking good a few days out. Don't just blindly follow where everyone else is going and do be prepared to travel. The XC hounds may well be off somewhere because it has the best chance of them clocking up some enormous distance – but the same site may be totally inappropriate for the less experienced pilot. Once you have been out a few times you'll probably be able to team up with pilots of your own standard and save on travelling costs. There is also guide to weather forecasting on the SEW club website.

### **There are some sites in the guide that require higher rating than I have to fly. Why is this?**

Those sites are generally tricky to fly. Some have difficult take-offs; some have difficult landings. Pen Cerrig Calch for example has a difficult slope landing and a bottom landing field that is a long way from launch, so the decision to head out must be made early. The rating system is there as a guide. If you think you are ready to fly a site then ask the sites officer or coach. They will give their opinion and may arrange for an on-site introduction to flying the site. Don't ever feel pressure to be in the air just because others are. Some pilots have 100's of hours experience and their

skills and knowledge may be very different to yours. Take advice and don't be too eager, but when you are ready and the conditions are right then go for it!

### **How do I take part in competitions? What are the club records?**

There are many competitions and awards open to pilots of all levels of experience. Start by looking at the [SEW competitions](#) and [SEW awards](#) pages on the website and asking in Telegram.

### **I want to be a BHPA Club Coach but am not sure if I have the right experience.**

The club supports pilots each year to become BHPA coaches. If you are not sure if you have the experience just ask on the Telegram groups. Some great coaches don't have 100's of hours of airtime, so don't feel this is necessary. Dates of BHPA club coach courses are [here](#). The club supports the fees for active SEW pilots – please enquire by emailing [sewchairman@gmail.com](mailto:sewchairman@gmail.com)

### **I want to be on the committee. How do I go about it?**

The committee is re-elected at the AGM in March each year. If you are interested then let the chairman at any point in the year (via email [sewchairman@gmail.com](mailto:sewchairman@gmail.com)). The committee is always in need of new ideas and enthusiasm.

### **What kind of flying do members of the Club do?**

The Club is about supporting pilots of all levels and disciplines. We have both hang-glider and paraglider pilot members. Many live to fly cross country but others just like to soar locally. There also an active Hike-and-fly community amongst its fitter members, with the three peaks challenge - Bloreng, Sugar Loaf and the Skirrid. In the summer the club is an excellent venue for Vol-Biv style flying. The club also has paramotoring take-offs at Bedlinog and Gelligaer Common (see website for more details).

### **How do I get a key to take my car to launch at Nant-y-Moel or the Bloreng?**

Access to the Bloreng launch site is restricted to 4x4 vehicles with good ground clearance and a key is needed to open the access gate. Most pilots don't use the key and just walk to launch. A key can be ordered on the membership page on the Club website.

The track to Nant-y-Moel is drivable by most vehicles. A key can also be ordered on the membership page on the [Club Webcollect web page](#).

### **How do I take my car to launch at Pontlloyn?**

Access to the Pontlloyn launch site was blocked by the council in 2018 in an attempt to stop fly tipping. It is best to ask on the Telegram Chat group for up to date information on if it currently accessible.

### **Does the Club run first aid courses?**

The Club has hosted several first aid courses run by Jockey Sanderson. These are on an ad-hoc basis. Keep an eye on the SEW Chat group on Telegram and express an interest.

### **Does the Club have a policy about landing out locally?**

The Club's [Land Out Policy](#) can be found on the website. Even a very short cross country flight will see you land in a field that has not been negotiated for landing in by the Club. It is therefore important that you read and understand the Club's policy on this.

### **Does the Club have a Right of Access Policy?**

The Club's has a [Right of Access Policy document](#) that can be found on the website. You are encouraged not to fly from local non-club sites without first discussing things with the Club Committee. This is to ensure there are no consequences that could prejudice the Club's on-going negotiations with regard to new flying sites. Always check before you fly.