



RESPONSE TO BUDGET PROPOSAL

IMPERIAL COLLEGE GLIDING CLUB

MARCH 15, 2014

1 Response to proposals

The aim of this paper is to both respond to suggestions made at the last CSB budgeting meeting regarding increasing the gliding membership fee and membership target, and demonstrate the annual gliding costs incurred by our various members.

At the last CSB meeting it was suggested that Gliding should raise its membership fee from £48 to approximately £70 whilst also increasing the membership target from 55 members. We feel this is completely unworkable and unnecessary for the reasons presented below.

1. Over 40 of our 83 members have come on less than three trips since the beginning of the year. These members simply wanted to try out gliding and would likely not have joined if our membership price was much higher. Raising the membership fee, which is already the highest it has ever been (see figure 1), would strongly discourage these occasional members from joining our club and trying out gliding. These members represent a substantial proportion of our club and losing them would result in a significant reduction in both the overall amount of members and our level of income.



Figure 1: Variation of membership fees and membership targets

2. An increase in membership fee is not compatible with also increasing the membership target. As mentioned in the previous point, raising the membership price would discourage a lot of people from joining, and thus reduce the number of members. Therefore raising the membership target as well as increasing the membership fee is completely unworkable.
3. It has been suggested that an alternative method for people to try gliding would be to offer trial flights without membership. The club has tried this system in the past and found that although some people enjoyed it, the conversion rate to full-time members was very poor. This was largely because people were not keen to then pay a membership fee just to be able to pay to do more flying. This therefore discouraged people who potentially wanted to take up gliding but were not completely sure, whereas the current system encourages people to continue. We know from past experience that this system is not very effective and results not only in fewer members but also lower levels of income.
4. Another suggestion that has been made was to provide more to our members in return for a higher membership fee. For example, some sports clubs have high membership fees which cover the majority of the activities throughout the year. However, this does not increase the net income of the club. All it serves to do is discourage people from trying gliding in the first place since they are put off by the high initial cost.

2 General points regarding our budget

1. The majority of our costs are mandatory. We cannot reduce spending on equipment or insurance for example as these expenses are either safety-related or required by law.
2. Our members receive no subsidy for their individual flying costs. In fact, we are having to charge our members additional flying fees for every minute they spend flying our gliders in order to meet our costs.
3. As we head towards our 85th anniversary, the club is currently at the busiest it has been in a number of years with all of our trips over-subscribed and all of our equipment fully utilised. There is certainly room for further expansion if the funds were available.
4. We feel that the expense of an activity should be irrelevant. Every club receives more or less the same subsidy levels. Our members naturally pay a lot more to do our activity than they would to do others (as can be seen in section 3).
5. Over the last 5 years our budget has been cut by about one third and has not been increased since (see figure 2). However, our activity levels and costs both continue to grow. At the same time, provisions to meet long-term equipment replacement costs have been removed.

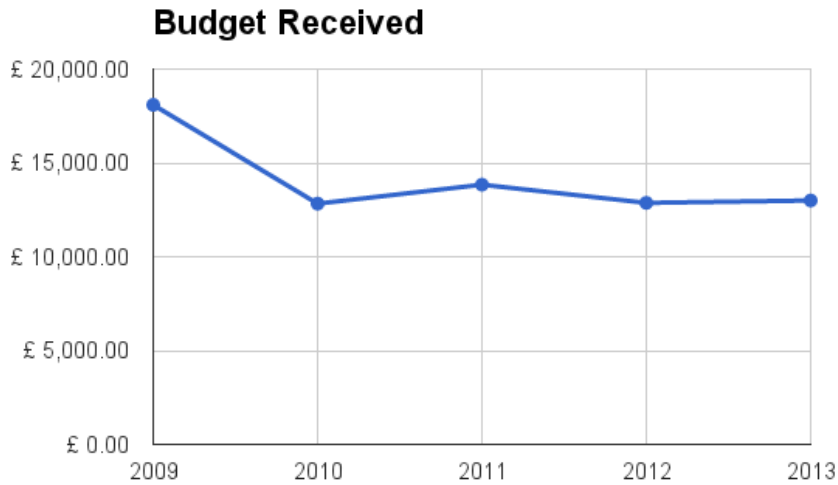


Figure 2: Decline in the amount of budget received

6. Our club already charges higher fees than most other university gliding clubs in the country, as can be seen in table 1. Additionally, Lasham, the airfield at which we fly, charges just £20 for an annual youth membership for which the majority of our members qualify. This gives a person access to Lasham's fleet, consisting of 9 gliders, whilst paying much the same launch and soaring fees as we do when flying our gliders. The only incentive for people not to join the airfield directly is to get access to our fleet of gliders. However, a further increase in our membership price could lead people to bypass our club and join the airfield directly, reducing our membership numbers and level of income.

University	Gliders	Membership	Soaring Fees	Winch Launch
Imperial	3	£48.00	£0.26	£5.00
Lasham (non-Imperial)	9	£20.00	£0.28	£5.00
UCL	3	£40.00	free	£5.00
Nottingham	3	£35.00	free	£4.75
Edinburgh	2	£45.00	£0.14	£7.00

Table 1: Typical costs at university gliding clubs

It is difficult to provide an accurate indication of what our members have to pay. We have tried to summarise annual expenses paid by our various members in section 3 below.

It is worth noting that we could provide a more accurate indication of what our members spend if the club paid for every bit of flying our members do and then charged the members for it. However, this is impractical and by getting our members to pay their flying fees directly to the airfields where they fly, the amount of admin is hugely reduced. The only downside is that to the casual observer it appears that our members don't pay too much.

3 Annual member costs

3.1 One-off members

These members only come once in order to try gliding out and only have one flight.

Type	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
ICGC Membership	£ 48.00	1	£ 48.00
Minibus Transport	£ 10.00	1	£ 10.00
Aerotow Launches (4000 ft)	£ 50.30	1	£ 50.30
Soaring Fees (minutes)	£ 0.26	25	£ 6.50
Total Cost			£ 114.80

3.2 Non-regular members

These members come on an average of three trips and then stop for various reasons such as lack of time, interest or money.

Type	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
ICGC Membership	£ 48.00	1	£ 48.00
Minibus Transport	£ 10.00	3	£ 30.00
Aerotow Launches (4000 ft)	£ 50.30	1	£ 50.30
Winch Launches	£ 5.00	9	£ 45.00
Soaring Fees (minutes)	£ 0.26	97	£ 25.22
Total Cost			£ 198.52

3.3 Regular members

These are members who come on trips regularly and want to progress quickly in their training.

Type	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
ICGC Membership	£ 48.00	1	£ 48.00
Minibus Transport	£ 10.00	20	£ 200.00
Aerotow Launches (3000 ft)	£ 42.90	7	£ 300.30
Winch Launches	£ 5.00	45	£ 225.00
Soaring Fees (minutes)	£ 0.26	600	£ 156.00
Total Cost			£ 929.30

3.4 Extremely active members

These members come very regularly, may have prior experience, frequently go on long soaring or cross-country flights and participate in competitions, tours and additional training, for example to become an instructor.

Type	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
ICGC Membership	£ 48.00	1	£ 48.00
Minibus Transport	£ 10.00	25	£ 250.00
Own Transport During Summer	£ 20.00	10	£ 200.00
Tour Travel (after subsidy)	£ 150.00	1	£ 150.00
Aerotow Launches (3000 ft)	£ 42.90	20	£ 858.00
Winch Launches	£ 5.00	120	£ 600.00
Soaring Fees (minutes)	£ 0.26	4800	£ 1,248.00
Competition Costs (after subsidy)	£ 500.00	1	£ 500.00
Instructor Training (after subsidy)	£ 300.00	1	£ 300.00
Total Cost			£ 4,154.00

4 Conclusion

In summary, we feel that increasing the membership fee and target is not only unnecessary, but would almost certainly result in a reduced number of members. This would likely decrease both the activity and income of the club and is therefore unworkable. We feel that our budget is fully justified and should not be targeted purely on the grounds of it being an expensive activity.