

Gowran Grange Briefing Information

N.B. Pilots should get a personal briefing from the duty instructor before flying.

GENERAL

Launches take place from the grass runway, running NNE/SSW (03/21).

Landing

Gliders should land on the runway if it is clear.

Only in cases where the runway is obstructed should pilots consider, in the interest of safety, landing off runway. The section of the field to the west of the runway (between the runway and the road) is rough and should only be considered for use in an emergency.

The southern end of the field slopes upward as you approach it; you should plan your approach to touch down beyond the track leading from the hangar to the windsock.

In northerly winds, this slope can exaggerate any wind gradient effect.

In westerly winds, the trees along the west side of the airfield – and the gaps between them – can cause turbulence and changes in cross-wind strength during take-off and approach. Landings on runway 03 in such conditions may be complicated by curlover from the trees, and it is advisable to land in the area to the right (or east) of the windsock and runway, and thus further away from this curlover effect.

TAKE OFF and CIRCUITS

When launching on 21 (towards the south), the tug will turn right soon after take-off, in order to avoid overflying houses. In south-westerly winds, expect a sudden increase in wind strength at the boundary as you pass beyond the line of trees, resulting in an increased climb. And think “wind gradient”.

The standard tow is to 2000 feet. On release, make a climbing turn to the left.

Gliders make their circuits on either side of the field, at the choice of the pilot. Look out! – and not just for gliders whose pilots have chosen differently to you. The tug generally, but not always, makes its circuit to the west of the field.

EMERGENCY FIELDS

In the event of an early launch failure, there are emergency fields.

To the south: If coming off tow in the very early stages, remember that a dogleg to the left (towards the hangar compound) will give extra distance within the airfield, although slightly downslope. And do avoid the windsock pole!

If it is not possible to land ahead in the airfield, the next field, immediately over the road, can be used. The field is not large. Watch for the telephone wire at the near hedge (quite low, and so should not cause a problem), and the small quarry at the far end of the field.

If you are a bit higher and over that first field, then make for the **next field but one** over to the right, which is good and large. You may have enough height for a short base leg before making your approach into it.

To the north:

In the event of a launch failure in the very early stages, within the field boundary, a turn off the runway will take you upslope and shorten the ground run. There is a hollow near the end of the field on the left, halfway between the runway and the gate; this needs to be avoided.

The field immediately over the boundary is landable. There is an access road across the middle of it, and beyond that some power lines. If you have sufficient height/speed to clear the power lines, turn 30° left and the next field is uneven but landable. Avoid the practice jumps! To the right, the race course is landable, as are fields further out across the road.

Remember, if in doubt after a low cable-break/launch failure, land somewhere ahead.

Before turning back to the field for a downwind landing or abbreviated circuit, **make sure you have sufficient speed** and height for the manoeuvre.

LOCATING THE FIELD FROM THE AIR

The field is visible from the air when flying to the north, east or south of it, although not always easy to identify if you are unfamiliar with its shape and local landmarks.

If you are out to the west, the field can be lost to sight if you are at a low angle to it, even though you may still be within gliding range. This is because of the trees at the western edge of the field, and because the field slopes slightly away from that side.

To locate the field from the air, the most prominent marker is provided by the very large square tan/yellow shed and other buildings associated with Punchestown racecourse, just to the northeast of the field. (N.B. There is another large racecourse, but without as many buildings, just three miles north, next to Naas town.)

Other aids to location are the following:

There are several quarries to the east and north-east of the field; there are none to the west, other than those around the landfill site near Kilcullen which are 4 nautical miles to the southwest.

The lake/reservoir is four miles east of the field. Mid-way along its western shore, just south of the town of Blessington, is a distinctive inlet pointing to the west, away from the mountains. This points directly to the field.

The town of Naas is two-and-a-half miles to the north-west. At the southern end of the town are two small ornamental lakes which point towards the airfield.

Five nautical miles to the south-west is the town of Kilcullen, with a bridge over the Liffey river. A mile from Kilcullen to the north-east is the landfill site, and two miles further on a large electricity grid. Town, landfill, and grid are in an approximate line leading back to the field.

AIRSPACE

Dublin Airport CTA extends overhead the airfield. This starts at 4,500 ft AMSL - that is to say **4,000 ft above the airfield**. Do not enter this airspace without clearance.

This CTA covers **all** local flying to the west, south, or east of the field.

Three miles due north of the field, the base of the Dublin CTA steps down to 3,500 ft AMSL west of Naas, and to 2,500 ft AMSL east of Naas. Effectively, this means that you should **avoid any soaring north-east of Naas**; north-west of Naas you may soar to 3,000 ft above the airfield, (3,500 ft AMSL) within a limited sector. Familiarise yourself with the aeronautical chart for this area, and/or get a briefing, before flying here. Overhead the town of Naas you are clear up to 4,500 AMSL.

North of Naas is Casement military aerodrome at Baldonnell.

The restricted airspace (R16) associated with Baldonnell runs over the field. We have a system in force by which we notify Baldonnell when we are operational, and further agree not to fly north of Naas or west of Naas motorway by-pass in R16 without prior telephone notification. In practice, most of our soaring is not to the north of the field.

Five miles to the west of the field, south of Newbridge and west of Kilcullen, is the Curragh army camp and military prison. Do not overfly; this is a prohibited area.

PD 11/01