

Kenyon Airstrip Safety Document (K.A.S.D)

This document has been constructed due to safety concerns relating to aircraft operations (some in the 1-2 ton category) from Kenyon (Hall Farm) Airstrip. The Lancashire Aero Club has been using a farmers field as an Airstrip (called KHF) since 27 June 2009 ... on a 28 day/year basis.

Members of the LAC have felt the need to openly comment on safety issues related to Airfields apart from their own. This appears to have been unregulated and has extended to internet forums.

In May 2011 a Safety Document was constructed called the KHF report (attached to this document). The purpose was to raise awareness of general safety concerns related to aircraft operations at KHF. The main concerns of the KHF Report were...

- The close proximity of KHF Airfield to the M6 Motorway and a Mainline Rail Link (only 200m).
- The location of KHF Airfield in the middle of a busy Low Level Flight Corridor
- The physical characteristics of KHF Airstrip (a sloping, undulating Runway close to high trees)
- The continued use of this Airstrip for aircraft in the heavyweight (1-2 ton) category.
- The proximity of multiple partially fenced public footpaths adjacent to the Airfield boundary
- The flight paths of aircraft using KHF causing a nuisance & safety risk to local residents (page 4)

Local residents have formed an opposition group against future “development” at KHF Airfield. During 2 meetings with a senior LAC member, this group were reportedly reassured that ...

- All Airfield activities would not be dangerous but “would be fun”.
- No aircraft would depart on the North East Runway (RW05) which would disturb local residents

I have been asked to assist them in raising safety concerns to the local authorities regarding KHF operations. Every attempt has been made to provide an unbiased & accurate document, without the intention to criticise any individual or organisation.



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Distribution List

Any person or organisation on this list is directly affected by this document.

All recipients will receive this document (and the original KHF Report) by email, additionally

Any name in **Bold & Red** will also receive a printed version.

Primary recipients

- * **Graham Dickman**, Wigan Borough Council (Development Control Manager)
- * **Emma Breheny**, Planning Officer, Wigan Borough Council
- * **James Grundy** Councillor for Lowton East
- * Sion Owen-Ellis (NDD North West, Asset Development Team, Highways Agency) (page 4)
- * Sarah McArdle (Community Relations Manager, Network Rail) (page 4)
- * Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) Civil Aviation Authority (page 8)
- * Station Commander, Cheshire Fire Brigade Hq Winsford (page 11)
- * Station Commander, Lancashire Fire Brigade Hq ... Preston (page 11)
- * Edward Thwaite, Chairman of the Lowton East Development Forum (LENDF)
- * Dr Chris Miller, Lancashire Wildlife Trust (page 3,7,9)
- * Mark Champion, Lancashire Wildlife Trust (page 3,7,9)
- * Paul Thomas, Natural England (Natural England Officer responsible for Highfield Moss SSSI) (page 3,7,9)
- * C&A Waddington .. Airfield Watch Group
- * **J Moulden** Airfield Watch Group

Secondary recipients (involved with Flight Operations at KHF Airfield **)

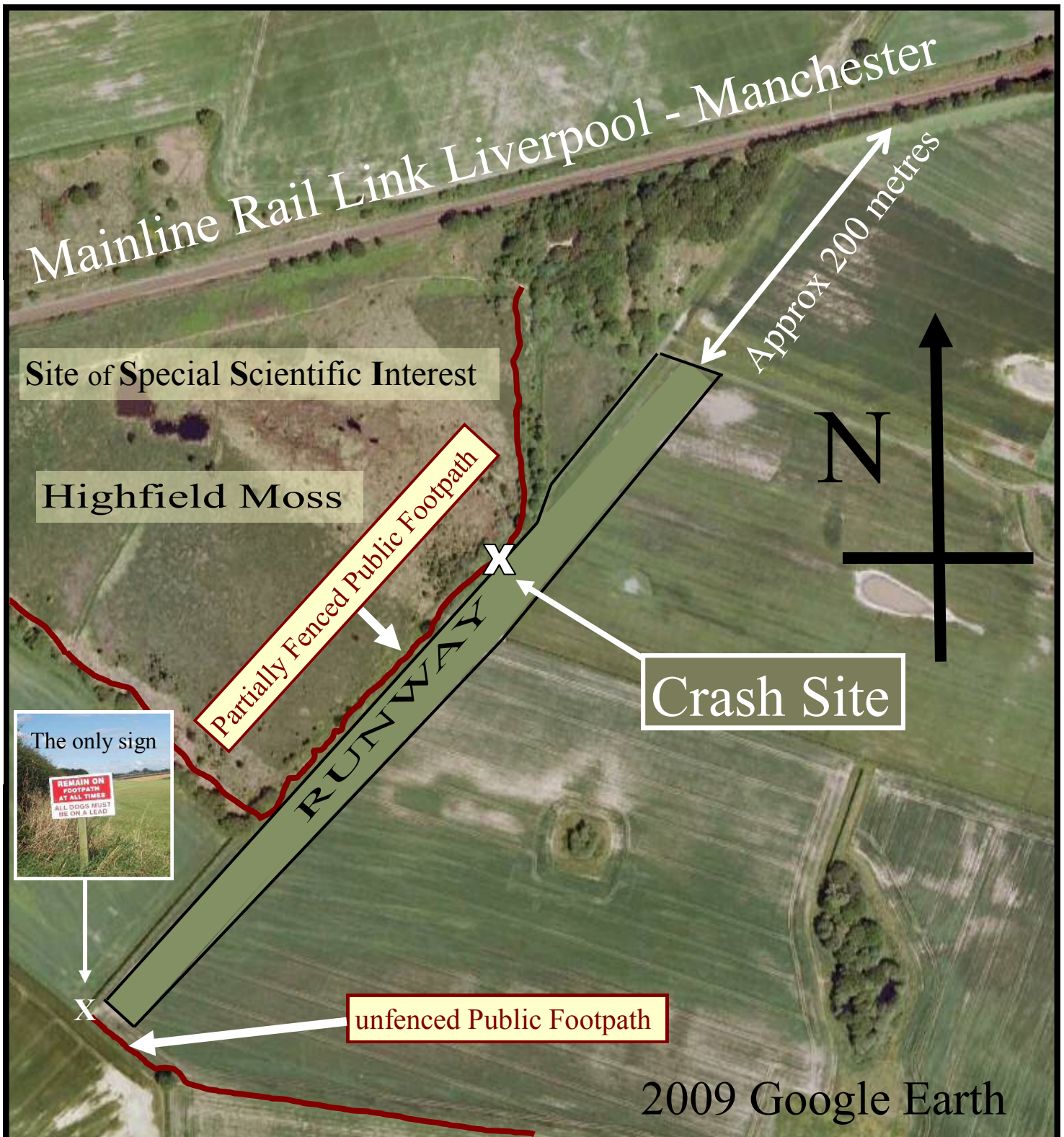
- * **Tod Bulmer**, Owner of KHF Airfield Kenyon Hall Farm, Warrington
- * **Clifford Mort**, Chairman of the Lancashire Aero Club
- * Christopher Barham, Communications Officerof the Lancashire Aero Club
- * John Coxon, Safety Officer of the Lancashire Aero Club

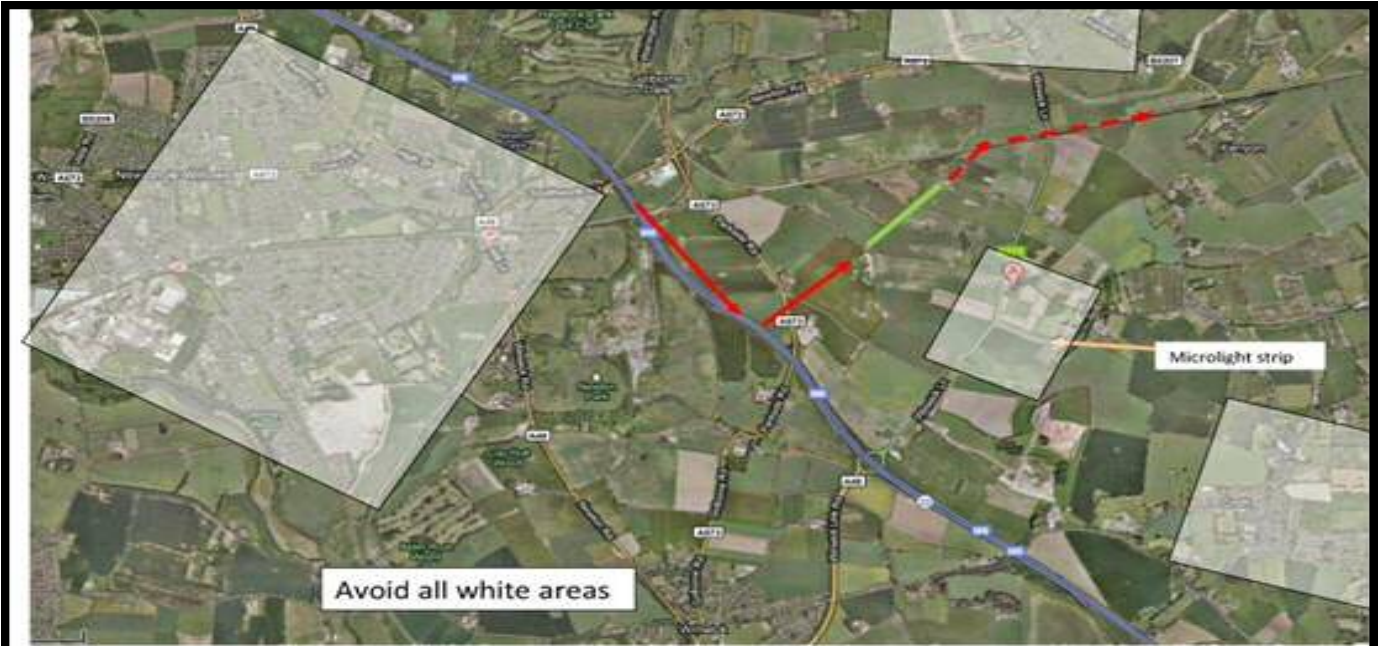
(** This document has been pre-released to all Secondary Recipients but they have declined to comment)

This page highlights safety concerns related to the following ...

- The close proximity of partially fenced ** public footpaths to KHF Airfield.
- The adjacent SSI site to the North West of KHF Airstrip.
- The Mainline Rail Link only 200 metres to the North East of the Airstrip.
- Insufficient signs to warn members of the public of the risk to their safety.

** The wooden fence that runs along the North West boundary of the airstrip is fragile in many places and is not capable of protecting the general public against aircraft crashes (particularly in the heavier category of 1-2 tons). A 2-3 metre high robust fence would be preferable.





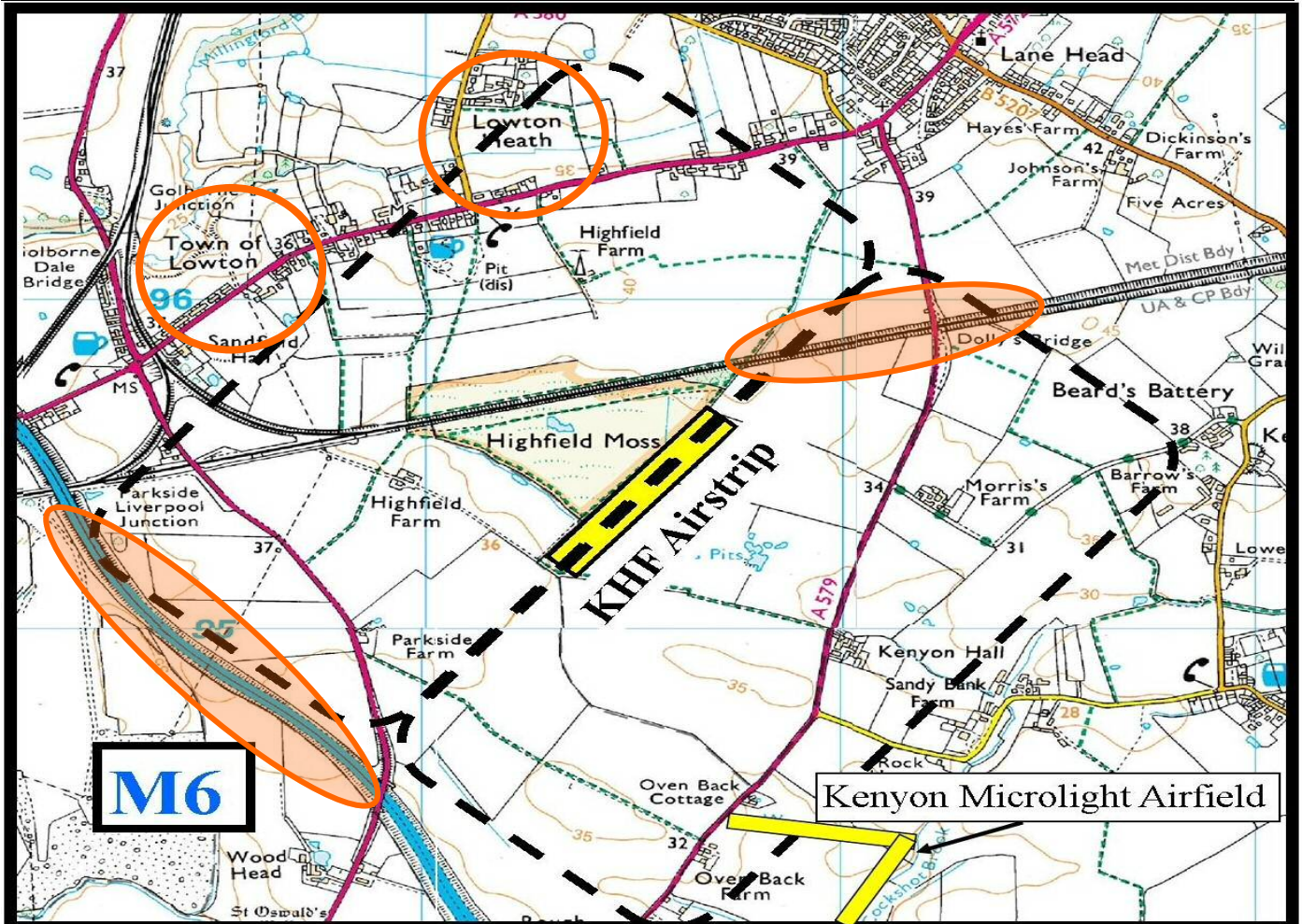
Approach and departure routes for Runway 05

The picture above is from the LAC website clearly showing that

- Departures are allowed to the North east on Runway 05 (contrary to what the Lowton residents were told)
- KHF aircraft are encouraged to fly along vulnerable transport links (M6 and Main Rail Link)

The diagram below tends to reflect reality (Many aircraft flying *Circuits* over Lowton and Lowton Heath)

NB: The ORANGE ellipses are the areas most prone to "contamination" from an aircraft crash, just before landing or just after take-off (statistics show that these 2 phases of flight account for nearly a quarter of all accidents).



26 August 2012 LAC Fly-In (Flooded conditions on the KHF Runway)

NB: At least 3 Aircraft were given permission to land at KHF on this day.



Frequent flooding occurs due to adjacent lowland raised bog. Highfield Moss SSSI site is located a few metres to the North

KHF "RUNWAY" in late August

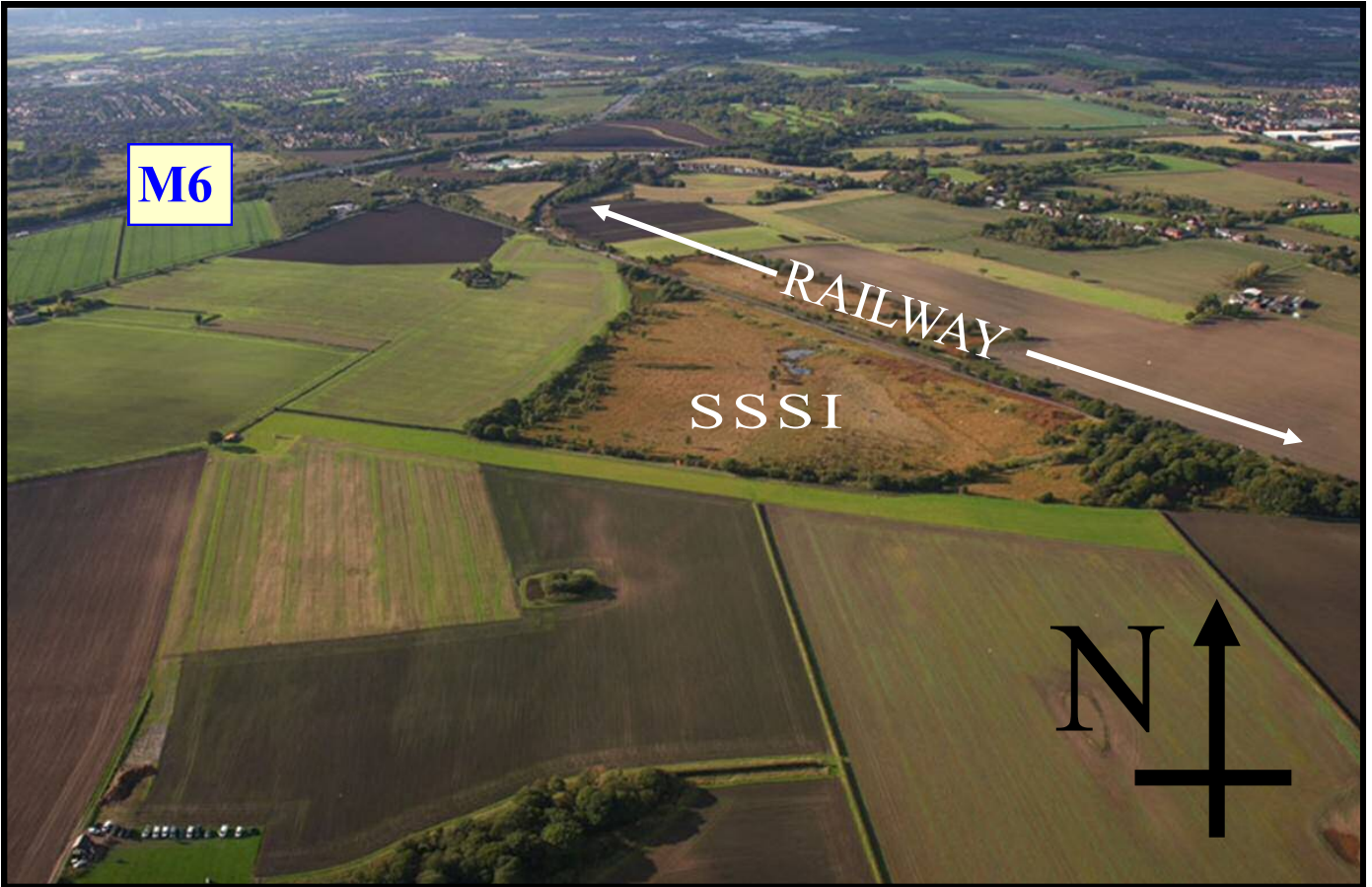
Departures to the North East. This is contrary to the reassurance that local residents received, that no such departures in this direction would occur. Note the proximity of the high trees to the left of this departing aircraft.



Comment from LAC Pilot... *"I have been into KHF once when it first opened and vowed that I wouldn't go back, and I'm used to Farm Strips. If you know it then it's fine but I was nervous of landing so close to the trees for the very reason that seems to have caused this incident ..."*

Railway Fence clearly visible 200m from end of Runway



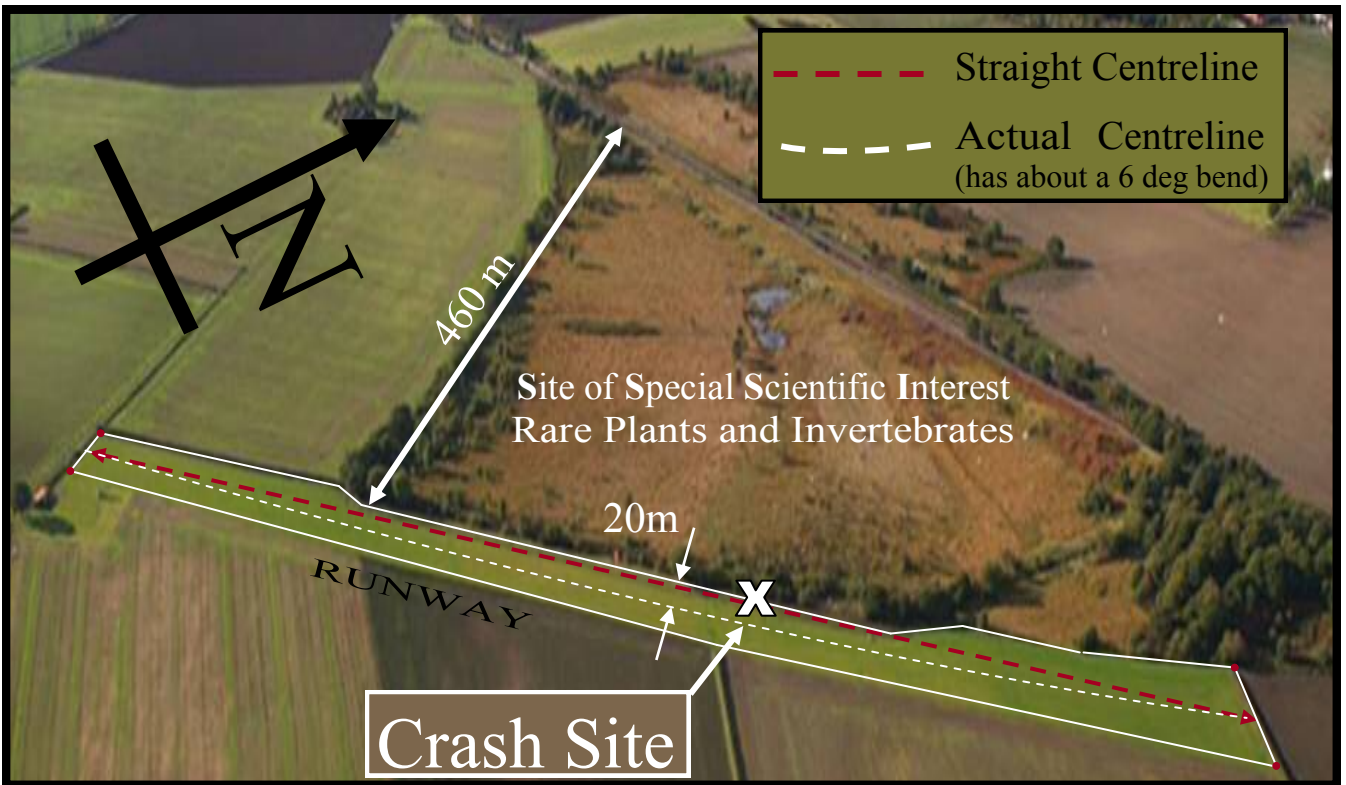


Above is an aerial photo of KHF Airstrip clearly showing

- The close proximity to primary transport links (M6 to the West & Railway to the North East)
- A **Site of Special Scientific Interest**, just North of KHF. This is a '*Lowland raised Bog*' containing rare invertebrates & plants. The Bog is prone to flooding, spilling onto the Runway at KHF (page 5).

Below is an aircraft in the heavier category landing (The Railway fence clearly shown behind)

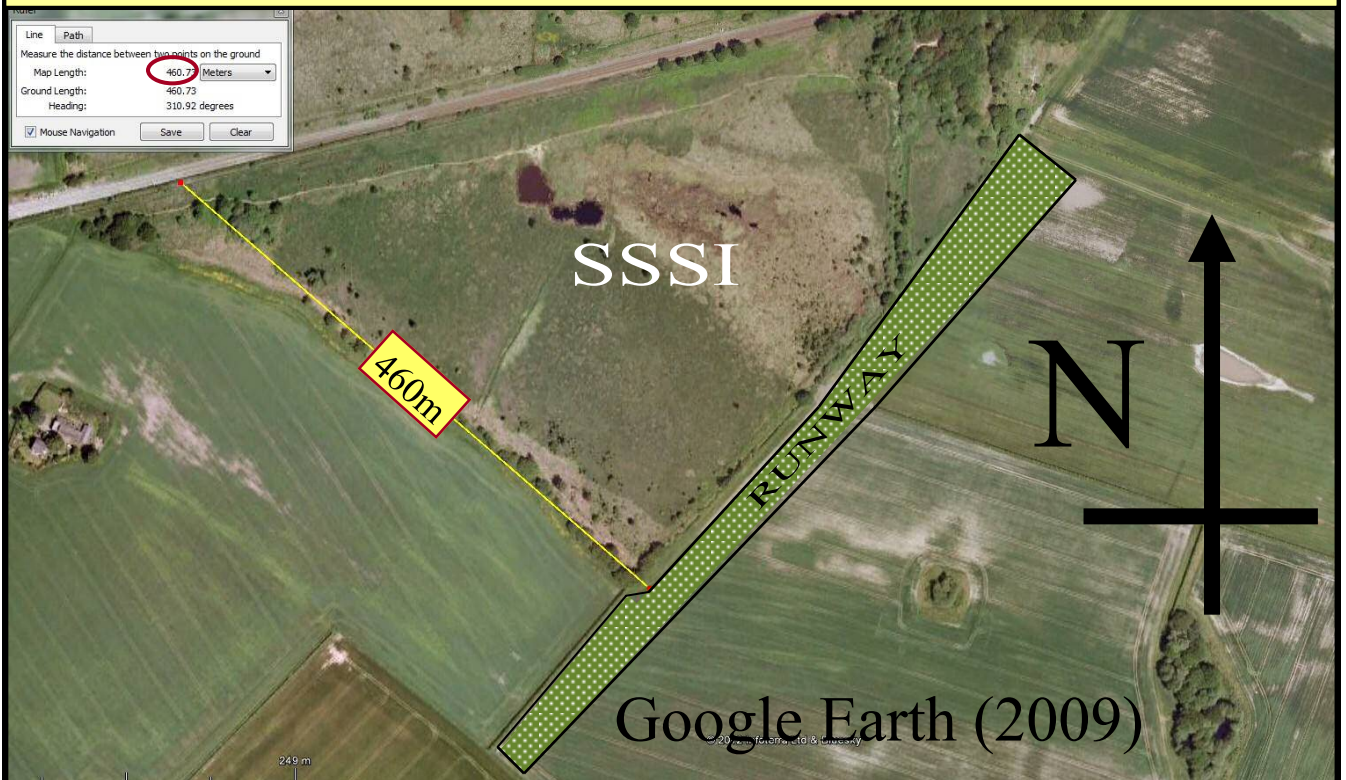




Shape of KHF 'Runway'

As you can see from the photographs in this document, not only is the Runway at KHF: (1) Sloping (2) Undulating (3) Prone to flooding ... but it also has an unusual shape with tall trees a few metres from the Runway Centreline (measured from end to end).

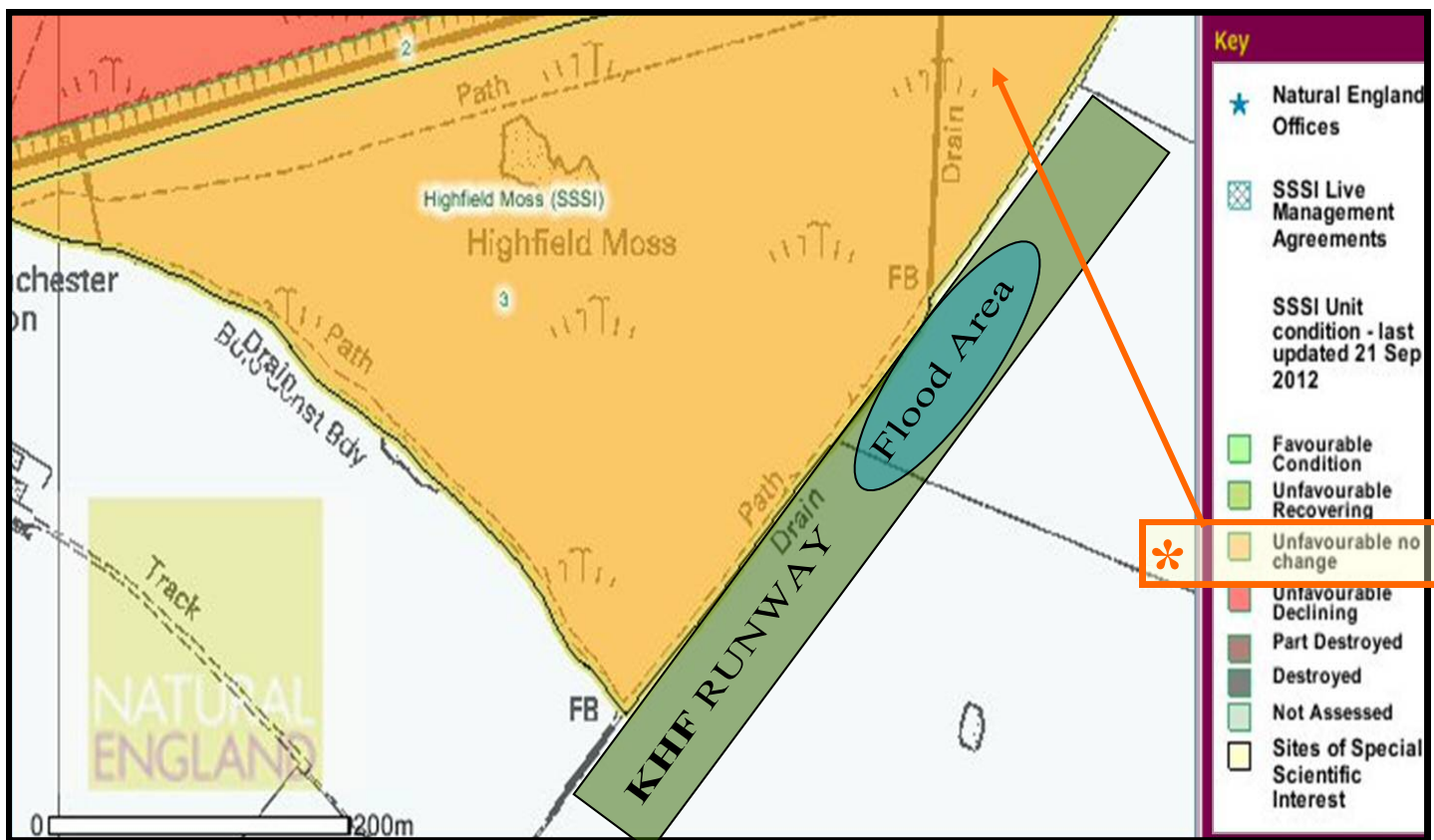
A Pilot is trained to focus on the end of the Runway for Take-Off & Landing. This could give a Pilot a false sense of his "*position*" relative to the actual centreline of the Runway. This feature (not shown on the KHF website) may possibly have contributed to the Crash at KHF Airstrip on 30 June 2012.



Highfield Moss

(Site of Special Scientific Interest & common land)

- Rare Lowland raised Bog (prone to flooding).
- Flooding overwhelms drains & spills onto KHF.
- Site of many rare invertebrates & wild flowers.
- Presently in an “*unfavourable*” condition *
- Development of KHF may jeopardise this SSSI.
- Just a few metres North of KHF Airstrip.
- Surrounded by popular public footpaths.
- For details see www.naturalengland.org.uk



Pictures of 2 KHF aircraft doing “*beat-ups*” (low flying over the airfield ...
..... not engaged in the standard practice of either taking off or landing).

This sort of stunt flying is normally only seen at air-shows and clearly
adds to the risk to the general public, walking on the adjacent footpaths.



The only Access Route to KHF Airfield

When the aircraft crashed into the tall trees adjacent to the North Boundary of KHF Airfield on 30 June 2012, the emergency services (particularly the 13 tonne Fire Engine) experienced difficulties reaching the Airfield along 600 metres of this severely rutted track.

This clearly is a safety concern for future Flight Operations at KHF Airfield

Aircraft are still allowed to use KHF three months after this crash with no obvious improvement to the only vehicular access (a photo of this muddy track was taken on 26/8/12)

It is not my intention to pass judgement on why Flight Operations at KHF are allowed to continue, when clearly the emergency services will be delayed in reaching a possible future incident. However the Fire & Rescue Services should be made aware of these likely difficulties.

Additionally, there may be legal responsibilities that the land owner and the Airfield operators may wish to investigate, with regard to liability, linked to giving a pilot permission to use an Airfield, in the full knowledge that difficulties have arisen in the past, affecting flight safety.

Flight operations at KHF Airfield are planned for events in late November. Since the photo below was taken in August and the Fire & Rescue Services experienced difficulties using this track in June, it is difficult to see how any organisation can promote an event in the wet season, in the full knowledge that, in the event of an accident, the emergency services would have little chance of successfully reaching the scene of a crash, using the vehicles that they rely on so much.



Summary

The Lancashire Aero Club have been using a Farmers Field as an Airstrip for just over 3 years but there appears to be significant evidence that it is poorly sited due to ...

- Its proximity to Primary Transport Links (M6 Motorway & Mainline LPL-MAN Railway)
- Its proximity to Public footpaths (which clearly affects the safety of the general public see Page 1)
- Its proximity to tall trees on the Northern boundary (the site of the recent aircraft crash)
- Its proximity to communities to the north of the Airfield & another Airfield to the south.
- Its proximity to Highfield Moss (a site of Special Scientific Interest *rare plants & invertebrates*)
- The Airfields' physical characteristics, sloping, undulating, bent & flood prone Runway.
- The Airfields' poor vehicular access, clearly affecting the Fire & Rescue services.

Conclusions





Legally, the Lancashire Aero Club may continue to use the Farmers field near Kenyon Hall Farm as an Airstrip for up to 28 days a year. The LAC have openly expressed a desire to develop this airstrip for extended use, with the long term goal of erecting hangars and a control tower.

From a practical view, it is my assessment that development of this nature and extended use, will have an adverse effect on the local community, the local environment and Flight Safety.

Allowing the heavier category of aircraft to use KHF would, in my opinion, exacerbate these safety risks & increase the nuisance & disturbance experienced by local residents & the environment.

Document constructed by Stephen Billington ashcroftar@btinternet.com (release date 05/10/2012)



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| Greater than 1000kg |
|  |
| 650kg |
|  |
| 450kg |
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