



Ministry  
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97 Heather Shaw,  
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Dear *Keevil Parish Council*,

**47<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY UPDATE TO WATCHKEEPER ACTIVITY AT  
KEEVIL AIRFIELD**

My name is Captain Josh McAleer and I am the Executive Officer charged with operating the British Army's Watchkeeper drone from Keevil Airfield. As you will no doubt have noticed, we have achieved many safe and successful flights from Keevil using Watchkeeper to support Army training exercises on Salisbury Plain. I thought it timely to provide an update to our local stakeholders of the progress we have made.

Since 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the airspace above Keevil Airfield (Temporary Danger Area EG D198) has been activated for periods between the hours of 0830 and 1730, Monday to Thursday, and between 0830 and 1400 on Friday. The activation of this airspace allows us to take off from Keevil and fly over Salisbury Plain, which is where we need to be to support Army training exercises. We always strive to reduce the time we fly in EG D198 to a minimum to reduce disruption to local stakeholders, both in the air and on the ground. From 1400 on Fridays, we hand the Airfield to Bannerdown Gliding Club so their members can continue to enjoy their sport from Keevil as they have done for many years. We will continue to fly Watchkeeper from Keevil until 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021, before recovering all our equipment to our home base in Larkhill.

Over the last two months we have flown Watchkeeper in support of large-scale Army training exercises and demonstrated the system's significant value. We have also proved that Keevil Airfield is an excellent location from which to operate, and that we can integrate efficiently with our partners. We are always looking for ways to improve safety and reduce impact on our stakeholders. Through local engagement we have developed safe deconfliction procedures with Wiltshire Air Ambulance, ensuring their critical activity continues as it must. We have been praised by the Civilian Aviation Authority (CAA) for the continuing to use EG D198 in a fair manner, ensuring others can use the airspace when we are not.

## PROTECTIVE MARKING

During the times when the Watchkeeper drone is about to take off or land, we position sentries around the perimeter track at Keevil Airfield. These soldiers are posted to give warning to our crews of any ground or air incursions that might make a take off or landing unsafe. I would like to take this opportunity to kindly request that local residents remain outside of the perimeter fence during our operating hours. This is for their own safety and to reduce distraction for the sentries. Incursions by curious onlookers could result in a preventable safety occurrence or accident. We thank you for your continued support as we try to remain safe and reduce our impact on the community

*Yours sincerely,*

*J J McAleer*

Josh McAleer

Captain

Executive Officer, 10 (Assaye) Battery