



USE OF DRONES AND MODEL AIRCRAFT POLICY

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CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE	1
2. GUIDANCE ON FLYING DRONES AND MODEL AIRCRAFT	1
3. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:	1
3.1 Operational Rules:	1
6.1 Operator Conduct:	2
6.2 Council-Owned Land Covered by This Policy:	2
6.3 Additional Regulations for Drones with Cameras:.....	2
4. ENFORCEMENT	2

1. PURPOSE

This policy governs the operation of model aircraft, drones, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) on land owned or managed by Thornbury Town Council.

The take-off and landing of drones, model aircraft, or UAVs is generally prohibited from Council land without the express permission of Thornbury Town Council.

Any individual or organisation wishing to launch a drone or UAV, including those carrying photographic or video recording equipment for commercial purposes, from Council land must seek and obtain prior permission from the Council.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Drone Code states that drones must not be flown within:

- 50 metres (150 feet) of people or properties
 - 150 metres (500 feet) of crowds and built-up areas
- Given these restrictions, the Council's parks and open spaces are generally unsuitable for drone operation due to their proximity to buildings and frequent public use.

Permission to launch a drone or UAV from Council-owned land will not generally be granted in relation to public parks or open spaces, unless the intended purpose is educational, for the promotion of the area (e.g., tourism), or for a compelling commercial reason.

Individuals found launching or landing UAVs on Council-owned land without the required permission must cease operation immediately.

2. GUIDANCE ON FLYING DRONES AND MODEL AIRCRAFT

If permission is granted to launch a drone or UAV from Council-owned land, operators must adhere to the following guidelines.

To ensure the safety of Council staff and the public, UAV operators must follow the CAA Drone Code. Any breaches will be reported to the CAA.

3. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:

- Anyone wishing to fly a drone must pass a theory test to obtain a Flyer ID.
- The person responsible for the drone or model aircraft must register to obtain an Operator ID.
- Further details on registration are available on the Civil Aviation Authority website.

3.1 Operational Rules:

- Drones must weigh under 20kg.
- Maximum altitude: 120 metres (400 feet).
- Maximum horizontal distance from the operator: 500 metres.
- The drone must always remain within the operator's direct sight.
- Drones must not be flown near aircraft, helicopters
- Operators must exercise caution and fly safely.
- Any drone over 250 grams must be registered with the CAA, and the pilot must obtain both a Flyer ID and an Operator ID, which must be displayed on the drone.
- Drones must not be flown within:
 - 50 metres of people, vehicles, buildings, or vessels not under the operator's control
 - 150 metres of a congested area or an organised public event.

If recording video or images in an area where people are present, operators must inform individuals beforehand and respect their privacy to avoid legal consequences.

Legal Restrictions Under the Air Navigation Order: Without explicit permission from the CAA, drones must not be flown:

- within 150 metres of, or over, a congested area;
- within 150 metres of, or over, an organised open-air gathering of 1,000 or more people;
- within 50 metres of any vehicle, structure, or vessel not under the control of the operator;
- within 50 metres of any person not under the control of the operator

3.2 Operator Conduct:

- Be considerate of other amenity users, including dog walkers.
- Maintain visual contact with the UAV at all times (use of binoculars, video monitors, or smartphones for operation is only permitted if an observer is present).
- Operate only during daylight hours.
- Cease operation immediately if instructed by Council staff.
- Any breach of these guidelines may result in permission being revoked

3.3 Council-Owned Land Covered by This Policy:

- Mundy Playing Fields
- The Chantry Playing Fields
- Streamside Walk
- Thornbury Cemetery
- Any other open space or land owned by Thornbury Town Council

3.4 Additional Regulations for Drones with Cameras:

- Must not be flown within 50 metres of people, vehicles, buildings, or vessels.
- Must not be flown within 150 metres of a congested area or a large public gathering.
- Operators must inform individuals before recording in an area where people are present.
- Commercial drone use requires permission from the CAA and compliance with additional regulations. Further information on operating permissions for commercial drone use can be found on the CAA website.

4. ENFORCEMENT

Any individual found operating a drone or UAV on Council-owned land without permission will be required to cease operations immediately and may be subject to legal action.

Breaches of the Drone Code or other applicable regulations may result in enforcement by the CAA or other relevant authorities.

Thornbury Town Council reserves the right to amend this policy at any time to reflect changes in legislation or local requirements.