

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT

Advice to cathedrals on the use of small unmanned aircraft:

Applications for permission to fly a small unmanned aircraft (unmanned aircraft system) should only be considered in the following circumstances:

- The pilot operating the unmanned aircraft has either a BNUC-S or RPQ-S certificate (Pilot's Licence), and can provide copies of his or her CAA-approved Operations Manual (which includes details of the pilot's risk Assessment/ method statement, testing process, pilot training and continued practice) and CAA-issued Permission to Operate (which includes details of agreed special permissions regarding the distance from the public or public buildings that the system can be operated).
- The pilot has adequate suitable insurance and can provide a copy of the policy.

No flight should be permitted without permission. If someone attempts a flight without permission it should be immediately stopped as it breaches Health and Safety procedures.

Even if the pilot has permission, he/ she should adhere to all of the conditions below, particularly if the footage is being used for commercial purposes:

- The pilot should only fly the aircraft if reasonably satisfied that the flight can be made safely.
- The pilot should maintain direct, unaided visual contact with the aircraft sufficient to monitor its flight path in relation to other aircraft, persons, vehicles, vessels and structures to avoid collisions.
- The pilot should have special permission from the CAA to fly the aircraft:
 - over or within 150 metres of any congested area;
 - over or within 150 metres of an organised open-air assembly of more than 1,000 people;
 - within 50 metres of any vessel, vehicle or structure which is not under the control of the person in charge of the aircraft;
 - within 50 metres of any person; and
 - at take-off or landing, a small unmanned aircraft must not be flown within 30 metres of any person.

Information and guidance from the CAA can be found on its website (see <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=1995&pagetype=90>).

Other considerations:

You should discuss planned use of an unmanned aircraft with your insurer before giving permission – even though the pilot should have insurance.

If you permit use of an unmanned aircraft within the building you should ensure the building is empty at the time of the flight. You should also expect a hexacopter to generate a down draft so, if the

building has high level ledges covered in stone dust, it will dislodge the dust and will disturb fabric hangings.

The BBC uses unmanned aircraft for filming in and around ecclesiastical buildings. If you are approached by the BBC, experience shows that it understands the requirements and ensures that those it commissions to do the filming are properly certified and insured.

There are a number of professional firms which offer a service using the aircraft to photograph areas which it is either impossible or difficult to access. It can be cheaper to use an unmanned aircraft than to erect scaffolding if you wish to conduct investigatory work.

Please use the term 'unmanned aircraft system' rather than 'drone' as the latter term carries baggage!

Sarah King

September 2014