

A statement from the ModelAir team.

Since the July model flying event, we have been working very hard trying to secure the future of Model flying events at Old Warden, that we ran on behalf of Shuttleworth, but unfortunately to no avail.

Our last course of action was to appeal to the Shuttleworth trustees who have replied as per the letter below, which basically says that Shuttleworth will no longer host model flying events on the airfield.

You will see in the letter that the trustees mention the use of the parkland for modelling events. We have thoroughly investigated all the locations proposed to us on the parkland, and it is our opinion that these areas are unsuitable for the majority of our model aircraft disciplines for both practical and legal reasons. Therefore, we do not feel that relocating the model aircraft disciplines into the parkland is a viable option for us.

We will, however, continue to monitor the situation at Shuttleworth with regards to any future aeromodelling events.

Whilst we explore alternative options for 2026 for a full event, this year, we would recommend all our disciplines, apart from RC, attend the SAM 35 events at the National Centre (details can be found at <https://sam35.org.uk/sam35-event-calendar/>). These events at Buckminster also include swapmeets for all attendees, traders and car booters to get involved in. We are in discussions with SAM 35 to hopefully bring some of the Old Warden atmosphere to their events, especially at their June event this year. More details to follow.

The National Centre also has lots of other events throughout the year to suit all modelling disciplines, so please take a look at the calendar <https://nationalcentre.bmfa.org/>

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported aeromodelling events at Old Warden over the many decades and if July 2024 was the last model flying event at Old Warden, we are glad it was such a great weekend, enjoyed by so many of you.

Emma Chase on behalf of the ModelAir team.



ModelAir

22nd January 2025

Dear Ms. Chase,

I am writing on behalf of the Shuttleworth Trustees in response to your letter of the 19th December regarding the ModelAir event at Old Warden.

Firstly, I would like to apologise for the apparent delay in replying. The role of the Shuttleworth Trustees is to provide strategic and supervisory oversight of the Trust, with the day-to-day matters and site events handled by the full-time staff. The Trustees formally meet with the staff on a quarterly basis; the most recent such meeting was held on Monday this week. Your letter had been tabled as an agenda item in light of the points you raised.

A depressing reality of the passage of time is that more and more airfields are closing with the land and buildings redeployed for other purposes. This is increasing the pressure on those runways which remain available to General Aviation. Old Warden is no exception to this trend, so we have to think very hard about any proposed activity which entails denying the runway to GA operators. As a general rule, we will now only close the runway for activities which are either in direct fulfilment of our charitable objectives or are of sufficiently wide interest as to encourage new demographics to visit the site and learn about Shuttleworth and what we do.

I understand how unwelcome it has been to hear that Shuttleworth can no longer host the ModelAir event in its traditional format but, having listened carefully to the issues and reviewed the thinking and work done by the management team, I have to report that the Trustees agreed with their conclusions. They were not taken lightly, and indeed there was a degree of sadness that circumstances dictate that such trade-offs now have to be made.

With that said, we would like to continue supporting modelling (in all its guises) in a manner which works around the runway demands and attracts the widest possible swathe of the public. We therefore intend to host an annual event to which modellers of all disciplines will be invited. This will utilise the parkland and will be laid out in a manner which does not require runway closure.

We have trialled this format and it received very good feedback from both participants and the attending public. If you feel that you would like to take part in such an event, please discuss the matter with Marc Boulton.

While Shuttleworth can no longer host the ModelAir event in its traditional format, we very much hope that your members will want to participate in this new-format event. While it would not be exclusive to ModelAir, it will be a meeting of like-minded people undertaking their chosen pastimes in front of the public. You would be most welcome.

With kind regards

Tim Routsis
Chairman of the Shuttleworth Trustees