

Limerick Flying Club

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are we?

Limerick Flying Club (LFC) is a not-for-profit flying club based at Coonagh Airfield, Limerick. We have in excess of one hundred members who basically “fly for fun” and, in so doing, work as a team in helping to run the club and our home airfield. Members are expected to participate in such “community” activities in the spirit of the club which helps us to save costs in its operation.

What do we do?

We have three main functions:

- We teach our student members how to fly and get to them to the point where they can obtain their Private Pilot Licence (Aeroplane) (PPL(A));
- We provide a social and professional atmosphere where our members who already hold a licence can pursue their hobby and maintain their flying skills on an ongoing basis; and
- Introduce to flying would-be pilots or those who wish to experience flight in a light aircraft through our “Experience Flights” vouchers.

What are the operating hours?

Because the club is run and operated by the membership on a voluntary basis, we regret we cannot maintain a seven day a week presence at Coonagh. This includes the covering of phones. We have a voice mail system in use which is checked regularly. We also use email and Facebook Messenger.

Most flight training and voucher flights take place on Saturdays and Sundays between 11.00 and 17.00 with extended hours up to 18.00 during the period May to September. Some flight training can take place on weekdays and summer evenings by strict prior arrangement with your flight instructor.

Club members who hold a Private Pilot’s Licence or higher rating may fly seven days a week subject to weather and aircraft availability

Who can fly our club aircraft either by way of Introductory Flight Experience or as a member?

The aircraft we operate are in the Light Sports category. There is a maximum load the aircraft can operate with in terms of the pilots and fuel on board. This requires careful juggling under a procedure called Weight and Balance. Consequently, there are limitations on both weight and height of those who can fly in these aircraft. As a rule of thumb persons weighing more than 90kg are regarded as too heavy to fly in the aircraft. Again, because of the height of the canopy persons taller than about 6 feet 3 or 4 inches would find the cockpit as restrictive and uncomfortable in terms of their height.

From time to time, we find that we must decline people the opportunity to fly because their physique exceeds these limits imposed by the manufacturer of the aircraft so we apologise profusely in advance.

What do “Introductory / Experience Flight” vouchers cost?

One can buy a maximum of two vouchers at a cost of €160 each.

Under new laws in 2019 pertaining to the validity of vouchers they are valid for a maximum of five years.

Most initial introductory flights are operated by a cohort of experienced members holding Private Pilots Licences who have been approved to conduct these flights. They are non-instructional. A second flight will be with a Flight Instructor and will involve an introduction to more formal flight instruction. If you have had a previous experience flight then you may request your flight be with an instructor.

Please note weight and height limitations mentioned in the previous section.

Are there forms to be signed?

The vouchers include the cost of Temporary Membership in respect of which a **Temporary Membership** form must be completed before the flight. These can be downloaded from our website.

What does Club membership cost?

For flying members, we have two main categories of membership:

- Full membership costs €360 per annum with a discount of €30 if paid in full before 28th February; or
- Temporary Membership which is included in the cost of an Introductory Flight Voucher.

New members joining after 1st March pay a pro-rata amount based on €360 until the year end.

Can one spread membership costs?

Yes – we have a facility where this can be paid by a monthly standing order of €30 subject to a minimum of twelve payments.

What does it cost to get a PPL(A)?

There are several costs which one must budget for including:

- Membership of Limerick Flying Club - €360 per year as mentioned previously;
- Cost of flight training - €170 per flight hour (paid on an hourly basis or part thereof). Total will be about €9,350 based on current pricing with an estimate of 55 flight hours to meet basic requirements; and
- Ancillary costs to include flight medical, ground school, books and accessories, exams, and flight test fees – a fair estimate is approximately €2,100 including subs.

Over two years we suggest a budget of €12,000. We can provide a breakdown on request.

What age must one be to join the club?

The minimum age to join LFC is sixteen. Student Pilots may not fly solo until their sixteenth birthday. The minimum age to hold a PPL(A) is seventeen.

How does one become a member?

To become a full member, you must complete a simple application form, the information from which is protected by GDPR. The form requires your full name, address, phone, email, date of birth, weight, and height. If you have previous flight experience or already hold a Licence there is a provision to include such information. If under the age of eighteen, the form must be signed by a parent or guardian who must always be at the airfield when such members are flying.

Are we regulated?

Yes - all our activities including flight training, flight operations, safety and standards, aircraft maintenance, Experience Flights and Airfield Licence and Operation are regulated by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) under the auspices of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

Is there anything we do not do?

We do not do:

- Commercial flights or similar operations;
- Commercial flight training for more advanced licences and qualifications;
- Aircraft rental to non-members; or
- Flights for walk-in customers. It is essential to have pre-purchased a voucher and pre-booked.

Who runs the club?

The club operates through a company Limerick Flying Club (Coonagh) Company Limited by Guarantee. The committee members for the time being, act as directors (without remuneration) of the company and in effect the flying club.

As already mentioned, the committee is supported by groups of club members who give freely of their time and assist in maintaining the airfield, club house and in running flight operations by acting as Duty Pilots based on duty rosters (a half day once every four weeks).

Ultimate control for the operation of the club and liaison with the regulatory authorities is with our Chief Flying Instructor who is assisted by several other flight instructors. They, like the committee, help run the club and participate in what is essentially their hobby or past-time which is “flying for fun”!

How does one get a PPL(A)?

There is a prescribed training process which includes:

- Passing a Flight Medical with an IAA appointed General Practitioner (Aero-Medical Examiner). This is required before flying solo;
- Complete an English Language Proficiency test – also required before solo flight
- Accumulating a minimum of forty-five hours of flying of which a minimum of ten hours is flying the aircraft solo (without a flight instructor). However, expect 50 to 60 hours as an average;
- Passing Theoretical Knowledge exams in a series of nine computer- based exams spread over six hours. The exams are held in Dublin and can be taken in stages. Theoretical Knowledge is delivered through Ground School training;
- Included in the flight training are “cross-country flights” which are to different airfields around Ireland again both with and without an instructor; and
- A flight test with an EASA / IAA certificated Flight Examiner.

What sort of exams are there?

Ground school and subsequent exams includes nine subjects being Principles of Flight, Aircraft General Knowledge, Meteorology, Human Performance & Limitations, Flight Performance and Planning, Operational Procedures, Communications, Navigation and Air Law. You do not have to be a math’s genius but good basic numerical skills will not go astray. Since 2020 we deliver some these using Zoom. There is also in person training conducted at Coonagh as part of the ground school.

How long does it take to get a PPL(A)?

Because Limerick Flying Club is not a seven day a week operation and operates as a not-for profit club run exclusively by volunteers, the process of getting a PPL(A) can be a time-consuming commitment. We suggest that one should allow up to two years. Taking a longer time-frame for training, the flight hours flown can exceed fifty or more hours. This depends on personal progress.

Unfortunately delays or cancellations do arise. That said, throughout we endeavour to minimise disruptions to flight and training operations.

For example, opportunities to fly and take lessons are dependent on several factors including:

- Suitable weather that is comfortable, legal, and safe;
- Aircraft is fully serviceable - we unfortunately have the odd technical issue from time to time just like a car or any piece of equipment. Our aircraft are subject to regular and annual checks by EASA licensed aircraft engineers which can lead to down time;
- Availability of flight instructors who are all volunteers with day jobs and personal commitments;
- Your own cash flow and budget constraints; and
- Personal time available to complete the process

Some members do, on occasion, go abroad to complete the training in the event they need the PPL(A) as a stepping stone to a full-time career in aviation. We have many past and current members who now fly for airlines in Ireland, the UK and elsewhere around the world.

I may have a medical condition – what do I do?

If you have a pre-existing medical condition which you feel may act as an impediment, we recommend you take a Flight Medical before you commence flight training. We can supply names of Aero-Medical Examiners based in your home area. There is one such AME in Limerick City and another in Shannon. They have had special additional training for assessing the fitness of would-be pilots.

I wear glasses or contacts lenses – is this a problem?

Wearing corrective lenses does not mean you cannot fly or hold a PPL(A). Being colour blind is not an impediment either. It depends on the severity of the condition. Again, a visit to the AME will establish the correct situation.

How do I pay for flight lessons?

You have the option to pre-pay some of your flights or pay-as-you-go after each flight. We accept VISA/Mastercard debit and credit cards, cheques, or cash. If pre-paying you can do so by EFT or set-up a standing order. We will do a regular reconciliation of your flying account to help you keep track of costs.

What sort of aircraft are used?

The club owns and operates three Italian-built Tecnam P2002JF two-seater training aircraft. They are Light Sport Aircraft and use engines made by ROTAX in Austria.

There are additional aircraft based at Coonagh which belong to individuals or groups of members. They are not used for flight training by the club. However, they add to the busy airfield and club atmosphere.

How to get started?

We suggest that potential members and students take an introductory flight lasting about 35 minutes with one of our flight instructors or designated Private Pilots. These can be bought in person at Coonagh Airfield or else online through our website www.limerickflyingclub.com. We have a PayPal facility.

What happens next?

If, having enjoyed the introductory flight experience, you decide flying is for you, then you should complete the application form for full membership. Once you have paid your subscription and your application is approved by the committee you will be given a personal log-on to our on-line flight booking system called GoBoKo. This is how you will book your training flights.

Some of the additional outlay to be incurred is a personal headset, flight training manual and a pilot's logbook in which to record all your flights. Allow €200 for the initial outlay.

After that you can commence flight training and in time Ground School with a view to getting your Private Pilot's Licence (Aeroplane). Ground School because of COVID-19 has mainly moved to an online platform with effect from October 2020. Some in person ground training at Coonagh is also necessary.

Where do I get more information?

We have several sources of information including our website (www.limerickflyingclub.com) and Facebook (Limerick Flying Club).

The telephone number at the flying club is 061-326600. If there is no reply leave a voice mail or send a message using Facebook Messenger. You can also email us at info@limerickflyingclub.com

Equally you are welcome to call to Coonagh Airfield on any weekend and have chat with one of our flight instructors or one of the Duty Pilots. We look forward to meeting you and helping you achieve your goals to become a pilot.

This document has been updated on 1st January 2024