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Safe Landings At Windy Knoll - Nigel Page

The Windy Knoll landing field is big but many pilots still have difficulties landing there. Let's look at the hazards:

The Road

We usually have to fly across the road to land and there have been a number of incidents of pilots crashing on or near the road. Some claim to have hit sink near the road, but sink is sometimes a fact of life so we need to allow for it. Being low over the road may also distract motorists.

Always cross the road with plenty of height.

If we do not have enough height to cross the road easily we can land on the north side of the road. Like the landing field itself the ground is a bit rough and slopes a little, but is OK if we are reasonably careful.

If you are not sure of clearing the road with plenty of height then land on the north side of the road.

Lumps And Bumps

The hillock in the middle of Windy Knoll has a disused quarry cut into it and I suspect the bumps on the field are spoil heaps. These bumps are quite big and can do some damage to a pilot. In a strong wind they may not seem much of a problem because our ground speed will be low, but can be nasty if we have difficulty deflating our glider or are dragged. In light winds we could find ourselves landing fast across bumpy ground.

The best landing is in the flatter areas of the field.

De-rigging

Pilots usually de-rig in the area by the path near the gate so it is preferable not to land there. Best practice is to land away from that area and carry our glider there to de-rig. This also helps to keep the best landing areas clear for others to land.

Land away from the road and the gate then carry your glider to the de-rig area.

Keeping the landing areas clear is especially important if there are hang-giders about. They need more space to land than paragliders so we need to keep an eye out for them.

Keep a lookout for other pilots landing while you are carrying your glider to the de-rig area.

Ground Handling Practice

Windy Knoll is a good place to practice ground handling but we have to remember that it is a landing field. We need to make sure good areas are left for landing aircraft and keep a lookout for pilots wanting to land.

When ground handling keep plenty of space clear for others to land. Keep a good lookout and deflate your wing if someone is landing.

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