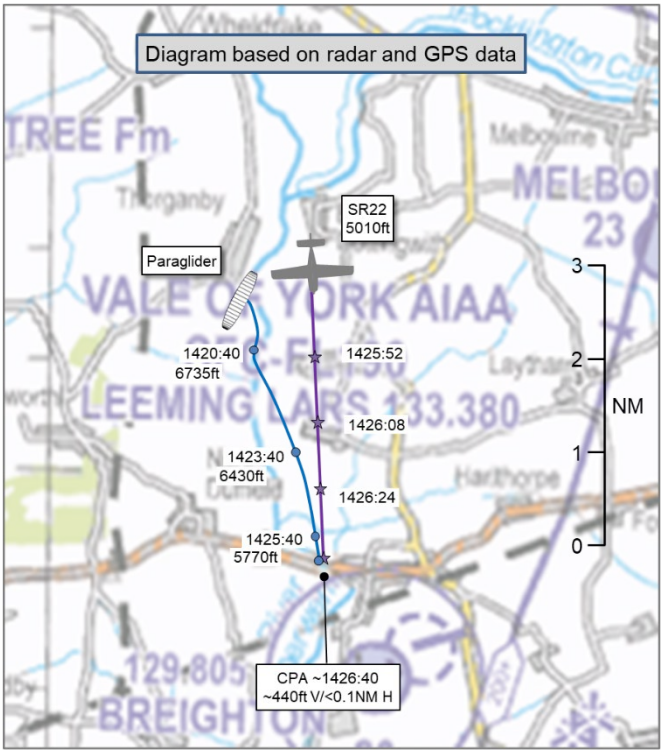
AIRPROX REPORT No 2025097

Date: 23 May 2025 Time: ~1427Z Position: 5349N 00055W Location: Bubwith

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Paraglider	SR22
Operator	Civ Hang	Civ FW
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	None	Unknown
Provider	N/A	Unknown
Altitude/FL	~5450ft	5010ft
Transponder	Not fitted	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	Lime green	Silver
Lighting	None	Nav, strobes
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	6700ft	FL050
Altimeter	NK	SPS (1013hPa)
Heading	170°	*'south'*
Speed	20kt	175kt
ACAS/TAS	FLARM	TAS
Alert	None	None
Separation at CPA		
Reported	150ft V/0NM H	2-300ft V/50m H
Recorded	~440ft V/<0.1NM H	



THE PARAGLIDER PILOT reports that they had been operating in excellent visibility and well below cloud. They had been on a straight line glide when a light-aircraft quickly passed close, directly below them. It had been difficult to judge separation by eye, but they had estimated it to have been only 100-200ft. When on a straight glide paraglider pilots have very limited vision behind and below. The relative speed had been high. There was no indication from the light-aircraft that they had seen the paraglider (e.g. a wing wobble), they just kept flying their straight line. The paraglider pilot notes that their aircraft is a highly visible bright lime green colour.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

THE SR22 PILOT reports that they were flying on autopilot in good visibility. The pilot believes that they were in receipt of a Traffic Service from either Humberside or East Midlands Radar at FL50 but it is possible, depending on the exact position, that they had been between and receiving a Basic Service. Either way, there had been no warning from either ATC or the aircraft TAS. Suddenly, and almost out of nowhere, the pilot had seen the paraglider above and to their left. [They noted that] it is difficult to be exact, but estimate it was about 200-300ft above and about maybe 50yd to the left. By the time they had seen it there was no time to take any avoiding action as they knew there was not going to be a collision. It [had] literally appeared and disappeared in the blink of an eye. The pilot reports that they were actually keeping a lookout and commented to each other how difficult it was to see it against what was a fairly clear sky with good visibility. They had been surprised that it was that high. At the end of the day, they state that they just didn't see it until very late. […]. Even after passing it, the pilots could no longer see it. They had had had no warning from ATC or from their TAS. They had both been keeping a lookout, visibility was good and yet neither of them saw it until it was very close. It was as if it appeared and then disappeared out of nowhere. At one point they had even asked themselves if they had imagined it.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE HUMBERSIDE DEPUTY ATC MANAGER reports that the UK Airprox Board first notified Humberside of their potential involvement of this incident after a protracted period identifying the second aircraft in this event and, unfortunately, as it had occurred a few months [previously] they [report that] they no longer hold records relating to that date and are therefore unable to carry out an investigation. There are no filed reports in their system for an Airprox [at that time] and, unfortunately, ATC has no recollection of this event having occurred.

Factual Background

The weather at Humberside Airport was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGNJ 231420Z 07013KT 9999 FEW048 16/08 Q1017=
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Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

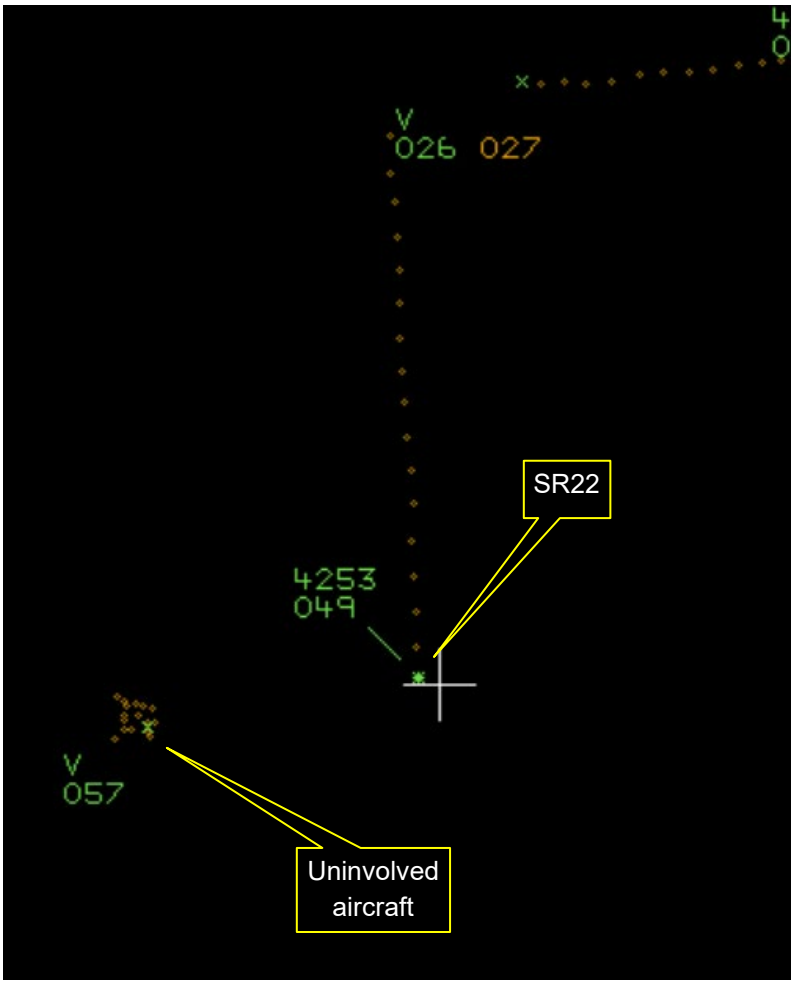


Figure 1: At CPA (1426:40). Paraglider did not display on radar; SR22 at FL049 (5010ft Alt). White cross marks the position of the reported CPA.

Figure 2: Pilot-provided IGC file for the paraglider at CPA (1426:40) – 5443ft (GPS)

Figure 3: Open source image (via MLAT) at CPA (1426:40). The SR22 shown at 4900ft (SPS) which equates to 5010ft AMSL and travelling at 164kt

The paraglider did not display on radar. The diagram at page 1 was constructed using available GPS and radar data with appropriate pressure adjustments made to enable a comparison between the 2 aircraft at CPA.

The paraglider and SR22 pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard.[1] If the incident geometry is considered as overtaking then the paraglider pilot had right of way and the SR22 pilot was required to keep out of the way of the other aircraft by altering course to the right.[2]

Comments

AOPA

This Airprox shows that, in Class G airspace, expect the unexpected. Until the DfT decides on a common standard of Electronic conspicuity, the risk of a mid-air collision is not mitigated by this equipment and effective lookout is the major barrier.

BHPA

The BHPA is relieved that this Airprox did not have a more serious outcome as it seems [the pilots of] both aircraft only visually acquired each other at the last moment and a collision was avoided more by luck than anything else. Once again, we see that the paraglider pilot had been operating an EC device but its transmission was not being received by the SR22. Also of note are the SR22 pilot's comments regarding how difficult it was to see the paraglider against the sky. This is something we are acutely aware of and which makes our aircraft particularly vulnerable in an Airprox situation.

Paraglider pilots rarely, if ever, carry/use air-band radios or transponders and the aircraft don't show up as primary returns on ATC radar. The only EC available to us are expensive devices which, at the moment, are 'visible' by aircraft carrying similar devices such as sailplanes. Consequently, Airprox reports between paragliders and sailplanes are quite rare despite the fact that both aircraft types usually fly in large groups and in close proximity in thermic lift.

Of further note is the SR22 pilot's comment about being surprised to find a paraglider at >5000ft altitude. We would like to remind all pilots that they may encounter paraglider pilots right up to cloudbase and, if it's a 'blue day' with no visible cumulus cloud, a soaring paraglider pilot might be at whatever altitude the thermal stops rising, which could be substantially high.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a paraglider and an SR22 flew into proximity at Bubwith at approximately 1427Z on Friday 23rd of May 2025. The paraglider pilot was operating under VFR in VMC and not in receipt of a Flight Information Service, and the SR22 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC, their type of FIS could not be determined.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, radar photographs/video recordings, GPS track data and confirmation from the air traffic unit approached. Relevant contributory factors mentioned during the Board's discussions are highlighted within the text in bold, with the numbers referring to the Contributory Factors table displayed in Part C.

The Board firstly discussed the actions of the paraglider pilot, noting that they had been operating in good weather conditions within Class G airspace and had equipped with an electronic conspicuity (EC) unit common to this aircraft type, whilst recognising that it had limited interoperability with the bulk of GA operators. Members understood that this pilot, like most within the paraglider community, does not carry or use air-band radios and this does restrict their ability to build situational awareness of other traffic around them. The Board agreed that, in this event, as their EC had been unable to receive electronic emissions from the SR22 (**CF2**), it had led to a lack of situational awareness of that aircraft's

[1] (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.
[2] (UK) SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(3) Overtaking.

proximity (**CF1**). As the SR22 had approached from behind, the paraglider pilot reported that they had seen the SR22 only as it had passed immediately below them, and members deemed this to have been an effective non-sighting (**CF3**).

Moving to the actions of the SR22 pilot, members expressed some disappointment that it had not been possible to determine the status of any Air Traffic Service that the pilot may have been engaged with, but understood that tracing difficulties had led to an unmanageable time gap for Humberside to have overcome. The Board did wish to reinforce to all pilots that, where possible, an active Air Traffic Service can significantly aid situational awareness, although in this case the paraglider would likely have remained undetectable to any radar unit. The Board noted that the SR22 had been equipped with a TAS which, in this event, had been unable to receive any electronic emissions from the paraglider (**CF2**). That, together with the paraglider's relative invisibility to radar, had meant that the SR22 pilot had not had any situational awareness of its presence regardless of the service they might have been in receipt of (**CF1**). The SR22 pilot reported that they had visually acquired the paraglider only as it had appeared in their high 2 o'clock position and had been too close to initiate any avoiding action, which the Board deemed to have been an effective non-sighting (**CF3**).

In reviewing the contribution from the Air Traffic Services perspective, the Board noted that the time elapsed between the event and identification of the SR22 as aircraft 2 had mean that there had been little chance of a comprehensive report from the Air Traffic Unit involved. This had been further complicated by the uncertainty expressed by the SR22 pilot in their recollection of the event due to the same elapsed time issue.

Concluding their discussion, members turned their attention to the determination of the risk of collision. They noted that the neither pilot had SA and both had achieved sight of the other only at the last moment, that safety margins had been reduced much below the norm and the Board was in agreement that there had been a risk of collision (**CF4**), assigning a Risk Category B to this event.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2025097			
CF	**Factor**	**Description**	**ECCAIRS Amplification**	**UKAB Amplification**
	Flight Elements			
	• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action			
1	Contextual	• Situational Awareness and Sensory Events	Events involving a flight crew's awareness and perception of situations	Pilot had no, late, inaccurate or only generic, Situational Awareness
	• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance			
2	Technical	• ACAS/TCAS System Failure	An event involving the system which provides information to determine aircraft position and is primarily independent of ground installations	Incompatible CWS equipment
	• See and Avoid			
3	Human Factors	• Monitoring of Other Aircraft	Events involving flight crew not fully monitoring another aircraft	Non-sighting or effectively a non-sighting by one or both pilots
	• Outcome Events			
4	Contextual	• Near Airborne Collision with Aircraft	An event involving a near collision by an aircraft with an aircraft, balloon, dirigible or other piloted air vehicles	

Degree of Risk: B.

Safety Barrier Assessment[3]

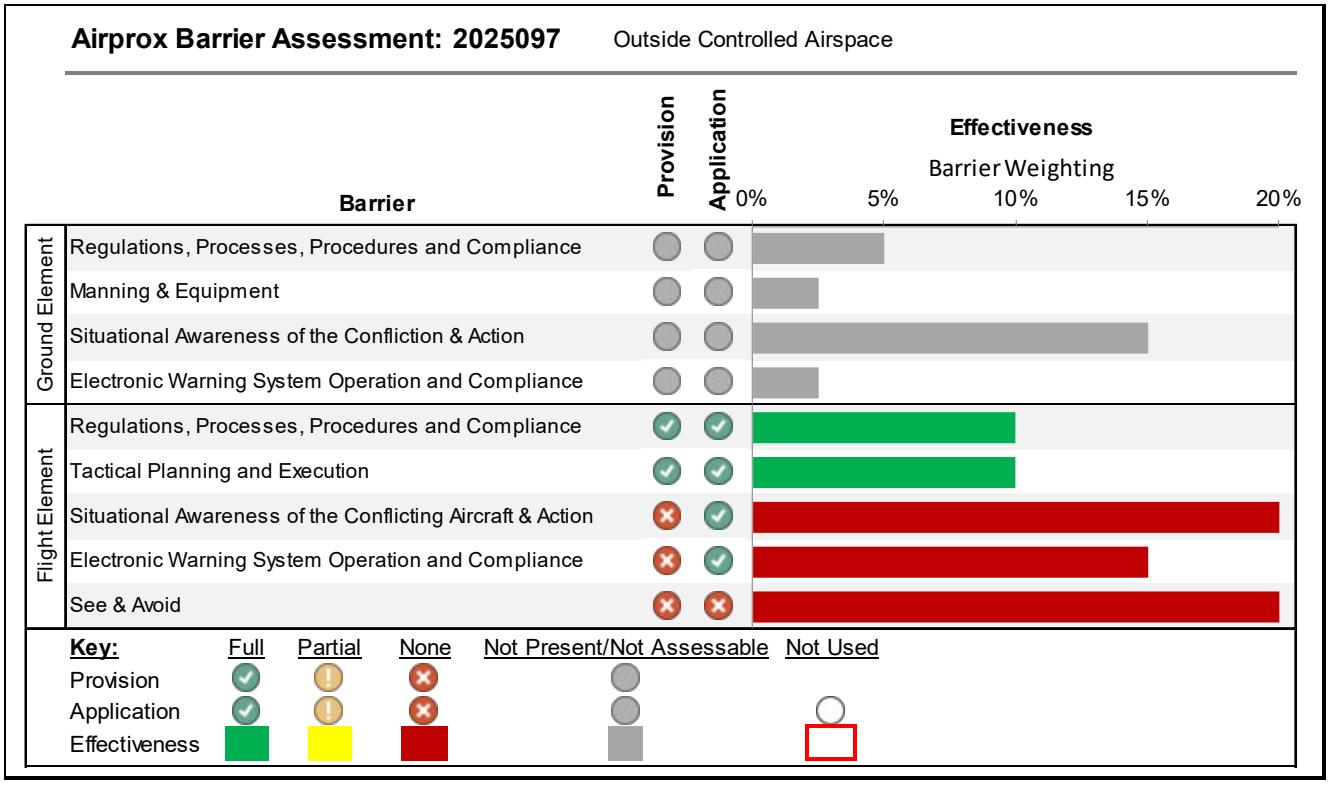
In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the key factors had been that:

Flight Elements:

Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because neither pilot had any situational awareness of the proximity of the other aircraft.

Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the electronic conspicuity equipment carried by both aircraft had been incompatible with that carried by the other.

See and Avoid were assessed as **ineffective** because both the SR22 pilot and the paraglider pilot had seen the other aircraft too late to initiate any avoiding action.



[3] The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the UKAB Website.