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NEW LEAFLET CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES POWERED PILOTS TO DISCOVER GLIDING

LEADING figures in the world of aviation are backing a national campaign to encourage more powered pilots to discover gliding.

Airline pilots, recreational flyers and young people pursuing a career in aviation and aerospace are among the high flyers encouraging more of us to glide in Britain.

Pete Stratten, Chief Executive Officer of the BGA, said: “The choice of flying powered or non-powered within General Aviation depends on what you hope to get out of your flying, and to a certain extent what you are willing to put into it. Gliding offers different challenges and opportunities from flying with power.

“Gliding is a great way of broadening handling skills and airmanship, and discovering the thrill and passion of pure flying and soaring flight. It’s incredibly satisfying to use

the freely available energy in the sky to fly cross-country or to simply climb in a thermal after launching."

Andrew Perkins, Chairman of the British Gliding Association and a B777 pilot, said: "Gliding is like a big family; you work together in all the activities that get you airborne. It hones all your flying skills and is a great way to learn about engineering, safety, lookout and airmanship."

As part of the literature and social media campaign, pilots share their love of gliding and the reasons why they enjoy it.

Former Royal Navy fighter jet pilot, Andrew Neofytou, now flies the B787 Dreamliner for a living but when he isn't working for a major airline he can be seen flying his glider from Lasham Gliding Society in Hampshire where he uses invisible currents of rising air known as 'lift' to soar vast distances of hundreds of kilometres and at average speeds of around 100mph – all without an engine!

Andrew explained: "Once you're hooked on gliding you will never have another day in your life where you don't look up and try to predict what the sky and environment around you is doing!"

Even commercial pilots with thousands of hours find that time in a glider improves their existing skills, knowledge and airmanship, as A380 pilot and Lakes Gliding Club member, Graham Sturgeon, added: "I'm an experienced pilot with around 15,000 hours and I've been flying for 35 years, but I learn something new about gliding every time I fly. It's also fun and rewarding!"

For more information, a copy of the latest gliding leaflets or to find a club near you, visit www.gliding.co.uk.

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Notes to editors:

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High flyers: Former Sea Harrier pilot, Andrew Neofytou, and Bidford Gliding Club's resident tug pilot, Ellie Youle, are among leading figures in the world of aviation backing a national campaign to encourage more of us to discover gliding in Britain.

Gliding - key facts

- The British Gliding Association (BGA) is the governing body for the sport of gliding in the UK and represents more than 80 gliding clubs stretching from the Highlands of Scotland to the south-west tip of Cornwall in England.

- A glider is an aircraft that doesn't need power to fly. Gliders fly by gliding gently down a slope causing air to flow over the wings, which generates a force that supports the weight of the glider. The steeper the slope, the faster the glider flies. By flying in rising air, for example a thermal, a glider can gain height.

- Using these invisible rising currents of air, known as 'lift', gliders can soar to great heights of up to 40,000ft, travel at average speeds of over 100mph and cover vast distances of more than 600 miles all within the UK.

- The longest distance ever flown in a glider in one flight is 3,008km, taking 15 hours and eight minutes at an average speed of almost 200km/h in South America.

- Gliding is an inclusive sport and enjoyed by people of all ages and physical abilities. Subject to completing the required training, you can fly a glider solo at age 14. There is no upper age limit with some glider pilots still flying in their early nineties.

- Gliding brings the science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) agenda to life to inspire the next generation of pilots, engineers and other aviation and aerospace professionals.