

Old Head Of Kinsale

N 51.620331° W 008.545441°



Old Head of Kinsale is a flying site with spectacular views, but it can be unforgiving, and is high-visibility due to the presence of the golf-course, tourism at the Lusitania Memorial and because it is in Cork Airport Airspace.

IHPA has designated the site as suitable for pilots with 50 or more hours flying experience.

The site requires a good strong-wind launch technique (similar to Rossbeigh and other coastal sites) and an awareness of the danger of Rotor due to the cliffs and the need for strong wind to create the correct flying conditions.

There is a safe informal launch site which is often covered with long grass but can be easily accessed from the road where a slight parking area can be found sufficient for three or four cars. There is a path over the hedge-bank and past the brambles near a pole which used to carry a sign. If people are already flying the launch will probably be easy to identify - on a first visit it is **STRONGLY** recommended to fly only after meeting other pilots at the site for a briefing.

The height of the seagulls soaring the cliffs will give a good indication of the height a paraglider will be able to reach. If the wind is directly onto the cliffs or slightly from the South the ideal wind will show in the waves, and there can be a few white horses on the waves (but not many.) Experience will tell you whether the wind is suitable, if you are not sure and there is no one flying it is probably best not to.

Before flying call Cork Air Traffic Control - this is VERY important because it is within airspace and is a busy helicopter and fixed-wing area. ATC is 021 432 9623 Inform them that paragliders will be flying at Old Head, **and remember to call them when the flying is finished!**



Landing:

Before flying the first time check the landing areas:

The field across the road from the launch area is ok to land in provided there are no cows or crop. The farmer has said we can use it, but obviously make sure gates are closed and cattle aren't disturbed.

To approach this field fly back either in a long curving approach from the south if high, or by drifting back doing figure of 8s from the west over the launch.

Don't turn back downwind and then aim to turn at the far end of the field - the wind blows strongly across the field and you may find it impossible to push back into wind. There is a line of power cables across the rear of the field - check where they are before flying. There are also sometimes electric fences set out in the field to contain the cattle.

If the wind is not too strong, landing at the take-off is possible, approach high and overshoot to go around again rather than trying to force a landing if you are too high - beware the brambles, it is better to go around a second time than spend half an hour trying to get your glider out of the brambles! Figure of 8 above the road to approach - the whole take-off area is lifty because of the slope of the ground, so if it is too difficult then get some extra height and land in the field behind instead.

When landing in strong wind using the C risers to collapse the wing will avoid being dragged. If necessary the brakes can be avoided while approaching, steering with the Cs and if necessary using speed bar until just above landing height in order to avoid being blown backwards. This can be done if landing in the fields behind the road if the wind is strong enough to cause the glider to be blown back with brake on. As soon as the feet are down collapse the wing with a strong pull down of the C

risers without touching the brakes - if the wind is strong enough to need this system then pilots planning to fly the site should be experienced in strong-wind flying...



Launching:

A good strong wind launch is needed. There is a safe (steep) slope area to land again in front of launch if there is a problem, but bringing up the wing to check lines etc will reduce the need to emergency land.

The air should be smooth as soon as the glider is flying in the lift band.

Flying:

The area in front of the launch, and in front of the cliffs is safe to fly. The lift-band should extend some distance out to sea. Flying along the cliffs to the south you will pass the wall and gatehouse which marks the private golf-course entrance. After this point there is no landing possible (the golf-course is VERY exclusive and private and does not allow visitors, especially from the skies!)

There is a clearly identifiable rock with a triangular top profile sticking up in front of the cliffs some way along the narrow neck of cliffs - this is 'Seagull Rock' and is the safe point at which to turn back. Check height, and when flying along the cliffs always aim to be above and in front of the clifftop. If you are not able to stay above and in front of the clifftop then turn back immediately and try to gain height - if you

can't stay up the site isn't working and you should land before you lose too much height.

If the wind has a South component the bowl at the North end of the narrow neck will work well.

If the wind is good staying well above the cliffs will be easy, in which case flying further South is possible - experience and knowledge of your wing and flying abilities will determine how far you can go, but always watch your height and groundspeed to be sure that return to a safe landing area is possible.

When the wind is good flying past Seagull Rock and on Southwards towards the point is possible - the photo below shows the view back towards the launch along the cliffs with Seagull Rock in the middle of the photo seen from the south. Note that the altitude will stay the same all the way along the cliffs provided the wind is straight on - if your altitude starts to drop then turn back!



Rotor Zones:

There are two main areas which produce rotor and can cause crashes or collapses: The area between the bowl by the neck of the cliffs and the 2 large steep bowls to the right (north) of launch. Flying behind either of these areas can be dangerous. The rotor area by the bowl near the tower where there is a level area next to the road, and small fields in front of the tower looks like a good place to land - it is not! Flying over this area with sufficient height is fine, but low down expect severe sink and possible turbulence combined with a strong wind. Landing backwards in turbulence among parked cars is not advised!

The rotor zone behind the bowls to the north of launch (right from launch) is behind the cliffs of the bowls. Flying across the bowl is safe, but flying behind while low

should be avoided. There is no need to fly in this area so keep clear and there will be no difficulty, but do not cross behind the closest bowl low - for example approaching a slope landing near launch. The rotor zone behind the second bowl is less likely to be flown into since it is not so close to the launch/landing area.

Both the cliff and bowl rotor zones should be avoided, they have both caused pilots to crash hard in the past.

