

Dronedesk case study

LAW ENFORCEMENT

How Dronedesk is helping **Dyfed-Powys Police** to keep logs and demonstrate compliance



9 min read

Alex is using Dronedesk to keep logs and demonstrate compliance for Dyfed-Powys Police

In 2021, Alex Jones and his colleague Nick Brookes could see the possibilities in drones. Dyfed-Powys Police was already receiving drone support from the local fire service where available. But Alex and Nick saw an opportunity to better serve the community if Dyfed-Powys Police had its own drone provision.

But to do that, they needed a way to safely plan flights, manage their pilots and drones, and ensure regulatory compliance.

All of which they found in Dronedesk.

How does Dyfed-Powys Police use drones?

Dyfed-Powys Police's beginnings with drones began with requesting support from the local fire service, which had its own drone provision. But Alex Jones, who has been an officer with Dyfed-Powys Police for 18 years and a drone operator for almost a decade, saw the benefits of having a dedicated drone provision for the force.

So, in 2021, he and Nick put together a project plan and use case for adding drone capabilities to the force. They secured authorisation to run a pilot scheme, which ended up with him overseeing 10 pilots and two drones.

Dyfed-Powys Police uses those drones for two purposes: spontaneous and pre-planned flights. Spontaneous flights often include active crime, from searching for suspects to streaming aerial footage to ground teams. It can also involve live incidents,

such as traffic collisions, and searching for potential victims or casualties. Using a drone is often a more cost-effective way to fulfil the force's needs, as well as helping them do a thorough job.



"Before the drones, we might request a dog unit to come and search the area, for example, or potentially request a helicopter. But a helicopter is a very expensive asset, so it probably wouldn't come and service those requests unless we had confirmed casualties. Whereas a drone can be quicker and more cost effective and can be used to give peace of mind to everybody involved."

Pre-planned flights can be used to capture evidence for courts, such as scenes, routes, and plans. They can also help secure birds-eye views for teams overseeing royal visits or visits of other important visitors.



"What we find is, commanders can form faster, more dynamic tactical plans when they can see what's going on via the drone. Before the drones, they had to deploy the scene or ask questions of officers on the scene. Now they can stay remote and still be in command."

With both spontaneous and pre-planned flights to manage, Alex and Nick needed a tool that could help both him and his team safely and quickly plan flights as well capture the data and manage the resources so as to stay compliant with regulations.

Finding Dronedesk



"We needed a structured process where we can record usage of the drone, record pilot flying times, record maintenance logs, record resource management like the batteries."

When it came time to figure out how to do all of that, Alex initially thought he might put together something himself. The force had recently migrated to Office 365, and he was confident that he could put together something in SharePoint that could be used to input the necessary data.

But it would have been quite time-consuming and there were concerns about how well it would have worked.



"I'd looked at some systems but they were pretty expensive. And we're a public organisation. It is taxpayers' money. So we've got to look at best value. And then we were shown the emergency services version of Dronedesk."



Our founder, Dorian, has seen just how complicated these DIY platforms can get. When he was gaining his own accreditations, he was astounded by the sheer number of tools, spreadsheets, and documents needed to plan even a single flight.

He'd also seen that some attempts to replace this complicated approach had resulted in some services that were pretty solid... but came with a pretty price tag too!

So Dorian built Dronedesk, a one-stop-shop for drone operators that doesn't break the bank. And Alex found that Dronedesk contains everything he needed for flight planning and risk assessments, but also much more: all the resource management he needed for drones, batteries, pilots, licences, accreditations and insurance too. Alex can monitor it all from Dronedesk.



"It was very intuitive. Our pilots can plan for a flight or dynamically put the flight on. And we know they've gone through a structured process that makes sure that flight has been done safely. I could see how it did everything we wanted to do and more."

Supporting better compliance

And with all of the data in one place for flights, pilot hours, drone maintenance schedules, details of insurance and licences, it'll be easy for Alex to demonstrate regulatory compliance whether he's facing an audit from another force or whether the CAA has come a-calling.



"We've got to have the confidence of the public that we're doing it properly. We've got to comply with CAA regulation just as much as anyone has to. And I am quite comfortable that if and when we are audited that Dronedesk will be able to provide the evidence of everything we've done with our drone operations. I know with the records we're keeping with Dronedesk, we're sitting pretty."

That ability to incorporate and export data extends to the day-to-day work as well. Alex has set up Dronedesk to automatically import flight data from the drones, for example, and frequently exports data for internal presentations or analysis. All of which saves significant time for Alex, his team, and the rest of Dyfed-Powys Police, which is time they can better use to serve the local community.



"We bear in mind we are a public organisation. It is taxpayers' money. But we couldn't get a system that's got all those features and more without significant

expense being spent."

But perhaps more important than what Dronedesk does was what Dronedesk could do.

We're always listening to our customers and implementing the features they need to do what they do. And, because Dorian's door is always open (metaphorically; it gets chilly otherwise), Dronedesk can quickly go from great to being exactly what you need.

So when Alex found himself wishing for certain tweaks or features, he sent Dorian a message. Some of the things on Alex and Nick's wish list were terminology tweaks so Dronedesk was speaking the same lingo as his police officers. Others were larger asks, like automatically creating sequential task IDs rather than letting officers create their own IDs.

Dorian quickly implemented all of them.



"Dorian is always very receptive. He took on board those suggestions and implemented them. Now there isn't really anything I would change. "

Supporting the future

Since the early days of the pilot project, Alex has grown his team to 30 trained pilots with 12 drones of varying models. Alex is in no doubt that growing his team has been made easier by using Dronedesk.



"Dronedesk has definitely made it easier. It's quite scalable in that sense. Adding new pilots in is really easy and when those pilots move on to other forces it's easy to draw out their records and pass them on."

We're so pleased that we've been able to support Alex and Nick's work to introduce drones to Dyfed-Powys Police and help the force do more for their community. If you're working with the emergency services and need a better way to manage your drones, get in touch today to take Dronedesk for a free spin!



"Dronedesk is user friendly. It's intuitive. It has a flow. It just makes sense. It can be used on multiple platforms. It makes us more accountable. And the level of customer service just makes it too good to go somewhere else. Dorian has given us everything we wanted and more."

All quotes are from Alex Jones - Uncrewed Aerial Systems Safety Manager - Dyfed-Powys Police



Alex Jones [in](#)

Try Dronedesk FREE with a 90-day 100% money back guarantee that you'll save time with your flight planning.