

GACC NEWSLETTER

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Dear Members

[Airport developments](#)

Gatwick continues to operate substantially reduced numbers of flights. In October 2020 there were some 4,500 aircraft movements at the airport compared to over 24,000 in 2019. We expect activity levels to increase substantially over the Christmas period and then build up gradually as quarantine arrangements evolve and the vaccination programme is rolled out. The airport continues to operate using just its North terminal.

[How to Build Gatwick Back Better](#)

As we reported in our last newsletter, Gatwick's statutory Consultative Committee, GATCOM, has been considering what the Government's Build Back Better agenda should mean for Gatwick. The Chairman of GATCOM wrote to the Aviation Minister setting out a range of initiatives GATCOM as a whole would like him to consider. Because that letter did not fully represent GACC's views, we have also written to the minister and our letter is [here](#).

We made clear that Gatwick's future size should be consistent with the achievement of demanding CO₂ emissions and other environmental and noise targets. Our view is that, unless new technologies are deployed on a scale not currently foreseeable, the airport should not be permitted to re-grow to its previous size, let alone to implement its master plan growth proposals. By contrast, Gatwick continues to pursue a Build Back Bigger strategy, including through its proposal to seek permission to make routine use of its emergency runway.

[Green New Deal for Gatwick](#)

In parallel, a recent report by three organisations, the PCS trade union, Green New Deal UK and the Green House Think Tank shows how new jobs could be created in the Gatwick area for those now unemployed. Their analysis indicates that around 16,000 "green" jobs could be created around Gatwick if an ambitious job creation strategy was adopted. They calculate that the cost would be comparable to the amount of Air Passenger Duty that Gatwick air passengers might pay in 2021 - around £329 million - whilst both securing many more jobs than the aviation sector offers and reducing the region's dependence on Gatwick.

GACC welcomes and supports this innovative approach to building both local employment and a more diversified, resilient and greener economy. Here is a link to the [full report](#)

[New runways?](#)

There has been mixed news recently on the wider question of new UK runway capacity.

On 9 December the Climate Change Committee (the government's formal adviser on climate change issues) made a series of helpful recommendations on aviation including that "*There should be no net expansion of UK airport capacity unless the sector is on track to outperform its net emissions trajectory ...*". Effectively the CCC's view is that if one airport expands others must contract or close, at least until the industry can show it is on a clear path to net zero emissions.

Then on 17 December the Supreme Court overruled the Court of Appeals' previous decision that the government's Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS) was unlawful. Their decision reopens the door for Heathrow to apply for consent to develop a third runway.

What happens next is anyone's guess. Much will depend on how the government reacts to these developments. One option would be for it to review the ANPS in the light of the CCC's advice and the UK's new legal commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

GACC's view is that airport expansion at Gatwick or anywhere else should be off the agenda. GACC has also welcomed the CCC's advice that aviation emissions should be formally included within UK climate targets and that the government should introduce aviation demand reduction measures (such as carbon pricing, a frequent flier levy and fuel taxes).

Night flights

Gatwick has more night flights than any other designated airport in the UK, two and a half times as many as at Heathrow, and over 50 each night in the summer.

GACC has therefore joined with airport community campaign groups across the UK to call for a ban on night flights. On 10 November we collectively wrote to the Aviation Minister asking, amongst other things, for all night flights (other than for emergency and humanitarian purposes) to be banned at all UK airports and that the night period should be re-defined to mean an eight hour period, giving people around airports and under flight paths the opportunity to have a full night's sleep consistent with health guidelines. Our letter is on GACC's website [here](#).

The government has since published a consultation on the future of night flights, which you can see [here](#).

We will continue to campaign on this with other groups and will be in touch with suggestions on how to respond to the consultation in the New Year.

New GACC website

We have just launched GACC's new website, which you can find [here](#).

We hope you find it clear and informative. Please do let us now what you think. In particular if you have suggestions on the current content or if there's additional material you'd like to see please get in touch.

Joining GACC: please spread the word

Please encourage your friends, family and neighbours to join GACC and help protect the interests of communities around the airport and under flight paths. Information on how to join is on our website [here](#).

Since we started preparing this issue there have been some pretty dramatic changes in everyone's circumstances in the UK. We trust you all keep safe and well and we all look forward to a better and stronger New Year and onwards.

With many thanks for your support throughout 2020 we wish you the Very Best for what will be for many a difficult as well as different Christmas.

The GACC committee.

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