

# GACC NEWSLETTER

Number 133

April 2022

## **Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) Annual General Meeting**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2022**

**at 7pm**

**To be held at:**

**Stanhill Court Hotel, Stan hill, Charwood RH6 0EP**

**Guest Speaker:**

**Tim Johnson, Director, Aviation Environment Federation**

Dear Members

GACC's Annual General Meeting will take place on 16<sup>th</sup> May. In addition to the more formal AGM business and the Chairman's update on GACC's activities over the last year together with the challenges we face in the coming 12 months, we are delighted that Tim Johnson, Director at the Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) will be our guest speaker. Tim has very extensive aviation and environmental experience, representing the AEF on numerous national and international bodies and we are grateful that he will be this year's guest speaker. As always, members of the public are very welcome to attend what we're sure will be a highly informative event. We look forward to seeing you all on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Airspace Modernisation**

As indicated in our last newsletter, Gatwick's airspace modernisation project team recently held a series of workshops to present their initial thoughts re a "comprehensive" list of route options to key stakeholders, including GACC. Although the workshop and the presentation provided some useful insights into the project team's approach methodologies, it was abundantly clear that the options presented were far from comprehensive, having been driven by a narrow set of factors: total population overflown, number of people newly overflown and overflight of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In our view, there are many other criteria which must be fully considered and weighed against each other if a truly comprehensive list of flight path options is to be effectively captured. Helpfully, after the workshops, the airport's project team circulated a short questionnaire seeking feedback on their approach to date, the options set out during the workshop and any other considerations that they should be taking account of. GACC's response to the questionnaire can be read [here](#).

### **DCO Consultation not fit for purpose**

Members will recall that, in our last newsletter, we highlighted the highly misleading nature of Gatwick's DCO consultation, where out of date carbon values had been used, resulting in a very material understatement of the clean-up cost costs associated with the airport's expansion plans. GACC highlighted these very serious shortcomings to the airport's consultative committee GATCOM, requesting that our concerns be fully discussed at the Committee's April meeting and that the New Economics Foundation (NEF) be invited to present their report which, in addition to Gatwick's use of out-of-date carbon values, also highlighted several other significant omissions. It is therefore disappointing to have to report that, although the pre-application process itself is to be discussed at April's GATCOM, GACC's request for the NEF to have the opportunity to present their report, allowing the quality of the airport's DCO consultation process to be examined and its shortcomings exposed, has been denied. Nonetheless, GACC has brought our concerns to the attention of local Councils and trust that they will reflect the deficiencies of Gatwick's consultation process as they prepare and submit their individual Adequacy of Consultation representations to the Planning Inspectorate.

### **Noise Management Board**

Since the start of the year, a number of NMB Work Plan studies, including optimum joining points for night time arrival approaches (ILS JP), continuous climb on departures (CCO) and fair and equitable distribution of air traffic (FED) have concluded and presentations have been made to community groups. Whilst some useful information has been produced for national and local consideration, the studies were largely incomplete with no significant conclusions reached and little in the way of practical noise reduction applications for implementation at Gatwick. Particularly disappointing was the FED study which had originally committed to provide a much-needed definition and quantification of Fair and Equitable Distribution of air traffic at Gatwick. Unfortunately, the FED study failed to deliver on this commitment and we are now waiting for the airport to produce a revised plan to fully deliver on the agreed Work Plan outcome.

In recent months, there has also been a growing frustration amongst community noise groups at the way in which NMB meetings, reports and presentations have been coordinated. More often than not, we have been given little opportunity to study often complex, technical reports in advance and limited time has been allowed for discussion and scrutiny in meetings. Despite these challenges, GACC continues to hold the NMB to account, recently highlighting a material error in the ILS JP report which has now been corrected. However, in an attempt to address the core problem, GACC along with the majority of the other community noise groups, submitted a series of proposals to the Chairs of the NMB committees designed to improve NMB protocols and enhance community group engagement, thus creating a more effective NMB. Initial feedback from the NMB leadership has been somewhat muted, but we have circulated our proposals to the wider NMB Executive Board membership and now await their feedback.

### **Noise Envelopes at Gatwick**

An important part of the government's Aviation Policy Framework was the introduction of the concept of a noise envelope at airports planning significant growth. Noise envelopes are designed to provide affected communities with certainty about the proposed future noise impacts associated with airport development plans, whilst helping achieve a suitable balance between airport growth and noise reduction.

On this basis, the creation of a suitable noise envelope at Gatwick is perhaps the most significant noise management tool to be deployed at the airport for many years to come. As part of the airport's DCO consultation, the airport has proposed a noise envelope approach, but has done so, without the stakeholder engagement recommended by government (CAP1129) and has already chosen a single metric which, in our view, serves Gatwick's purpose rather than sharing benefits equally with communities.

Given these issues, we raised our concerns to both the NMB and GATCOM and we are pleased to report that as a result a noise envelope stakeholder engagement process will now be progressed under the auspices of the Noise Management Board. Naturally, we will be insisting that the engagement follows the government's CAP1129 guidance and that wherever possible Gatwick follows the examples set by Heathrow and Luton both of whom have already initiated a noise envelope development process.

### **Gatwick Operations**

Most of you will have noticed the increase in flights in recent weeks. Gatwick re-opened the South Terminal at the end of March in preparation for Easter demand. From mid March the number of flights increased from around 390 per day to high on 600 by 31<sup>st</sup> March. The forecasts from Gatwick itself are that there will be days in the summer months reaching 900 per day or more – pretty close to the 2019 levels. Of course with the overall increase in flights we are seeing night flights returning and despite efforts to obtain a voluntary reduction in night flights we've had no luck on that front so far.

Gatwick is also this summer undertaking a full re-surfacing of the main runway. Much of the work is undertaken at night with the result that many night flights are now re-scheduled onto the Emergency Runway. This of course means an increase in noise impact to those living north of the airport compounded by an increase in overall ground noise as a result of the work teams on site.

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### **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: <http://www.gacc.org.uk/contact-us.php>.

### **GACC contact details**

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