

## **HEATHROW BAA Faces Legal Challenge**

Residents' campaign groups NoTRAG and HACAN have teamed up with the local authorities in the 2M group, and national environmental groups Greenpeace, WWF and CPRE to mount a legal challenge against the Government's decision in January to give BAA permission to draw up detailed plans for a 3<sup>rd</sup> runway at Heathrow. If the courts allow the challenge, a full court hearing is expected to take place late this year or early next year. It will mean that the Government is forced to fight a court case, just months before the next General Election, knowing that all the other political parties have pledged to scrap plans to expand Heathrow. The key points of the challenge will be:

- That the UK risks breaching noise targets and the EU legal limits on air pollution;
- That the decision will seriously undermine the Government's efforts to meet its emissions target to tackle climate change;
- That the final plan the Government adopted was so different from the proposals it consulted on there should have been further consultation



### **Children Stage Rally at Parliament against Heathrow Expansion**

On 24th March hundreds of people, including dozens of children dressed up as endangered species, took part in a rally, organised by "WeCAN", opposite the Houses of Parliament. The rally was addressed by a number of high-profile speakers including Colin Challen MP and Zac Goldsmith. Amongst the children who took part were pupils from Heathrow Primary School which would be demolished if a new runway went ahead - who then went into Parliament to lobby their MPs. The children's rally was a moving reminder that

future generations will remember Gordon Brown and Geoff Hoon as the politicians who gave the go-ahead to a third runway in the full knowledge that Heathrow was a major contributor to climate change.

### **Flash mob held at St Pancras to praise Eurostar over air travel to Europe**

Campaigners against Heathrow expansion staged a Flash mob with a difference at the Eurostar terminal, with signs saying "Rail – Not Stupid" - tying in with the climate change film, The Age of Stupid, which was on general release around UK cinemas from 20th March and which featured cheap flying as undeniably in the "stupid" category.





Photo - Rick Pushinsky

## **Activists pledge to help Heathrow residents defend their homes**

30th March. Environmental activists from across the UK “adopted” Heathrow residents to support them in their fight against a third runway and prepare them to defend their homes in the event of BAA being given permission to build the runway. The activists, brought together through Plane Stupid, adopted 40 residents over tea and cakes in St Mary’s Church hall

Local residents are feeling very vulnerable with the threat of a third runway hanging over them, and were boosted by feeling "We are not alone". They were delighted about the scheme, and appreciate the prospect of support from the campaigners, with the increased chance of being able to "stay put".

## **STANSTED**

### **Second Runway Inquiry postponed – and airport to be sold off**

Stop Stansted Expansion’s (SSE) efforts to secure a postponement of the second runway Public Inquiry were rewarded last month when the Secretary of State for Communities, Hazel Blears, announced that its April start date would be deferred pending the outcome of the Competition Commission investigation into the BAA’s monopoly position.

A date for the inquiry will be announced by DCLG some time before the end of May. There will then be a minimum of 8 weeks between the announcement and the start of the inquiry. BAA has said it will not decide how it intends to respond to the Commission’s report before then.

SSE has long campaigned for a break up of BAA in the south east to eliminate the possibility of cross-subsidy from Gatwick and Heathrow facilitating the expansion of Stansted, and in the expectation that ending BAA’s monopoly would weaken its political influence over Government policy on airport expansion – a problem campaigners have had to contend with for many years. The decision by the Competition Commission is therefore an important milestone in SSE’s campaign and very welcome. Forcing BAA to sell Stansted throws a very large spanner into the works so far as the current plans for a second runway are concerned and the expectation is that the Public Inquiry will be shelved.

However, for the moment, the second runway Inquiry has only been postponed, not cancelled, and it is still possible that the Government will make a last ditch attempt to force it through while BAA is still in charge of Stansted and before the next General Election.

### **High Court ruling on the 35m decision: application to the Court of Appeal**

SSE has decided, on legal advice, to proceed with an application for leave to appeal the recent High Court decision on the 35m passenger decision on the single runway to get the clarification that was sought on the materiality of adverse economic effects, noise impacts and the exacerbation of climate change. While there was recognition in the case of the negative effect of Stansted’s growth for the balance of trade deficit, and that noise should be taken into account in the weighing of the pros and cons of expansion, the fact that the Government has not been asked to revisit its decision makes no sense at all. Meanwhile, reliance on a 1981 House of Lords ruling to justify exclusion of climate change from the impacts to be weighed against any ‘positives’ is wholly wrong.

### **Airspace change plans to be redesigned for new consultation**

SSE was delighted by the news in February that the plans put forward a year ago by NATS to change the airspace arrangements for the region have been scrapped. It had lobbied long and hard – through the

local and national political system and the media – and presented at more than 50 public meetings to highlight awareness of the plans, with advice on how to respond to the wholly unsatisfactory NATS consultation.

NATS now say that it is shelving its original plans for revising the airspace arrangements for the area north of the Thames spreading into East Anglia. It is going back to the drawing board to develop a new consultation which will be run during the second half of this year. Whether or not NATS fully takes on board the views of campaigners and the wider community remains to be seen. However, it is clear that the pressure from the public, special interest groups set up to fight the plans and parliamentarians has achieved its aim of a rethink. NATS should be under no illusions: the new consultation will be scrutinized just as hard and pressure applied where needed to ensure that next time round proper explanations for the proposals and meaningful information on the range of options considered are put forward. SSE and others will also be pressing for an explanation of the way assessments were carried out to determine the level of importance NATS attaches to environmental and community impacts as opposed to cost savings and efficiency gains for its airline shareholders.

*(from SSE)*



### **Campaigners succeed in kicking Leeds Bradford's expansion plans into the long grass**

16.4.2009 Plans to expand Leeds Bradford have been put on hold, thanks to a very effective campaign by FOE, Stop Climate Chaos, Leeds Tidal and quite a few more, at No Leeds Bradford Airport Expansion (NLBAE). <http://www.leedstidal.org/nolbaexpansion/about> If approved, the airport's plans would increase passenger capacity by 2012 from 2.9 million to 5 million a year - a 70% increase in 5 years. The airport could be emitting as much CO2 as the entire city of Leeds by 2050. Planning councillors unanimously agreed to defer their decision. They indicated broad support for the expansion, but criticised the airport's transport blueprint for failing to tackle key transport issues, including links from Leeds. Protesters gathered outside prior to the meeting at Leeds Civic Hall voiced fears local roads would become gridlocked despite efforts to encourage bus use. The plans will now be discussed again by councillors at a later date.

### **Birmingham Airport Solihull Council Approve Step in the Wrong Direction - 400 m runway extension**

5 April 2009. Despite overwhelming evidence contradicting the wisdom of extending the runway at Birmingham International Airport by 400 metres, Solihull Council has approved plans to do so.

Birmingham Friends of the Earth have spent over a year fighting plans to increase the capacity of the airport and enable bigger planes to take off - with the help of local residents and more than a thousand signed objections to the application. The runway extension is likely to lead to 37% more emissions by 2030, while we are aiming to decrease them by 80% by 2050. Granting permission for the runway extension bears no relation to sustainable development, particularly now Climate Change Bill requiring carbon emissions is the law.



There is a "Carbon Management Plan", but the lack of strength in it is very disappointing and this extension should not go ahead without better safeguards. In addition, due to the proposed changes, there will be larger, noisier aircraft with lower flights over residential

areas, resulting in an extra 8,100 people being exposed to significant daytime aircraft noise. Again some safeguards have been put in place with regards to night flights, but not enough to prevent the lives of more people being subject to noise pollution. The airport and business lobby built the case for the extension on the claim that it will bring in more foreign investment and is essential to the wealth and prospects of the area. Basing hopes for future wealth on the aviation industry at this time would be a huge gamble, considering that nobody knows what future oil prices will be in 2010, let alone in 2012, when the extension is due to be completed.

Airlines are currently going out of business as quickly as other sectors of the economy and there has been no independent survey showing the need for the envisaged increased air traffic. On the other hand, as the Stern report and recently published Green New Deal have shown, there is a great need for investment in new carbon neutral technologies, which could really kick start the economy of this area if encouraged sufficiently. The airport has considerably overestimated the economic benefits and underestimated the costs of this extension, so it is highly likely it will have no overall benefit to the area.

Birmingham Friends of the Earth and other local people who care about the future of this planet will continue to oppose plans for ever-increasing levels of CO2 to be built into the airport's plans.

<http://www.birminghamfoe.org.uk>

### **Farnborough - hoping to double the number of private jet flights**

Farnborough has been the home of British Aviation for 100 years. The aerodrome stages the world famous biannual air show. This heritage, and the local knowledge and skill base that has developed as a result, has led to many Aerospace Companies setting up shop in the area.

Under these circumstances one might have expected that a new dedicated Business Aviation airport at Farnborough would be welcomed by a clear majority of the local community. But it has not turned out that way, primarily because the Local Planning Authority failed to address the communities' concerns over incremental growth – the thin end of the wedge problems that are so common. These fears were confirmed when the airport operator, TAG, recently said that an application to double the number of movements will be submitted later this year, and that a further application within 5 to 10 years would be made if necessary to meet demand.

The current planning permission, granted in 2000, has a movement limit of 28,000 per annum, and two environmental constraints – noise and third party risk contours. At the time they were established, it was clear that the environmental constraints were not robust. The level of flying that the noise contour permits is twice as great as the airport infrastructure will allow, and the third party risk contours were established on the premise, wrongly, that the Department for Transport addresses third party risk by virtue of its Public Safety Zone policy (*see more below*). Campaigners will take the opportunity that a new planning application presents to argue for the introduction of meaningful, transparent and enforceable planning conditions that will make the key constraints bite, and also provide some certainty as to what the future might hold.

A consultation by the airport on its draft master plan recently ended. TAG wants to increase air traffic movements annually up to 50,000, and makes the usual claims about greatly increasing the number of local jobs and enhancing the local economy. However, of those who responded to the recent public consultations, around 90% were opposed to growth beyond the current level.

That figure might have been even higher if it had been known at the time that the average passenger load of private jets at Farnborough is just 2.7 passengers. Brandon O'Reilly, the chief executive of TAG Farnborough Airport, said the actual average figure could be even lower. (See [Farnborough private Jets carry 2.7 on average](#) 16h March 2009). Even those in the community who are not bothered by noise, or who have not suffered blight, have begun to question the benefits of a business that is so clearly at odds with the measures that have to be encouraged if the global warming challenge is to be faced.

*from Geoff Marks Farnborough Airport Residents Association*

## AirportWatch conference



The annual conference was held over a day and a half, at the end of March - and was a lively and stimulating event, as well as a tremendous networking opportunity. Around 60 people attended, including campaigners from as far away as Cornwall and Scotland. Sessions included discussing how to deal with pro-airport-expansion Councils and press, understanding flight path mapping, the threat of the use of biofuels by the aviation industry in future, and debate about airport economics and employment. Those attending found the weekend such a success that another may be planned before the end of the year.

## Third Party Risk - new briefing paper available

The land close to the end of an airport runway is a risky place to be. While Public Safety Zone (PSZ) planning policy, if properly applied, should prevent significant growth in the numbers of people at heightened risk of death or serious injury, PAZs do not address all of the possible risks.

Most Local Planning Authorities appear to believe that PSZ policy is all that is required to protect the public. However, some knowledge of Third Party Risk is also needed. The Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) has been pursuing the weaknesses of the planning system, with respect to Third Party Risk around airports, with Government departments. It is vital that around airports intending to expand, campaigners press local councils to address the dangers in their plan policies and when considering planning applications. In particular, a commitment to limiting risk from aircraft operations to tolerable levels should be included in policies for airport development. When considering proposals for high-occupancy land-uses such as schools, hospitals, shopping malls and sports stadia in the vicinity of airports, local planning authorities should ensure that the overall risk is kept within tolerable limits.

The topic of Third Party Risk in relation to airports, and the associated Public Safety Zones, has been puzzling campaigners for some time. Recently Roger Wood, working for the AEF, produced an easily understood short briefing paper. Roger is happy to help explain the principles and assist campaigners, and can be contacted at [info@ladacan.org](mailto:info@ladacan.org). The briefing can be found at: [http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/news/detail.php?art\\_id=3034](http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/news/detail.php?art_id=3034)

## London City Airport Jobs : False Hopes, Cruel Hoax Hits Eastenders

"Fight the Flights" (FTF) has been looking at the issue of airport jobs for over a year now. We've tried to access the airports job statistics which are required to be reported to Newham under the planning agreement. So far, London Borough of Newham have refused access, or ignored requests, but we have one letter from the airport boss to an MP which is possibly the best indicator of how many directly employed jobs there are at the airport. In the last planning application the airport claimed it had created 1,866 jobs, and claimed they would create 960 more if the council approved an increase of 50% more flights.



**In reality after over 20 years in operation London City Airport directly employs a total of 406 individuals on-site just 120 of them from the Borough of Newham.**

However the airport likes to present the job figures in a very different way. In the 10 years since the 1998 application job figure of 1,140, to the current claimed created job figure of 1,866, the airport boasts it has 'created' a total of 726 jobs - and that took 10 years. But clearly it directly employs far less than that.



## **CAA airport statistics for 2008 show first annual fall in passenger numbers for 17 years**

CAA figures for all of 2008 show UK airports handled 1.9% fewer passengers in 2008 compared with 2007. This is the first time annual passenger numbers have fallen since 1991, and only the 4th time since the end of World War Two.

Traffic declined most in the final quarter of the year, with 4 million fewer passengers handled from October to December 2008 than in the same months of 2007. UK airports handled 235 million passengers during 2008. At the London airports - Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City - the fall was 2% overall, with the largest decline in both absolute and percentage terms at Stansted (with a 1.4 million drop in passengers, representing a 6.0% decline).

At the regional airports, traffic contracted by 1.8% to 98 million passengers. In 2008, 25 million passengers took domestic flights. This represents a fall of 4.8% (1.2 million) on 2007.

### **CAA figures show passenger numbers falling in January, February and March**

Figures just out for March, comparing the month with March 2008, show there was a drop in air passengers across the UK of 13.1% - though perhaps 3% is due to Easter falling in March 2008 and in April 2009. Compared to the same months a year earlier, passenger numbers were down 14.8% in February, though there was a snowy period early in the month, down 8.3% in January and down 8% in December.

#### **% change in passenger numbers from the same month a year before**

	March 2009	Feb 2009	Jan 2009	Dec 2008	Nov 2008
Heathrow	-7.5	-9.5	-2.1	-2.3	-4.8
Gatwick	-17.7	-14.4	-10.8	-13.8	-13.5
Stansted	-15.9	-16.2	-11.2	-13.0	-13.2
Luton	-19.8	-23.8	-11	-9	-8.1
Manchester	-18	-16.8	-10.2	-10	-8.2
Birmingham	-6.9	-6.8	-1.2	+3.3%	+3%
Edinburgh	-3.6	-11.8	-5.8	-2.5	-7.8

Figures from the CAA  
[www.caa.co.uk/airportstatistics](http://www.caa.co.uk/airportstatistics)  
 and  
[www.caa.co.uk/provisionalairports](http://www.caa.co.uk/provisionalairports)  
 and  
 BAA press releases  
[www.baa.com](http://www.baa.com) (Media Centre)

### **Tacky, Eurovision-fun !! Join in the Euroflashmob on 16th May**

There will be a Euro Flash Mob on the morning of the Eurovision Song Contest – May 16th, 12 noon, at Departures at Heathrow Terminal One. And, yes, we will be singing the dreadful songs - to show musical solidarity with campaigners opposing airport expansion across Europe. And they'll be doing the same in Amsterdam, Paris, Frankfurt, Brussels and Dublin at the same time. More details soon at [www.euroflashmob.eu](http://www.euroflashmob.eu)

### **And now for something to get you REALLY irritated ..... or worse Tesco's 'flights for lights' promotion – every little hurts**



Spotted by Guardian Ethical Living Online blog by Ed Gillespie. Tesco offers air miles for points for most of its supermarket's products, and so, with classic consumerist green-washed logic, you can get double air miles on low-energy light bulbs. The more bulbs you buy, the more you can fly. It's like giving away a pack of Benson and Hedges with every Nicorette patch .....

## Helicopters group to re-convene

A year and a half ago, the Helicopter Noise Coalition came into being, with the aim of being a forum for everyone in the UK whose lives are adversely affected by helicopters noise. The group's website is at [www.helicopter-noise.org.uk](http://www.helicopter-noise.org.uk) Unfortunately, due to ill-health, the group has not been active recently. However, the AEF are hoping to get the group moving forward, and are looking both for people interested in helicopter issues to get involved, and for someone competent at websites to take on the task of running the HCN site. If you want to find out more, please contact Cait at AEF on [cait@aeef.org.uk](mailto:cait@aeef.org.uk) or 020 7 248 2223.

## Join a funeral procession and eulogy for Cherry Lane Cemetery at Heathrow .....

- from Trafalgar Square, **Saturday 2nd May at 10.30am**

The day is organised by Cherry Lane Development Group (CLAD) and will be in two parts. Firstly, they meet at Trafalgar Square at around 10:30am to begin a funeral procession promptly at 11am. They will walk behind a hearse along Whitehall and in front of the Houses of Parliament. After arriving at Old Palace yard, there will be a eulogy about the cemetery and the importance of honouring the dead. John McDonnell MP has confirmed that he will be one of the people who take part in the Eulogy. The second part of the day starts promptly at 3pm outside of Harlington Baptist church in Hayes. Again, there will be a procession following the hearse, along the High Street and onto Shepiston Lane. Once at the cemetery, the group will be met by many residents who cannot participate in the march for whatever reasons. Additionally, we will have representatives from our local religious organisations to bless the cemetery. **Please wear appropriate funeral attire !**  
More details at CLAD's website: <http://www.cherrylane.org.uk>

## ..... and please sign the 10 Downing Street Petition to save Cherry Lane Cemetery

It states: "We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to oppose the planned destruction of any part of Cherry Lane Cemetery and desecration of graves therein in favour of access roads being developed by BAA to accommodate the hugely unpopular Third Runway and Sixth Terminal at London Heathrow Airport". Deadline - 12th May. <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/CherryLane>

## DECC Consultation on the term 'carbon neutral'

This consultation is on the definition of the term, and recommendations for good practice. Many airports and organisations involved in aviation are on the consultee list. Airports are keen to play up their "carbon neutral" virtues, while ignoring the totality of their operation. So an airport cannot be carbon neutral if its raison d'être is to fly people around in a non-carbon neutral way. It does not matter how little emissions are caused by the lighting in the terminal, or the amount of paper being re-used and recycled, if the operation is predicated on massive emissions. Worth a response !

Details at: [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/open/carbon\\_neutrality/carbon\\_neutrality.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/open/carbon_neutrality/carbon_neutrality.aspx) Deadline 21st May.

## Useful Info

- For a **daily digest of transport stories in the papers**, with many on aviation, [www.transportinfo.org.uk](http://www.transportinfo.org.uk)
- For more information about aviation, and news on aviation stories, see the **Aviation Environment Federation** (AEF) website at [www.aef.org.uk](http://www.aef.org.uk) and the AirportWatch website [www.airportwatch.org.uk](http://www.airportwatch.org.uk)
- There is excellent advice on planning issues in relation to airports, on the AEF website at <http://www.aef.org.uk/?cat=8>
- For legal advice contact the **Environmental Law Foundation**. They give initial advice free. [www.elflaw.org](http://www.elflaw.org)
- To find out how to buy a little piece of land at Sipson, as part of the **Greenpeace Air Plot** scheme, see <http://www.airplot.org.uk> - 41,360 people have become beneficial owners so far !

Bulletin compiled by Sarah Clayton - with thanks to many contributors

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[www.airportwatch.org.uk](http://www.airportwatch.org.uk)