

airportwatch

Bulletin No 19
June 2008

Heathrow makes a NOise



Over 3,000 residents and protesters join forces to create a message of defiance over plans to build a third runway

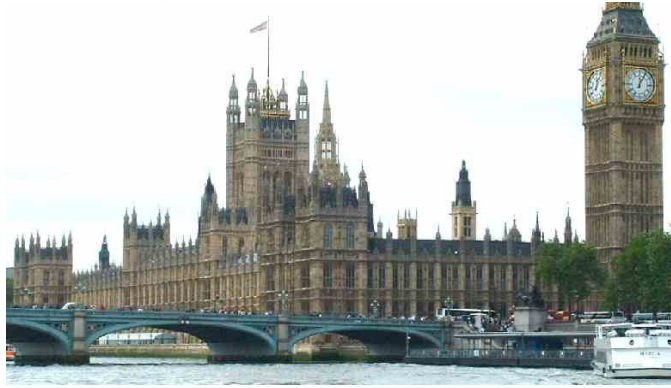


Walking from Hatton Cross to Sipson - the village that will be lost if plans for a third runway at Heathrow go ahead - a huge raft of people from all walks of life came together in one of the biggest demonstrations seen yet opposing airport expansion. Protesters gathered in a field to form a huge 'NO' sign that was clearly visible to pilots and passengers landing at the airport.

Greenpeace chief John Sauven, who joined the march, said: "There is no need whatsoever for a third runway. If everybody took trains to Manchester, Paris, Scotland and Brussels rather than flying then a third runway would not need to be built. Now it's about the campaign gathering weight before the MPs break for summer - and it is. We've had support from the Archbishop of Canterbury and all of the London mayoral candidates."

The event was broadly reported in mainstream press, though there was some disappointment that the numbers attending were under-reported by a few sources. Nonetheless, a strong message went out that the residents of South West London - and all those who care about the future of the environment - will not be kept quiet. (See details of the Flashmob planned for 3rd July towards the end of this bulletin).

Bills, bills and more bills



The Commons have been busy this month considering two of potentially the most influential pieces of legislation of the 21st century; the Planning Bill, and the historic Climate Change Bill.

The Planning Bill, despite fierce debate, still lacks a clause requiring the consideration of Climate Change impacts in any planning decision. This was voted out by a very small margin (only 15 MPs) with a large rebellion from back bench Labour MPs. However, on a slightly more positive note, the Secretary of State did give an undertaking that the flawed Aviation White Paper of 2003 would not be used as a National Policy Statement without substantial further research and revision. The Bill's concluding stages are likely to be on 25th June.

The Climate Change Bill saw broad cross-party consensus as to its importance: however, there was still reticence on the part of the government to accept either the need for 80% cuts in carbon emissions or the inclusion of international aviation and shipping in targets from the outset. This was disappointing, and is likely to come up again as the bill passes through the next readings. Only three MPs voted against the bill - any AirportWatch members residing in these member's constituencies are encouraged to write to them and voice their displeasure: The three MPs in question: Mr Peter Lilley, Mr. Andrew Tyrie, and the Rt Hon Miss Ann Widdecombe.

For more information, see

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/local/planning/planning_disaster/home.html

and <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/legislation/index.htm>

NATS Terminal Control North consultation nears end as rural communities rally to protect tranquillity



Rally on Thursday 19th June at 12:30pm, London's South Bank

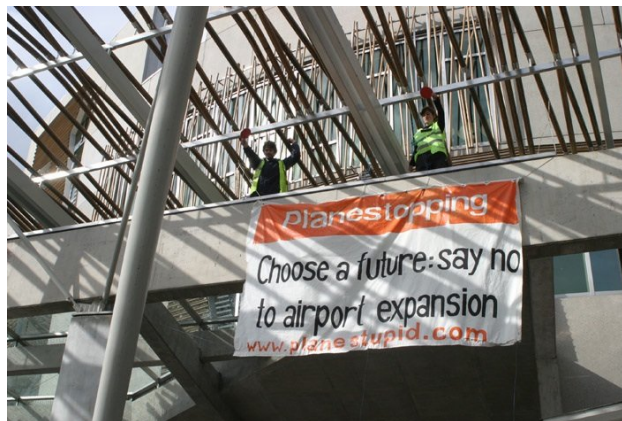
On Thursday the 19th of June, there will be small rally held on London's South Bank to mark the closure of one of the largest Airspace Change Proposal Consultations seen in years – covering particularly flight paths and stacks for Luton, Stansted, and London City airports. Members of the AirportWatch member group Rural Peace, plus residents from many other villages and towns that are facing loss of their peace and quiet from the proposals, will gather to listen to speeches by three local MPs (Andrew Lansley, Richard Spring and David Ruffley), and hand a letter in to NATS – to demonstrate to NATS and the Government how strongly they feel about the effect the new airspace proposals will have on their homes. Labour MP Margaret Moran has voiced concerns that the consultation process has been unsatisfactory and has failed to inform residents on the true extent of the impact of the proposals.

Rural Peace, and other AirportWatch members such as LADACAN and SSE, have already won a valuable extension to the consultation period to make their views heard, so if you are concerned about the ongoing onslaught of noise and pollution over the last remaining areas of tranquillity in the country, write to NATS at <http://www.consultation.nats.co.uk/>, or come along to the rally on the 19th, meeting by the National Film Theatre on the South Bank (nearest tube Waterloo) For more information, or to confirm you would like to take part,

contact: Sarah Clayton - 01372 722341 or Email: sarah@airportwatch.org.uk

Also, a **minute's silence** was held at 12 noon on June 12th, by communities across the areas affected by proposed changes, a week before the end of the NATS consultation. The silence was organised by campaigners from Save Our Peace and Quiet (SOPAQ). sopaq@btinternet.com

Scottish campaigners get organised – AirportWatch Scotland



A new umbrella group, AirportWatch Scotland, is due to start planning a campaign of action against airport expansions, working with Stop Climate Change and the World Development Movement

Dan Glass – the group's founder - reports:

The movement to tackle climate change in Scotland is growing. In order to uphold a strong climate change bill in Scotland, it must include key polluting industries, such as aviation and shipping- setting a precedent for other communities and nations. Supporting a widely consulted community-led mass movement for climate change action in Scotland AirportWatch Scotland, an umbrella group of community groups, charities, NGO's as well as groups supporting radical direct action will ensure a

future for the coming generations. When communities are equipped with the skills to voice their concerns strengthened with supportive networks, the benefits to the environment could be substantial.

The campaign is particularly appropriate as Scotland's planning system is undergoing its most radical overhaul in 60 years and both Glasgow and Edinburgh airports are due for expansion, directed through the 'National Planning Framework 2' (NPF2) and local development plans for frameworks. The proposed NPF2 will undergo sixty days scrutiny in Scottish parliament in autumn 2008. AirportWatch Scotland oppose airport expansion and want to ensure that the voices of communities directly affected by planned airport expansion under the Scottish Government's 'National Planning Framework' are given due weight. We are being set up to support networks empowering local communities in the campaign to prevent Scottish airport expansion proposals.

To find out more, or to get involved, email Dan at dan888glass@yahoo.com

Greenpeace - vigil against Heathrow expansion

Greenpeace announced that a group of celebrity mothers including X-Files Gillian Anderson, Laura Bailey and Anna Chancellor are backing a new climate action group's call for the government to scrap plans for airport expansion.

We CAN' (standing for Climate Action Now) held a vigil in Parliament on 20th May. Their ultimate aim is to get the government to form a cross-party coalition to deal with climate change.

WWF-UK - businesses to cut businesses flights



WWF-UK has released a new report which shows that the majority of top UK businesses hope to cut business flights in the coming decade. This raises serious questions regarding current UK policy on airport expansion and its supposed links to the nation's economic health. 'Travelling Light', WWF-UK's report based on an independent survey, examined travel policies among FTSE 350 companies.

Peter Lockley, Head of Transport Policy at WWF-UK, said: "Our report has revealed that there is a real appetite among many of the UK's biggest businesses to reduce the number of flights they take. For many companies, travel is a major contributor to their carbon footprint - more than 50% in some cases - and green alternatives such as videoconferencing not only provide a swift solution for cutting carbon, they can also save businesses time and money. In the current economic climate, and with increasing carbon accountability, videoconferencing is an easy win for businesses." The report is at http://www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/travelling_light.pdf The report also serves to launch WWF-UK's campaign "One in Five" for companies to cut one in five business flights, over five years. http://www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanet/opt_0000004980.asp

SDC calls for pause on aviation plans

The Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) think tank, have reported on their Open Dialogue on Aviation, published as 'Breaking the holding pattern'.

They concluded that the evidence base for aviation policy needs to be revisited; a special commission should lead this work; and the outcome should be used to review the Air Transport White Paper. The full report can be accessed from: <http://tinyurl.com/44k8aa>.

The SDC are also carrying out an on-line poll on their website, asking if the government's 2009-11 policy statement on British airport expansion should be subject to independent and thorough review. As at 27th May, the results are:

Agree - 85% Disagree -4% Not sure-12%

AirportWatch South West - funded and ready to roll

Jeremy Birch writes:

We have been successful in raising funds to enable the operation of the new AirportWatch South West group. We intend to help all of the 6 South West airport groups in the following ways:

- a) provide media skills and campaign strategy training at each group
- b) help groups to grow by bringing in other interested parties
- c) provide resources that are relevant to the region including template press releases, analysis of relevant policy documents and reports etc
- d) facilitation of communication between the groups
- e) present a united front to regional bodies

We have already begun on its mission to empower those groups, with meetings already with the Exeter, Staverton and Newquay groups. We have created a media training programme that can be delivered in an evening and tailored for the needs of airport groups. We have produced a resource CD with over 400MB of relevant data that has proved useful to the Bristol group over the years and sent this to the other groups.

We hope that by helping the groups to deliver their message to the public and decision makers that we can repeat some of the success that we have had at Bristol.

Contact jeremy@awsw.co.uk for more details.

Bristol Airport plans knocked back

Campaigners fighting expansion at Bristol airport (BIA) are celebrated a major victory following the unanimous decision by North Somerset Council (NSC) to demand that the airport's plans for a controversial 'walkway' are submitted as a full planning application and that an environmental impact assessment be considered. The Stop Bristol Airport Expansion group (SBAE) said that the councillors' decision was crucial to allow full scrutiny of BIA's plans which appear as an attempt to

‘expand by stealth’ by hiding a development that could allow more flights and passengers under ‘permitted development.’

Councillors at the South Area Committee meeting unanimously rejected BIA’s ‘permitted development’ consultation. They gave concerns such as ‘size, bulk and scope’ and the effect of increased noise on children at nearby Felton school, saying that it was essential that they could put conditions on any such development. They warned BIA that they had made a major PR blunder by attempting to bypass the planning process for a development of this scale, antagonising both the public and the council.

The meeting also voted to re-examine the issue of whether a full environmental impact assessment (EIA) should be required. Parish councillors have asked the Secretary of State to review the need for an EIA. SBAE have referred the EIA decision to the Government Office of the South West and have commissioned a report from independent aviation consultants that conclusively shows that the walkway would increase capacity and thus have environmental impacts that should be assessed.

For more details see: http://www.stopbia.com/walkway_application.php

Southend airport plans – including runway extension



The airport already has planning consent for the first phase of development, which started in 2007. This includes a new control tower, dedicated railway station, hotel, and car park. It now looks likely that a 6-week public consultation will be circulated in August, even though they know a lot of people will be away, for the second phase, which includes an entirely new, re-sited terminal building and a runway extension.

“This”, says the airport “whilst modest in size, would allow the Airport to accommodate the new generation of medium capacity, high-efficiency jets being adopted by regional airlines operating scheduled flights and shorter range holiday charters. This development phase is at the advanced planning stage with permissions and approvals sought to enable work to commence in 2009 for completion by 2011 – coincident with the London Olympics.”

The airport says it is likely to announce in June the preferred bidder to take over the running of the airport from Regional airports Ltd.

Birmingham Airport claims expansion will benefit health

Chris Williams (B'ham FoE) reports:

Birmingham Airport took the brave decision to commission two reports of the health impact of further airport expansion. The first study, undertaken by Liverpool University demonstrated many ways that the health of people both locally and globally would be affected by more flights at the Airport, while the second study suggested that health would be improved as a result of economic benefits that the Airport will bring. Apparently greater wealth would mean more jobs and therefore healthier people. The link is tenuous of course.

Birmingham Friends of the Earth welcomes the Airport's decision to make the reports public as they are not obliged to as part of the planning application for their runway extension. The first report gave a negative view on the Airport's effects on health so a second report was commissioned. The Airport claims this was because they wanted a 'slimline' version for people to read and they say Liverpool academics refused to produce one. Birmingham FoE find this hard to believe given the comprehensible Executive Summary that Liverpool researchers produced and the second report is more to do with spin than the desire for 'clear English'.

The Liverpool study claims that education at 31 schools would be affected by noise, as would thousands more residents but significantly, it clearly states that more flights will mean more carbon emissions, contributing to climate change, which will affect the health of people worldwide. The report also shows how local health inequalities will widen between the poorest and richest, which flies in the face of Birmingham Airport's claims that the runway extension would bring biggest benefits to the poorest people in the local area.

Police hold pensioners over Heathrow protest t-shirts



On Saturday 31st May, three pensioners were stopped, at the Heathrow bus station as they made their way by bus to Hatton Cross for the peaceful demonstration against the expansion of Heathrow. In the words of one of them:

“We were five pensioners from Slough, changing buses at Heathrow bus station on our way to the rally against the third runway. Three of us were wearing T-shirts saying "Stop Airport Expansion", but the police stop and search rules say that dress cannot be used as a reason to stop members of the public.

Nevertheless, police officers did stop us. The Heathrow bylaws, we were informed, permit access to the bus station only to air passengers or those meeting them. Oddly, only the members of our party wearing the T-shirts appeared to be in breach of these bylaws. We were questioned, our details were recorded

and we were forbidden access to the airport for 24 hours on threat of arrest if we did return. In one case "demo - T-shirt" was recorded as the reason for the stop, but the other records are inconsistent, referring only to breach of the bylaws.

Thousands of people change buses at Heathrow daily and hundreds of buses break the bylaws by carrying them. This restraint on trade is usually ignored. But five officers took half an hour to take our details, warn us and see us off the premises. We were given forms headed "Metropolitan Police: Working together for a safer London". Safer for whom?

John W..... Slough, Berkshire (Guardian letters 3rd June)

Carlisle expansion still waiting

The Government Office North West said the earliest they will make a decision is late June, but probably late July. The longer it is delayed the less likely it is to happen. They also said that they wanted to check that the application had been dealt with openly..... which you can interpret as you wish

And finally another Flashmob **Flashmob at the DfT on Thursday 3rd July, at 11am**

This time with t-shirts and paper planes!

Turn up outside the Department for Transport (corner of Marsham Street and Horseferry Road) at **11am** (very sharp). Red t-shirts (Stop Heathrow Expansion) optional, but paper plane compulsory!

You can download your paper plane from here -

http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/downloads/AW_June08_Paper_plane.doc

- At 11.03 (precisely) those wearing t-shirts will reveal them.
- At 11.05 (precisely) we will all launch our paper planes in the direction of the Department.
- Write a message to Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly, telling her what you feel about Heathrow airport expansion, on the plane.
- If she won't meet us, we'll take our messages to her!
- Remember, the beauty of the Flash Mob is that you are an ordinary member of the public until you reveal yourself!

Useful Info

- For a **daily digest of transport stories in the papers**, see Anthony Rae's excellent site www.transportinfo.org.uk
- For help organising your campaign, **Seeds for Change** offer free advice and direct action training. Contact oxford@seedsforchange.org.uk or check out their website www.seedsforchange.org.uk
- For legal advice contact the **Environmental Law Foundation**. They give initial advice free. www.elflaw.org
- There is a new feature on the AirportWatch website, giving dates and events relevant to aviation, on the Take Action! Page at <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/action.php>

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www.airportwatch.org.uk