

## **NORTH WEST ESSEX AND EAST HERTS PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION (NWEHHPA)**

### **Minutes of the 52<sup>nd</sup> NWEHHPA AGM held 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017 in Priors Green Community Hall.**

**Present:** Peter Sanders (Chairman), Brian Ross, Irene Jones, Sarah Cousins, Jackie and Richard Cheetham, Ray Woodcock, Janice and Ken McDonald, Tricia Barber, Michael Young, Roger Clark, David Aldridge, Martin Peachey, Carol Barbone, Rosemarie Welch, Freda and Alan Townsend and Maddy Willis. (As taken from the sign-in sheet.)

#### **1. Apologies for absence.**

Denise Williams, Suzanne Walker, Jonathan Fox and Mike Fairchild.

#### **2. Minutes of the last AGM.**

The minutes of the previous AGM of June 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

#### **3. Matters arising from the previous Minutes not on the Agenda.**

There were no matters arising

#### **4. Chairman's Report.**

Peter Sanders presented his report as follows:

"Last year I reported that the Airports Commission had recommended that there should be one extra runway in the south-east by 2030 and that that runway should be at Heathrow. This year the main development has been the Government's acceptance of this recommendation. Before any action is taken, however, the Government must publish its National Policy statement on aviation and this is expected early next year. This may well indicate a bigger role for Stansted Airport in the long run.

But, as I need hardly remind you, there is still no certainty, no clarity, especially after the recent election. There was always the possibility that the Government's policy on Heathrow would be overthrown by its own backbenchers, and that possibility is now that much greater. And there will always be the possibility of legal challenge.

In the meantime, earlier this month, the Airport submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report to Uttlesford District Council, signalling the start of a process which it says will lead to a planning application later this year seeking to expand the Airport to a capacity of about 44.5mppa (passengers per annum) and 285,000 annual flights. (The present limits are 35mppa and 274,000 flights.) It is outrageous that in its covering letter to Uttlesford the Airport claims that 'no significant adverse environmental effects are predicted as a consequence of the proposed development.' In 2016 the Airport handled 24.3m passengers and 180,400 flights. So if the Airport's proposal is approved and traffic increases to the level of the new caps there will be an increase over the 2016 throughput of more than 20m passengers and more than 104,000 flights each year. That would mean an extra 2,000 flights a week.

Now, part of this increase is due to increases under the existing caps, but even if these are stripped out the increases will be 9.5mppa and about 38K flights, and this would mean an extra 731 flights every week, or 104 every day. And bear in mind there would be comparable increases in road and rail travel to and from the airport leading to even more traffic congestion on our local

roads. And consider this alongside the scale of local housing development which is currently under way and being proposed.

Now we have the draft Local Plan, which recommends the full use of Stansted's existing runway. If that means no more than the present 35mppa then there is no great change. If however it means the 44.5mppa being put forward by the Airport then that would be premature in the absence of an Environmental Impact Assessment and wholly unacceptable. And there are other aspects of the draft Local Plan which call for the closest examination.

In the meantime there have been four issues which have taken up a lot of our time.

The first is compensation. For years the Airport refused to pay any compensation for local residents for the devaluation of their property caused by airport expansion. It used the excuse that it had no legal obligation to pay compensation until it had completed everything listed in its 1999 Phase 3 planning consent. Completion of a small part of these works, the Echo Cul-de-Sac, was repeatedly postponed – the so-called golden rivet. I don't want to go into the details of this, but in 2016 the Airport's argument was rejected in the Royal Courts of Justice. But then it put forward a new excuse for rejecting compensation - that claims were now time-barred under the Limitation Act. As the judge commented: 'So, after years of telling people you can't claim until the works are complete, you're now saying Tee-Hee – you're too late!' We threatened legal action, and the Airport gave way. Claims for compensation have now been made and are being considered. In this way SSE, while not supporting any individual case, has helped to open the gate for a wide range of claims, and it has also lined up surveyors who are prepared to help claimants.

The second issue in which we have been involved has been the sale of houses. For years we have argued that the Airport should sell the houses which it had bought, nearly 300, to facilitate the development of a second runway if and when planning consent was given for such a runway to be built. For years the Airport took no action. Suddenly, towards the end of last year, it began to sell off some of these houses. But it did so in a particularly inept and heavy-handed way, and we intervened to encourage the formation of a tenants' association which might seek to ensure that, while the sales should still go ahead, more consideration should be given to tenants' interests.

The third issue is noise, in particular night flights. We responded to a Government consultation for the next regime due to start in October 2017. Stansted currently has permission for 12,000 night flights a year, more than twice as many as are permitted at Heathrow. We have long argued to the Government that night flights have a far greater impact on local residents around Stansted because of its rural location where background noise levels at night are generally very low. We have called for an unequivocal Government commitment to phase out all night flights at Stansted by 2030, except in the case of genuine emergencies. The Government has yet to publish its decision for the next regime.

And the fourth issue is airspace. Flight paths for aircraft taking off from Stansted were changed in February last year and led to a doubling of flights during the day on the easterly 'Clacton' departure routes, causing additional aircraft noise misery for local residents beneath those flightpaths. We spearheaded a vigorous local campaign against the change from the outset and have now pushed for a reversal of the change. After 15 months of experience, we are more convinced than ever that any minor benefits for airlines are far outweighed by the additional noise misery being inflicted upon local communities. The Civil Aviation Authority is currently undertaking a post implementation review of the change and has yet to publish its decision.

You will have realised from all this that Martin Peachey has been very busy on our behalf, as well as helping individual complainants about noise. An amazing job, very professional.

Peter Riding has maintained our website. As I said last year, a magnificent resource, a superb work of reference for both ourselves and those raising questions with us.

Ray Woodcock and his helpers have rolled out our trailer at various fetes and markets, and Ray has sold a prodigious number of calendars, not just from the trailer but knocking on doors as well. We sold nearly all our 1,500 calendars for 2017 and we are now in the process of preparing the calendar for 2018.

Denise Williams continues to keep our books in far-off Northumberland, and we owe her a great debt of gratitude.

And Sarah has run a superbly helpful, friendly and efficient office.

Maggie has continued to provide much appreciated hospitality for our committee meetings.

And Brian, of course, well, what can I say? He is a phenomenon. A champion for all of us and a terror to the Airport – a much feared but much respected terror.

And welcome back to Carol Barbone. In the last members' letter I said that you can see how seriously we are treating the latest threat from the Airport that we have asked Carol to re-join us.

Finally thanks to you for all your support and encouragement.

Looking to the future, to the year ahead – the need to get new team members.”

Following Peter's report, Jackie Cheetham advised that she had heard that when purchasing houses from the airport, a clause had been written into the purchase agreement stating that should the airport wish to purchase the property in the future to make way for a second runway, the purchaser would sell the property back to the airport at market price. Jackie asked if there was any truth attached to this rumour. Peter confirmed that neither he nor any member of SSE had heard of this policy but that it would be followed up.

Jackie also asked whether SSE would be suggesting to the local parish councils that they should write to Uttlesford District Council, pressing them to ask for the deadline of UDC's response to the EIA Scoping Report to be extended. Peter confirmed that this would be discussed at the SSE, Parish & Town Council Liaison meeting scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 in Birchanger.

## **5. Treasurer's Report and Acceptance of Accounts.**

Sarah read out the Treasurer's Report for the NWEHPA/SSE Accounts for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 as prepared by Denise Williams as follows:

### **“INCOME**

While membership subscriptions, donations from members, parish councils and societies showed a reduction, an increase in the net proceeds from fundraising activities resulted in a total income for the year of £57,008 against £53,447 in the previous year.

The increase comes entirely from the sale of the SSE Community Calendar, for which Ray Woodcock should be thanked once again for his tremendous efforts.

The figure for Interest is gross (i.e. including tax, which is shown as a separate item under expenditure at a rate of 20%).

## EXPENDITURE

The increase in expenditure was largely due to legal fees, travel and press conference expenses in respect of SSE's challenge on Stansted Airport land compensation matters, and higher costs relating to accountancy fees, attendance at the three 2015 party political conferences, and membership mailouts.

## SUMMARY

While Income was up £3,561, Expenditure was also up by £10,488, reducing the surplus for the year to £19,181 (from £26,108).

## BALANCE SHEET

The increase in Bank balances (£192,217 to £213,089) is reduced by campaign expenses owing of £16,573, to produce Net Assets of £196,516 (up from £177,335 the year before). This all points to a healthy financial position."

Sarah explained that the accounts had already been approved by the NWEHHPA Board at their March 2017 meeting but that it was now required that the participants of the AGM adopt them. Since no-one had any questions, David Aldridge proposed that the accounts be adopted and Ray Woodcock seconded the motion and the Accounts were duly accepted.

A copy of the Accounts will shortly be available on the SSE website at:  
<http://stopstanstedexpansion.com/accounts.html>

## 6. Election of Officers and the Committee.

Irene Jones confirmed that Peter Sanders would be willing to stand again as **Chairman**. This was proposed by Brian Ross and seconded by Ken McDonald and Peter was duly elected.

Peter Sanders confirmed that Irene Jones would be willing to stand again as **vice-Chair**. This was proposed by Carol Barbone and seconded by Mike Young and Irene was duly elected.

Peter Sanders confirmed that Denise Williams would be willing to stand again as **Treasurer**. This was proposed by Sarah Cousins and seconded by David Aldridge and Denise was duly elected.

Peter Sanders confirmed that Sarah Cousins would be willing to stand again as Secretary. This was proposed by Roger Clark and seconded by Alan Townsend and Sarah was duly elected.

Peter Sanders suggested that the other members be re-elected en bloc. This was proposed by Jackie Cheetham and seconded by Janice McDonald and the committee members were duly elected. The **NWEHHPA Committee members** therefore are Jangu Banatvala, Martin Peachey, Maggie Sutton, Brian Ross and Ray Woodcock.

## 7. Any other business.

There was nothing further to discuss.

## 8. Conclusion of the meeting.

Peter Sanders closed the meeting, thanking everyone for attending and saying that he was looking forward to seeing everyone in 2018!