

**NWEEHPA
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
29 June 2011
Held at The Silver Jubilee Hall, Takeley**

1. Apologies

Apologies were recorded from: Gillian Atkins, Jangu Banatvala, Colin Barber, Jackie Cheetham, Martin Peachey, Freda Townsend, Denise Williams

2. Minutes of the last AGM held 21 April 2010

The minutes were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman, Peter Gowan.

3. Matters arising

Peter Gowan referred to the welcome withdrawal of the second runway application in May 2010 but cautioned that events could change very quickly in the event of a change in political policy.

There were no other matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Chairman's report

Peter Gowan explained that the threat had changed during the previous year stressing that while the context had changed, there was a continued need to campaign to prevent the expansion threat from returning at a later date. He referred to his own involvement with airport issues since 1977, first with Takeley Parish Council, then with the Uttlesford Association of Local Councils and, more recently, with SSE. At last year's AGM he had highlighted the need for NWEEHPA, as parent organisation to SSE, to carry on the work it had undertaken since the 1960s and the need for new committee members to underpin this.

5. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Richard Cheetham referred to the paper copies of the draft accounts which had been circulated to those present and described the cash position to the end of June 2011. The draft accounts had been on the website for many months.

He drew attention to the previous year's accounts (2009) which were the busiest ever in terms of income, largely because of preparations for the second runway public inquiry. The figures since then reflected the effect of the Coalition Government's decision to withdraw support for a second runway at Stansted during the lifetime of the current Parliament. The perception of reduced risk had led to a sharp drop off of income.

Nevertheless, despite the initial rescinding of a number of standing orders in the immediate aftermath of the decision, income was holding up better than anticipated. Year on year, expenditure had decreased as a result of not incurring legal costs, but despite membership subscriptions generally continuing to come in as forecast, the reduced income meant that cash reserves were now being drawn upon. The cash position at the end of May 2011 was still over £100,000. Meanwhile, an emphasis on cost saving meant that at the end of the current year the forecast position would be better than expected in late 2010. Calendar sales had made a contribution to the 2010-11 year income of some £20,000 net profit which, while lower than in earlier years because of a scaled down operation, was still very helpful.

The Treasurer referred to the huge debt of gratitude to SSE's continued expertise and professionalism in mounting such a successful campaign with so much expertise, even without the lawyers. He also thanked Lynn Petts for her work on the auditing of the accounts over the past five years. A new auditor is now being sought after she had expressed a wish to step down.

Peter Gowan said that it was important to acknowledge Richard Cheetham's own role as Treasurer over many years and the valuable contribution he had made to the management of the finances.

Richard Cheetham then recommended that the accounts for the year ending 30 September 2010 be approved. This was formally proposed by Peter Riding and seconded by Peter Gowan. All were agreed in favour of approval.

6. Report of the SSE working group

Peter Sanders, as Chairman of SSE, gave a report on activity since the last AGM which had been held just before BAA had withdrawn its second runway application.

It was now possible to say that after eight years campaigning, this was a victory which could be celebrated, even though the campaign could not relax. Three previous victories had been won but each time the threat of additional runways had returned. It was therefore essential to work to rule out a second runway in the long term. SSE therefore continues to campaign for a moratorium in the context of the Government's review of aviation policy. The scoping review in preparation for this was currently underway, taking as its foundation the premise of no new runways in the south east and the fact that the policy enshrined in the 2003 Air Transport White Paper was fundamentally out of date. However, the aviation industry was lobbying hard to see new runways put back on the agenda, including pressure for an offshore option as proposed by the Mayor of London. SSE therefore continued to press its case with the Government and to lobby the Labour Party in connection with the latter's review of its transport policy. An all-party declaration of opposition to additional runways at Stansted would have a greater chance of remaining in place longer term and was a key goal for the campaign.

The moratorium, however, was not the only local issue. BAA's continued ownership of over 300 properties in the vicinity of the airport meant the community could not have faith in the airport operator's intentions. Also, there was the issue of expansion within existing permissions: BAA has permission to almost double its throughput and this has major implications for noise, air pollution and surface access in particular. SSE's efforts to mitigate impacts must continue. Finally, BAA would almost certainly be required to sell Stansted and so it was essential to be vigilant with any new owner. Feedback from the membership and the community at large indicated that there was still a continuing role for SSE.

The campaign had been maintained at a fairly intensive pace, although not as frenetic as before the second runway application withdrawal, although going forward this would inevitably calm further, not least because of financial constraints. This was normal, particularly since the prospect of a protracted public inquiry was no longer in sight. Adjustments to working operations were being considered and changes would be made in the coming year to reflect the ongoing workload. The NWEHPA Committee was also being restructured to take on SSE Executive Committee functions, although a separate SSE Committee, comprising members of the Response Team, would remain.

As part of the objective of staying closely in touch with the community, SSE had recently set up a liaison group with parish and town councils to share information and news on issues of concern on a quarterly basis. Two meetings had already been held and had been fruitful. The initiative may be extended to other parish and town councils in due course, depending on how the main group continues to function and its usefulness.

Peter Sanders thanked all those who had worked so hard to achieve the second runway application withdrawal, as well as in the last year, but stressed the need for continued campaigning.

Chairman Peter Gowan thanked Peter Sanders for his report. Before inviting questions, he highlighted the involvement of SSE at national level, notably through the activities of the AirportWatch coalition with whom key SSE members are regularly involved.

Ray Woodcock asked whether there was anything to be learnt from the relatively low profile of NWEHPA at the time when SSE was formed in 2002. The Chairman responded that while there was expertise within NWEHPA, the SSE campaign had been started almost from scratch. This had been taken into account for the plans for the future as it was essential to maintain vigilance. Richard Cheetham endorsed this. Peter Sanders noted that Carol Barbone and her team had been collating a library of documents for future reference, should the need arise.

7. Election of officers

Peter Gowan advised the meeting of three resignations from the NWEHPA Board: Richard Cheetham (Treasurer), Patricia Barber (Secretary) and himself (Chairman). He thanked Richard Cheetham and Patricia Barber for the many years they had spent serving NWEHPA.

Peter Gowan then explained that he had accepted the role of Chairman on a caretaker basis after the sad death of Norman Mead. While he lived out of the area, he was still involved in the campaign, including in Suffolk where he lived, but the time had come to move on. Peter Sanders thanked Peter Gowan for his contribution.

Peter Gowan then proposed that Peter Sanders be elected Chairman of NWEHPA. This was seconded by Richard Cheetham and all were in favour.

Peter Gowan then nominated Irene Jones for re-election as Deputy Chairman. Ray Woodcock seconded this and all were in favour.

Peter Gowan then proposed that Denise Williams be elected Treasurer. Peter Riding seconded this and all were in favour.

Peter Gowan then said that the Secretary's post would remain vacant although the practical duties associated with the role would be carried out by the office team for the time being.

Peter Gowan then offered himself as a member of the NWEHPA Board. Mike Young responded by formally proposing this, seconded by Peter Sanders. All were agreed.

Peter Gowan proposed Brian Ross be elected to the NWEHPA Board. Carol Barbone seconded this and all were agreed.

Peter Riding was proposed as a NWEHPA Board member by Brian Ross, seconded by Maggie Sutton. All were agreed.

John Pryor's re-election was proposed by Irene Jones, seconded by Maggie Sutton. All were in favour.

Carol Barbone proposed that Ray Woodcock be re-elected to the Board, seconded by Mike Young. All were in favour.

Peter Riding proposed that Maggie Sutton be elected to the Board, seconded by Carol Barbone. All were in favour.

Speaking as newly elected Chairman, Peter Sanders described arrangements for the next meeting of the new Board whose first task would be to co-opt three further members, namely Jangu Banatvala, Sarah Cousins and Martin Peachey.

8. Any other competent business

Carol Barbone requested that the attendance register be circulated to ensure that anyone who had not yet signed it could do so before the end of the meeting.

Ray Woodcock asked if there was anything that needed to be said about the likely sale of Stansted and the sort of organisation that would be preferred as new owners. The Chairman asked Brian Ross if he had any comments to make.

Brian Ross explained that while the Competition Commission ruling on the future ownership of Stansted was imminent (and technically due by the end of June), BAA could easily appeal an unfavourable decision. This meant the issue could still have some way to run. As far as a buyer was concerned, this could be an existing airport operator such as the Manchester Airports Group or an equity fund. Until such time as a new owner was in place, however, the uncertainty over ownership effectively left Stansted without a champion. This meant that the lobby for expansion at the airport would be weakened – significant at a time of the development of government policy.

He added that the arrival of a new owner would bring challenges and threats, however. Ryanair could be expected to try to do a deal with the new owners so that in return for discounted charges the airline would guarantee higher passenger levels (BAA had turned down such an offer previously). Higher passenger levels and aircraft numbers could easily be accommodated within existing permissions (35mppa and 274,000 ATMs). There was also a potential threat from the South East Airports Task Force which was looking at how to squeeze more out of existing runways in the region. Therefore there would still be a clear and present danger of enormous expansion at Stansted even without an additional runway.

Ray Woodcock asked whether the Government would have any influence over a new owner. Brian Ross said that while it had no direct influence, the Competition Commission did in that it could ensure one monopoly was not replaced by another and by ensuring that any new owner had the wherewithal to expand to create new capacity.

Closing the meeting, Peter Gowan remarked on the welcome consolidation of operations and looked forward to the year ahead. He closed the meeting at 8.50pm.