

WYCOMBE AIR PARK JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 3rd February 2015

PRESENT

Mr R Pushman	Chairman
Mr S Brown	CEO, Helicopter Aircraft Holdings Ltd
Councillor R Metcalfe	WDC Member, Hambleton Valley
Councillor M Detsiny	Lane End Parish Council
Councillor D White	Hambleton Parish Council
Councillor J Richards	WDC Member,
Councillor D Barnes	WDC Member, Greater Marlow
Councillor I McEnnis	WDC Member, Chiltern Rise
Councillor Z Ahmed	WDC Member, Sands
Mr H Luxton	Booker Common and Woods Protection Society
Mr P Allies	Wycombe Air Park Action Group (WAPAG)
Mr N Phillips	Sands Residents' Association
Mr R Martyn	Booker Gliding Club
Mr A Young/Mr R Packe	HeliAir
Mrs M Sarney	General Manager, Wycombe Air Park
Mr S Adkins	Head of Training, Wycombe Air Park
Mr J Smith	Divisional EHO, WDC
Mr C Brocklehurst	Major Projects Executive & Estates Officer

(8 members of the public were in attendance)

1. The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting. He advised that P Allies was representing WAPAG this evening and that C Brocklehurst was present to talk about, as far as possible, the council's future plans for the air park.
2. **Duration of meeting**
The Chairman confirmed that the public participation part of the meeting would be 30 minutes and the business part of the meeting would therefore commence at 7.00 pm, with an anticipated finish time of between 8.00 and 8.30 pm. He also advised that Councillor R Metcalfe had been delayed.
3. **Questions from the public**
Q. R Rendell, Frieth advised that the large map located on the wall outside this meeting room depicted the NAZ incorrectly.

A. S Adkins confirmed that he had established contact with him and would be taking this matter forward.

Q. W Pendrell advised that he was a member of the public in favour of the air park and he considered there was little representation from them and he confirmed that there were a number of like minded people out there.

H Luxton, Booker Common & Woods Protection Society also considered that most of his Society, some 300 households, would like to see the airfield retained and do live comfortably alongside it.

A. The Chairman stated that these comments were most encouraging. M Detsiny stated that he had not indicated that he was against the air park and further he did not believe others were against it, there was however a concern over noise pollution from it.

Q. R Rendell reminded the meeting that the complaint form on the website required adjustment in order that it could be used to record multiple complaints rather than the current single entry.

A. M Sarney reported that she had been advised that this was possible and her IT expert would make contact with him to explain how this worked.

Q. R Rendell further stated that when pilots had flown off course, he did not see any action being taken against them and asked what specific actions had been taken against pilots in the last six months.

A. S Adkins stated that they were briefed; reflight and required to demonstrate to the instructor that they could fly the correct course. He reminded the meeting that the crosswind leg was outside of the NAZ, which had been formulated in order to appease local residents. R Metcalfe stated that this response matched a conversation he had in the summer of last year, which asked for an encouragement of responsible flying driven by performance improvement through good practice, signs of which he was seeing.

Q. D Pearce, who was a local district councillor, stated that in his opinion, only a handful of people were against the air park.

Q. Lord Parmoor enquired as the status of the lease negotiations.

A. The Chairman responded that these remained in a delicate situation and he did not wish to jeopardise same by entering into specific discussion around this matter. In addition, he asked that all present take the decision of the chair as final and avoid any unpleasantness for the duration of the meeting.

The public participation part of the meeting was then closed.

4. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Mr K Chanter. B Pearce advised that he was standing in for Councillor N Dunn, Great Marlow Parish Council. In addition, R Wetenhall, WAPAG, had retired and his seat had been taken by A Mann. However, he could not be present tonight and P Allies was therefore performing this role.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2014

Under item no. 10, N Phillips advised that he had asked for details of helicopter circuits, and with that amend they were agreed as an accurate record.

6. Matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda

The Chairman reminded the meeting that at the last JCC, S Brown had given a presentation on the issues as he saw them at the air park. He then introduced C Brocklehurst, the council's Major Projects & Estates Executive, who was present so that he could offer an alternative perspective on the situation at the air park.

C Brocklehurst would make a statement and then take any questions from the JCC. The Chairman asked all to be mindful that debate needed to remain restricted because of legalities. He confirmed he would not allow any harsh challenge and asked that debate be conducted under those terms.

C Brocklehurst advised that he had circulated some background papers to the JCC earlier. He confirmed the council's desire to maintain an operational air park balanced against the council's need for housing land and employment purposes. He wished to dismiss any talk of housing on this site but confirmed the council's need to retain flexibility in any new lease over part of the airfield identified in the local plan review as potential employment land. The balancing of the lease renewal was also subject to some element of environmental control.

The council was therefore looking to agree a lease albeit on modernised lease terms, which provided more control from an environmental impact viewpoint and potentially with a modified layout, and at the same time release some land for employment purposes. He confirmed that he was working with AAA and the operators of the air park on any modifications. Whilst it was not unique for an airfield to have single directional runways, he was looking to keep some element of crosswind and he was working with consultants on this and would share any findings in due course with AAA.

M Detsiny enquired whether it was possible to summarise the key difference between the two parties and why were negotiations protracted.

C Brocklehurst advised that negotiations had only recently commenced due to legal proceedings. The main issue centered around whether the air park could be modified and if so, could it remain commercially viable. S Brown reminded the meeting that his presentation detailed a number of areas that required resolution not just the viability issue. C Brocklehurst reiterated that potential employment uses at the air park were limited but there were employment uses which were compatible as evidenced by use at other airfields. S Brown referred to the public statement that the council was committed to a viable air park and he enquired why a sub committee had not been set up to oversee negotiation at the air park, rather than leave any decision to one person. The local plan appeared to take much ground; it did not appear to offer any alternative progression for aviation. Furthermore his company was prepared to invest several million pounds so he remained puzzled as to why additional buildings would be required when they were already there. He confirmed he did instigate legal proceedings as he considered demands were being made of him without due regard to his legal rights.

D White enquired why the council was so against any housing on the airfield. C Brocklehurst advised that houses could be built on slopes but there was a lack of flat land for employment purposes and also there was a compatibility issue with housing next to the air park.

R Martyn enquired as to the timescales for negotiation. He was advised that it was considered reasonable that progress should be made within two months. If this was not the case, an extension may be sought or there may be a reversion to court proceedings.

Discussion took place around the options for the air park. Option 1 found favour with some JCC members. C Brocklehurst pointed out however that Option 2 had yet to prove that it rendered the air park unviable. He further advised that the council was working with Alan Stratford Associates, who were professional aviation consultants. Discussion with AAA Limited had not yet commenced. S Brown stated his experience of consultants had been that they were reluctant to take responsibility for any incident/accident as a result of their recommendations.

N Phillips enquired as to what environmental measures were being requested under the lease negotiations. C Brocklehurst stated that the council wanted four items but they were yet to be negotiated and if they had a serious impact on the commercial return of the operator, then the council would need to reconsider. They were:

- (a) quieter training aircraft, or silencers. This implied a viable long lease in order to get payback on the expenditure incurred;
- (b) respite in flying activity for residents;
- (c) GPS transponder tracking on all aircraft, including those visiting, and
- (d) some control over any future intensification/increased flight movements.

H Luxton stated that he considered the majority of these matters had been discussed by the

JCC previously and were being addressed. J Smith confirmed that much work had been conducted through the JCC and the Noise Action Plan and C Brocklehurst wanted to build on this.

S Brown stated that his initial reaction to the requests detailed by C Brocklehurst was that they were not unreasonable. There was general discussion around the need to ensure the right things were done for all concerned so that the best solution was adopted, S Brown confirmed that he would have no objection to the debate being put into the public domain.

The Chairman closed the item and considered it had been useful for both parties to have listened to each other. C Brocklehurst then left the meeting.

7. Proposal from other companies at the air park

The Chairman advised that he had received a request for other operators to put their views/make the JCC aware there were other players who had a stake in the future of the air park. The Chairman considered that this had now been dealt with.

8. Proposed training route change

S Adkins advised the meeting that he wanted to introduce an initiative to reduce the concentration of noise in any given area on a given day, and to do this he proposed that 50% of training departures would depart to the west over Henley/Reading. This would mean that aircraft would no longer fly between Lane End and Frieth. A discussion could then take place at the next meeting to see if there had been any improvement.

H Luxton advised that when changing track, past experience had shown that other people may be affected so he suggested this was closely monitored.

S Adkins further advised that he was also working with ATC to try and increase circuit height.

9. Noise complaints received by the air park

M Sarney informed the meeting that the majority of complaints were from Frieth/Skirmett and it was hoped the changes described previously would help improve the situation. An invitation to fly was also extended to R Rendell and P Allies.

10. Noise complaints received by Wycombe District Council

J Smith advised that none had been received directly.

11. Community Matters

S Brown advised that he wanted a cafe to be at the heart of the air park. The current situation with the lease was that one sub tenant had the right to all catering on the air park. However, once the lease negotiations were complete, this right did not automatically transfer and he suggested that this was an item on the next agenda. In the meantime, he was considering starting up a social club.

M Sarney advised that cub units and a school wished to visit and improved facilities would be a huge assistance. In addition, June would see the air park hold a day when disabled children could come and be taken flying.

12. AOB

There was none.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 19th May 2015 at 6.30 pm at the air park.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm.