

WYCOMBE AIR PARK JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 19th May 2015

PRESENT

Mr R Pushman	Chairman
Mr R Metcalfe	Vice Chairman
Councillor M Detsiny	Lane End Parish Council
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 A Mann	Wycombe Air Park Action Group (WAPAG)
Mr N Phillips	Sands Residents' Association
Mr S Fletcher/Mr M Pack	Great Marlow Parish Council
Mr A Hegner	Booker Gliding Club
Mr K Chanter	Frieth Village Society
Mrs M Sarney	General Manager, Wycombe Air Park
Mr S Atkins	Head of Training, Wycombe Air Park

(1 member of the public was in attendance)

1. The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting. He advised that the practice of public participation at the start of the meeting was well established but before opening this part of the meeting, he wished to advise that until formal ratification at full Council on 26th May, there was an interregnum period for WDC representatives and he would therefore be postponing the AGM until the July meeting.
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 commence at 7.00 pm or before if there were few questions, with an anticipated finish time therefore of approximately 8.00 pm.
3. **Apologies for Absence**
The Chairman advised that neither S Brown nor J Smith could be in attendance tonight. He also advised that R Metcalfe had stepped down from WDC but would continue his role as Vice Chairman.
4. **Questions from the public**
Q. P Allies stated that he had observed an increase in helicopter activity and enquired if additional helicopters had been added to the fleet.
A. S Atkins confirmed that fleet numbers had not been increased. However, the air park had received an increase in helicopter activity from other airfields who were affiliated to the

training school based here. M Sarney confirmed there were therefore more helicopter movements being recorded and she anticipated this as a 10% increase. She further advised that S Brown was keen for this practice to stop and to assist this the air park required prior permission before arrival; helicopters were being photographed and fees had been adjusted upwards in an attempt to dissuade additional traffic. She confirmed that the situation was being closely monitored.

P Allies suggested that the JCC receive monthly flight movement statistics so that a baseline of activity could be established and then duly monitored. He was advised that currently there was no staffing capacity to undertake this. This practice has historically taken place but had ceased in 2011. H Luxton suggested that the JCC did need to review movements as they were relative to the annoyance of the public.

R Pushman advised the meeting at this point that in the absence of Sean Brown he had been empowered to speak on his behalf. He confirmed that court deliberations had again been put on hold. WDC had been advised that the Air Park was in a strong position and that it could continue to extend the current lease on an ongoing basis. As a result of this, WDC had re-entered into lease negotiations with the Air Park and it was his understanding that the terms of the lease would not be too dissimilar to those currently applied. He stated that negotiations were still in progress and it would be premature to presume the outcome at this stage.

There was some disquiet amongst some members of the JCC who considered that there should be some review conducted of WDC, who they considered had been on notice for some time regarding the actions and failures at the air park.

M Detsiny enquired if it should be assumed there would be no commercial development therefore at the air park. He considered the lease as it stood, was one sided and that WDC currently had little control over the activities at the air park. Noise pollution continued to be an area of concern for residents and he assumed from the comments of the Chairman, that little was likely to change.

R Pushman referred to his earlier remarks and stated that there was greater awareness from the air park, who wanted to co-operate with the public and mitigate the problems of the past. This could be evidenced by the actions already taken to try and reduce helicopter activity from other airfields.

R Metcalfe reminded the meeting of the four key areas which it was hoped would be included within the new lease. He also emphasised the importance of the good working relationship with the JCC and the need for this to continue.

The public participation part of the meeting was then closed.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd February 2015

The Chairman advised that subsequent to their circulation, C Brocklehurst had challenged the use of certain words and phrases used within the minutes, which he accepted did not alter their meaning. The meeting considered the suggested amendments. Page 3, second sentence, the meeting agreed to his revision which now read: "He confirmed the council's desire to maintain an operational air park balanced against the council's need for land for employment purposes." No other suggested amends were accepted and the minutes were agreed as presented with the above amend only. C Brocklehurst would be advised accordingly.

6. Matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda

There were none.

7. Update on proposed training route changes

S Atkins advised that changes had been made to offer a respite to residents of Lane End and Frieth and he welcomed feedback.

K Chanter, resident of Frieth, confirmed that there did appear to be a reduction in the level of noise he was experiencing. He advised that occasionally, a glider tug would stray and fly straight over the village, and he had reported this and he asked that the gliding fraternity kindly pay more attention to this. One thing that was spoiling this very welcome relief, was that the Cessners and some Pipers continued to cut the corner. He also advised that the new

twin engine planes were noisy and he wondered if their use could be cut down at weekends. P Allies confirmed that there was a better distribution of aircraft over Skirmett now.

S Atkins confirmed that trying to avoid a particular point is very difficult for pilots and if they avoid Skirmett they might then clip the corner of Frieth. He would of course review the trackers and he was pleased to hear there had been some improvement.

In addition, the air park was, from the beginning of May, trialling finishing club flying at 6.00 pm (previously it was 8.00 pm) on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Circuits would take place during the week, Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays to 5.30 pm and Tuesdays and Thursdays until 8.00 pm. However, a commitment was given in that if it was not worth staying open until 8.00 pm they would close.

The meeting was also advised that pilots from White Waltham also use the corridor at Frieth as a cut between the Benson military zone. Discussion turned to the ability to track planes other than school aircraft and the meeting was advised that pilots do turn their phones on for tracking purposes, but this was not mandatory.

In respect of tracking for helicopters, once the lease negotiations had been resolved, it was S Brown's intention to invest in tracking equipment for club helicopters.

8. Noise complaints received by the air park

M Sarney informed the meeting that there had been a reduction. She did not know if this was because of an improved position or whether residents had stopped bothering to report because of a perceived lack of remedy. She urged that any issues were reported so that they could be investigated and fixes put in place.

The Chairman asked all to work with the air park in trying to address any nuisance factors. The last meeting had seen a more balanced viewpoint and residents had confirmed their desire to retain the air park in favour of a housing development.

M Detsiny considered that the anti air park view was not true but rather that residents had a genuine concern over noise pollution. The current lease was considered by the community as not assisting this. The Chairman reiterated that the JCC had no mandate to influence the lease but he had expressed the JCC's desire that any lease should serve the purpose of responsible flying. M Detsiny enquired if this meeting could see the lease, clearly minus any financial information.

Councillor D Barnes, who declared an interest at this point, advised that he would communicate the views of the JCC back to the council. M Sarney also advised the meeting that she had worked for the air park for very many years. The current situation with regards to the lease was very stressful for all and in addition she wished to dispel the myth that the air park made a large profit.

9. Noise complaints received by Wycombe District Council

J Smith had advised that none had been received directly.

It was considered that the meeting would benefit from a key report on the tracking of complaints so that the meeting could get a feel for trends. It was again reiterated that movement statistics would be of interest and use as well.

10. Community Matters

M Sarney advised that the air park very much wanted to involve itself in the community, however, until lease negotiations were finalised these were on hold.

R Metcalfe stated that he would like to see a cafe project continue and opportunities for other outlets, which in turn would help widen community involvement.

11. AOB

There was none.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 23rd July 2015 at 6.30 pm at the air park.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm.