

Minutes of APCAG AGM held via Teams 27th September 2022

Present	Ian Hare (IH)	Chairman	Pulborough PC
	Peter Drummond (PD)	Vice Chairman	Wisborough Green PC
	Linda Penny (LP)	APCAG Secretary	
	Roger Penny (RP)	APCAG Treasurer	
	Atholl Forbes (AF)	ex NMB NEX Committee member	
	Len Ellis Brown (LEB)		Pulborough PC
	Susie Nyfield (SN)		Ebernoe PC
	Alistair Persson (AP)		Kirdford PC

Abbreviations: GAL Gatwick Airport Limited NMB Noise Management Board

1 Apologies Plaistow and Ifold PC

2 The minutes of the AGM 2021 had been circulated and were signed.

3 Chairman's report

IH summarised the issues which had been under discussion over the past year:

GAL were preparing an application for a second runway

Consequently, discussions about the content of a Noise Envelope were ongoing

FED (Fair and equitable distribution) continues to be examined

The possible change to the ILS joining point continues to be discussed.

The proposed wide sweeping reorganisation of all airspace, known as FASI South

APCAG membership remains at 18 PCs. Most of these are associate members

4 Treasurers report

The year-end accounts show that payments from full member Parish Councils were all up to date. A payment of £52.67 for web site maintenance for last year is outstanding and will be made next week. The current balance of £669.28 is held at Barclays Bank

PD proposed that this be approved

IH seconded

5 Election of Officers

Chairman IH Proposed by PD Seconded by LP

Vice Chairman PD Proposed by IH Seconded by RP

Secretary LP Proposed by IH Seconded by PD

Treasurer RP Proposed by PD Seconded by IH

Committee member LEB Proposed by IH Seconded by LP

IH asked AP if he would be prepared to join the committee. AP expressed interest but would consult with his Parish Clerk first

6 Gatwick Noise Management Board Presentation

IH introduced AF who had been an elected member of the Noise Management Board but had now stood down after 3 years. He was, however, still currently involved with aviation issues.

Gatwick NMB

The NMB's work plan was agreed back in March of 2021, but has thus far failed to deliver the meaningful noise reduction we were all looking for. This is a view shared by the majority of community noise groups on the NMB. This failure is made worse as it comes at a time when post-pandemic traffic volumes have increased dramatically with this summer's traffic volumes close to what we saw back in 2019, the airport's busiest year.

So, what's gone wrong with the NMB and its workplan?

Clearly the workplan's initiatives were impacted by the pandemic and were slower to gain momentum, but I'm afraid to say that as Gatwick has returned to business as usual, we've seen little evidence of the airport looking to build back better with the primary focus being to build back bigger.

Interestingly, the most significant noise related issues and the ones which could have the most impact on your parishioners are actually being taken forward outside Gatwick's NMB, so I thought I'd provide updates on the initiatives most likely to impact your parishes:

Gatwick's Noise Envelope Engagement Process.

As Ian has highlighted in his report, the development of an effective noise envelope at Gatwick is one of the most important initiatives in terms of future noise management. Unfortunately, Gatwick chose not to address community group concerns regarding the way in which the engagement process was being conducted and, as the project now draws to a close, it's disappointing to report that, Gatwick has completely failed to facilitate the collaborative discussions needed to have any chance of delivering broad stakeholder consensus. This is borne out in Gatwick's, recently circulated, Engagement Process Output Report which simply re-states respective positions rather than delivering the broadly agreed noise management strategy required to provide certainty and protection for communities. In terms of next steps, Gatwick will be considering the feedback they've received and will be updating their Noise Envelope proposal as part of the DCO application which is likely to be submitted around this time next year.

Fair & Equitable Distribution (FED)

This is one of the NMB's main work plan initiatives which has as its key outcome the delivery of a definition of what Fair and Equitable Distribution should look like at Gatwick. However, after an initial NMB project, which took about 12 months and was led by the University of Salford, no FED definition was produced. The airport has now taken the project back and having secured recent funding from the CAA has now initiated a stage 2 project, once again led by an external team of academics. From a recent briefing it would appear that it will take a further year of analysis and community engagement work, to identify what FED should look like which will then have to feed

into Gatwick's wider FASI-S airspace modernisation project. It would therefore appear that the deployment of a Gatwick specific FED strategy capable of sharing the airport's noise burden remains many years away.

Airspace Modernisation

In terms of the FASI-S airspace modernisation project, the update circulated along with the agenda provides a fairly comprehensive update of the latest position, but I would just add that we continue to provide input into the project team's thinking and, in particular, the importance of giving full consideration to the attributes associated with more rural areas which can make the adverse impact of plane noise that much greater for our communities. In terms of FASI-S implementation, it's difficult to say when any new routes will be deployed, but at this stage, I'd estimate that it will be 2026 at the very earliest.

Night Noise

Given the downturn in traffic caused by the pandemic, we saw this as an excellent opportunity to reduce or even eliminate altogether the scourge of night flights. However, despite our best efforts, the industry participants on the Noise Management Board came back with various reasons why a reduction in night flights wasn't possible. In response, NMB community groups made a direct request to the airlines to voluntarily reduce night movements. Sadly, but probably not too surprisingly, we were told that airlines wouldn't commit to anything in the short term and would only engage re night flights as part of the DfT's next night flight consultation which is due to take place next year and will set night time quotas from 2025 onwards. In other words, no change for at least the next 3 years. So, in terms of night noise, we're left with the Reduced Night Noise Trial which is progressing as part of the NMB's work plan. The airport is very keen to take this initiative forward. In our view, this isn't because it will make a big difference to night noise but is because it will allow Gatwick to test the operational capabilities of Performance Based Navigation (SatNav for planes) for arrivals – a key element of the work required for the FASI-S project. Unfortunately, this new technology will inevitably lead to highly concentrated routes, meaning that the frequency of overflight will increase very significantly for those unfortunate to find themselves under these new flightpaths. Given the plan is to use current routings it will mean that those already impacted the most will be adversely impacted even more during this trial. The timetable for the trial has been slipping and our understanding is that a go/no go decision is required very shortly to allow a trial start date in February 2023. We also understand that any further slippage will see the start date pushed back to the end of 2023 to avoid the busier summer period.

In conclusion, it's really disappointing that my update couldn't be more upbeat and also deeply frustrating that the NMB appears incapable of delivering the noise reduction we'd originally hoped for.

Following Atholl's presentation there were a number of comments and questions.

IH commented that there was a risk that GAL might evolve a policy of overflying least populated areas, despite the ambient noise level being much lower in these rural areas.

SN asked if, in view of the increasing population in Billingshurst, overflying would be avoided.

She also commented on the number of different groups involved with adverse Gatwick issues and asked how APCAG related to these. AF explained the current structure of the NMB with the Community Forum comprising 2 representative groups. The first group includes elected members from local Councils. The second is made up of Community Noise groups of which there are 9. IH explained APCAG was not a Community Noise Group but was set up as a communication conduit to inform local PCs and put forward their views.

LEB felt the NMB enabled a divide and rule strategy by GAL. PD agreed that GAL were a commercial organisation and were keen to minimise the effectiveness of CNGs. He reminded the meeting of the history behind the formation of the NMB.

AF agreed that GAL had used the NMB to effectively "corral" campaign groups as a way of reducing their nuisance capacity. It was important to realise that the NMB was GAL's NMB, and they were unlikely to agree to anything that didn't serve their commercial aspirations. Significant issues were now outside the NMB scope such as the DCO for expansion, FED, Noise envelope and FASIS.

LEB wondered if we should be concentrating on a priority. For him it would be a reduction in night flights. AF replied that it was generally agreed that night noise is the noise with most impact and was associated with health issues such as cardiovascular disease. It was therefore hugely disappointing that despite the best efforts of all the Community Noise Groups that our request for a voluntary reduction had been re-buffed. AF also referred to the "Reduced Night Noise Trial", due next year, which would see a concentration of night flights over selected areas (probably rural). It was vital for PCs and residents to respond to this.

The question of discord between CAGNE and the other Community Noise Groups was raised. IH Explained that while 8 of the CNGs were generally in accord, CAGNE have continually refused to work with the others and historically have sought to undermine the effectiveness of the other community noise groups.

PD then left the meeting with apologies as had another commitment.

LEB asked why FED was so difficult to define. AF explained that what seemed fair to one area would not necessarily seem fair to another and that for those areas that weren't currently impacted by plane noise to be newly overflowed would inevitably raise issues. However, it was generally agreed that as a high-level aspiration traffic should be dispersed such that all areas receive an equal share of the associated plane noise

There being no other business IH thanked participants for attending and the meeting closed at 7.15pm