

## **BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday, 21 January 2016 at 3.35pm.**

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#### **Present:**

##### **Organisation:**

Chairman  
Deputy Chairman  
Secretary  
Biggin Hill Airport Limited (BHAL)

##### Private Owners

Biggin Hill Residents Association  
L.B. of Bromley Residents Federation (LBRF) & Crofton Res. Assoc.  
London Borough of Croydon  
London Borough of Bromley (Officer)  
BRF/Leaves Green & Keston Vale Residents Association  
Kent County Council  
South London Business  
Business & Commercial Users (Transcity Exhibitions)  
London Borough of Bromley (LBB)  
Tandridge District Council  
Private Owners  
Biggin Hill Residents Association

##### **Representative:**

Mr J. Bowden  
Mr N. Kemp (in the chair at start of meeting)  
Mr G. Crowe  
Mr A.R. Walters (Chairman)  
Mr C. Hitchins  
Ms B. Russell  
Mr D. Field  
Mr K. Gerry\*  
Dr R. Hadley  
Councillor T. Letts  
Mrs M. Manuel  
Mr P. Osborne  
Councillor R. Parry  
Mr D. Ponnosami  
Mr R. Shirley  
Councillor Mrs M. Stevens  
Councillor D. Weightman  
Mr J. Willis  
Mr B. Wingate

\*observer

#### **1. Welcome and Chairman's introductory remarks**

- 1.1 The Deputy Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and also welcomed Bethany Russell, the Airport's Policy and External Affairs Co-ordinator, who was attending her first meeting of the Committee.

#### **2. Apologies for absence**

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr V. Endacott (LBRF), Councillor S. O'Connell (Greater London Authority (GLA), substitute), Councillor D. Hodge (Surrey County Council), Councillor R. Hogarth (Sevenoaks District Council), Councillor I. Mitchell (Tatsfield Parish Council) and Councillor R. Scoates (London Borough of Bromley).
- 2.2 The Chairman arrived at the meeting during the consideration of the AMD's report and apologised for his late arrival which was due to traffic problems caused by roadworks.

#### **3. Membership**

- 3.01 There were no membership issues to report.

#### **4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

- 4.01 The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Chairman. It was noted that the second sentence in paragraph 8.03 should be amended to

read, “Mary Manuel responded that because land was designated to remain in the greenbelt did not mean that development cannot take place there and that buildings in the Green Belt can be replaced.”

## 5. Matters arising from the minutes

5.01 There were no matters arising from the minutes that would not be dealt with during the consideration of the minutes for this meeting.

## 6. Airport Managing Director’s report

6.01 In the absence of Will Curtis, his report on the fourth quarter of 2015 was presented by Andrew Walters. It provided information on the following issues:

6.02 Market conditions – the report updated the Committee aviation activity in Europe and other parts of the world. It concluded that overall for 2015 Business Aviation in Europe was still at the same level as 2006, which was depressing, but that Biggin Hill had seen some growth in December ahead of its competitors.

6.03 Biggin Hill movement summary – it was noted that, due to the onset of less favourable leisure flying weather, the November and December figures showed the anticipated decline in flying club and privately-owned flights. Circuit training activity in October remained good and rescued the quarter’s overall figure for that category in 2015 compared with the previous year. The absence of snow and fog produced better than usual corporate and executive market. The ATM Charter and Corporate Jet movement figures were better than in 2014 with fewer flights needing to divert to other airports due to inclement conditions at Biggin Hill. The improved European market conditions made the December movement numbers particularly noteworthy.

6.04 The operational movements during the fourth quarter of 2015 were:

	Club Circuit	Club Other	Private Owner	ATM Schld.	ATM Charter	Corp. Jet	Twin Corp.	Helis.	Military	Total
October	2,130	532	803	0	610	323	57	211	4	4,670
November	815	255	436	0	560	334	36	141	2	2,579
December	976	269	426	0	564	312	41	171	4	2,763
Total	3,921	1,056	1,665	0	1,734	969	134	523	10	10,012
Change	+386	-249	-100	0	+207	+173	-15	+64	-6	+460
Year to date	19,983	6,514	9,604	0	7,443	3,622	625	2,592	179	50,562

6.05 During the same quarter of 2014 they had been:

	Club Circuit	Club Other	Private Owner	ATM Schld	ATM Charter	Corp. Jet	Corp. Twin	Helis.	Military	Total
October	1,280	588	698	0	578	278	61	151	6	3,640
November	995	335	507	0	483	255	52	159	4	2,790
December	1,260	382	560	0	466	263	36	149	6	3,122
Total	3,535	1,305	1,765	0	1,527	796	149	459	16	9,552
Year to date	16,920	7,033	8,221	0	6,945	3,465	660	2,091	142	45,477

6.06 UK aviation policy and Biggin Hill Airport - the report referred to the Government having recently announced its decision to delay a decision on a new runway at Heathrow or Gatwick until autumn 2016. The effect would be to further exacerbate the expected runway under-capacity in the next decade. Increased strain would be placed upon mainstream airports and make the role of smaller general and business aviation airports such as Biggin Hill even more critical to a successful UK economy.

- 6.07 The accident at last summer's Shoreham Air Show had led the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to review air show participation by historic jets and mandatory safety limits at public air displays. BHAL had, since 2001, not permitted aerobatics by historic aircraft and not permitted jets other than those operated by the Royal Air Force or, in exceptional cases only, other NATO air forces. It had been decided that, subject to any restrictions by the CAA the Biggin Hill 2016 Festival of Flight will be taking place on Saturday, 11 June 2016.
- 6.08 RAF Northolt - BHAL had been advised that the CAA does not intend to take any action in respect of civil aviation at RAF Northolt but had issued a safety notice instructing aircraft operators to make their own assessment of safety before making use of the aerodrome. This appeared to BHAL to be in contravention of the judgment handed down at the Judicial Review of January 2015 and was considering its options before responding further. To illustrate the unfair competition that Biggin Hill was up against, Andrew Walters advised that Northolt had eight telecoms engineers whereas Biggin Hill had only one. In response to Councillor Mrs Letts who expressed concern that, given the problem of terrorism, the mix of civil and military aircraft at one airport could be a potential issue and offered to write to the Ministry of Defence on the matter, he said that any support would be welcome.
- 6.09 BHAL application to vary Airport operating hours – on 25 November 2015, more than 12 months after the initial application to vary the operating criteria in the existing airport operating hours, LBB Council had voted to approve the Airport's request. Implementation of the decision had been agreed by LBB and the matter had progressed to contract. The new hours would be:
- |                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Monday to Friday          | 0630- 2300  |
| Saturdays                 | 0800 - 2200 |
| Sundays and Bank Holidays | 0800 - 2200 |
- 6.10 Andrew Walters expressed his gratitude to the councillors who had supported the variation of the hours against strong opposition. Councillor Letts thanked Councillor Mrs Stevens for her support and complimented the BHAL leadership team on its steadfastness. She said that a dynamic future for this historic airport could now be envisaged. Councillor Parry said that an Airport cleaner had expressed pleasure with the decision.
- 6.11 Andrew Walters added that the AMD had been upset that the Airport's approach to the consultation exercise had been questioned. Colin Hitchens explained the methodology of the consultation exercises and confirmed that, in both the Airport's own consultation and the one run by *Populus* which took place alongside it, all responses were taken into account. He explained that all responses had been fed into the Council's website and why it appeared that so few internet provider addresses had been used. The Committee was informed that Bromley Council had sample-audited 400 of the responses and all had been found to be genuine.
- 6.12 Airport facilities – the report informed the Committee that the installation of additional taxiway and runway lighting was continuing at the threshold of runway 03 and semi-permanent lighting was now in place and providing improved lighting to aircraft operators.
- 6.13 The Airspace Change Proposal for the new runway 03 Instrument Approach Procedure (IAP) had progressed to Serial 5 – Stakeholder Consultation. This would be continuing until mid-February after which the output would be sent to the CAA for its consideration. Implementation of the new IAP was on schedule for the autumn of 2016. Members were advised that, to date, 14 to 15 responses had been received. All responses would be fed to the CAA through independent consultants which had been nominated by the CAA. A map was tabled which showed the current approach route to runway 03 together with the revised route which would be available in the autumn. Members were advised that although the revised route was a longer one, it was anticipated that there would be a 50% reduction in noise. This was because, as far as possible, built-up areas would be avoided and that the revised route provided a more gradual approach which would enable less power to be used. In response to a reference from Deva Ponnosami about a letter from Farnborough and Petts Wood residents, the Committee was advised that briefings had been provided at Tatsfield and Farnborough.

Peter Osborne commented that the main complaints of Farnborough and Petts Wood residents related to runway 21 movements. The Chairman responded that, currently, all 03 approaches were over those areas.

- 6.14 New ATC radio transmitters were being installed to replace obsolete equipment and were expected to be operational in the first quarter of 2016. Obsolete ATC radio receivers would also be replaced before the end of 2016 in line with a European Aviation Safety Agency requirement for aerodromes to have 8.33khz channel spacing capability by late in 2017.
- 6.15 Some work had been undertaken to regularise the Delta taxiway according to CAA regulations. Improved taxiway signs in this area were also planned and the taxiway now complied with Code C requirements and removed one of the documented variations against CAP 168.
- 6.16 Economic Development/LoCATE@BigginHill – a new LoCATE newsletter had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. Andrew Walters advised that research carried out two years previously showed that aviation companies wanted to be on an airport close to a big city, where there are other operators and resident aircraft and where there was the support of government and local authorities so that there would be the ability to develop new facilities without delay.
- 6.17 Since the decision to increase the operating hours, international business aviation companies had expressed an interest in relocating to Biggin Hill. LoCATE and its stakeholders were playing a part in winning valuable inward investment opportunities. It was noted that Bethany Russell, had been appointed to oversee and coordinate the LoCATE project.
- 6.18 The proposed Aviation Technical College would play an important part in ensuring that the required skills would be available to support the expected growth in aircraft maintenance activity. LBB and Bromley College were developing plans for the progression of this project assisted by BHAL and the Aviation Skills Partnership. It was hoped that a project outline plan would be available imminently. BHAL was waiting to hear from Bernie Ecclestone about the possibility of siting it at West Camp.
- 6.19 Health & Safety/security - the Airport Safety Management System continued to deliver valuable information and the output had resulted in actions to improve some areas of infrastructure on the Airport. There had been no significant safety reports or incidents.
- 6.20 Environment – the revised Noise Action Plan (NAP) had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. It was noted that some work was to be concluded during the set up and commissioning of the Noise Monitoring and Track Keeping System. This work could not be undertaken until the requisite equipment had been purchased, installed and made operational. All work required by the terms of the NAP would be overseen and signed off as satisfactorily completed by LBB's airport noise consultant, Cole Jarman, before the Airport hours would be altered.
- 6.21 Plans showing the airborne aircraft noise contours were tabled and during his presentation of the NAP, Andrew Walters explained how they fitted into the process. Referring to section 4 of the NAP, he advised that three noise monitors were being purchased, two of which would be sited where they would provide the best readings and the third monitor would be kept in reserve in case of breakdown. It was noted that the readings would be fed into the control tower and subsequently made available on the Airport's website.

## **7. Report by the Chairman of the Noise and Safety Sub-Committee**

- 7.01 The report of the Flight Evaluation Unit for the fourth quarter of 2015 was tabled together with a map that plotted the areas from which the comments had emanated.
- 7.02 Councillor Parry, the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, advised that the total number of complaints made in the quarter was 29. As usual, they had all been handled professionally and well. He advised that many of the issues related to movements on runway 03 many of which would be eliminated when the new approach was introduced in the autumn.

- 7.03 The Committee noted that only three of the complaints had any relation to movements that contravened the Airport's regulations. Two of these were due to human error and the third related to engine running by a Citation aircraft.
- 7.04 Peter Osborne asked about the membership of the Sub-Committee and was informed that, in addition to himself there was the Airport MD, Will Curtis, the Chairman of the Noise and Safety Committee,, Dr Hedley Pugh, the Environmental Health Officer from Bromley Council, a representative from the airport noise consultants, Bickerdike Allen Partners, Mr Robinson, the Airport Senior Air Traffic Officer, and Roy Marsden, a former pilot who lives locally, as members.
- 7.05 Referring to paragraph 5.01 (8 October 2015), Peter Osborne said that the telephone number of the dedicated complaints line had appeared only three times in the *Biggin Hill News* since the last meeting and said that it should appear in each addition of the *News Shopper*. It did not appear on the front page of the Airport's website and neither did it appear on the community page or the (third level) consultation page. He maintained that the number was still not being sufficiently advertised and mentioned that Peter Mirams, at the 16 July 2015 meeting, had undertaken to investigate. He asked whether the Committee agreed with him.
- 7.06 Members searched for the telephone number on their mobile phones and tablets and advised that it had appeared very quickly. Councillor Parry pointed out that the Airport's telephone number was on the home page of the website and that the operator would transfer anyone to the complaints line. In common with other members of the Committee he did not agree that the number was not being sufficiently publicised. The Chairman agreed that obtaining the number did not appear to be a problem.
- 7.07 Peter Osborne advised that he would be writing to the CAA to see whether it agreed with him that the number should be more easily available.

## **8. Planning issues**

- 8.01 Local Plan - Mary Manuel reported that the Regulation 18 consultation had closed on the Draft Allocations, Further Policies and Designations document. There had been 1,200 responses to the consultation and these were being analysed and recommendations will be made to the Council. A revised timetable had been approved and the end of May was now the deadline.
- 8.02 Consultations were about to begin on a revised Statement of Community Involvement and on Local Green Space and historic buildings.
- 8.03 Residential developments - Leaves Green - the Committee was informed that an application had been received for a residential developments across Leaves Green Road from the Airport.

## **9. Community Relations**

- 9.01 Press cuttings - The press cuttings for the last quarter had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

## **10. Any other business**

- 10.1 London City Airport - Deva Ponnosami referred to it being mentioned in the media recently that London City Airport was available for sale. Andrew Walters advised that business traffic was being forced out and that he had suggested to the opportunity should be taken for the GLA to direct business aviation to Biggin Hill.
- 10.02 Ken Gerry - thanked the Chairman and Committee for allowing him to be an observer at this meeting.

## **11. Dates of next meetings**

- 11.01 The Committee was reminded that it had been agreed at the Annual General Meeting that preceded this meeting that the next AGM would be held on Thursday, 19 January 2017.
- 11.02 Members were reminded that the dates for the remaining meetings in 2016 had been agreed at last meeting as follows:
- Thursday, 21 April 2016;
  - Thursday, 14 July 2016;
  - Thursday, 20 October 2016.

The meeting closed at 4.40pm.