

Aviation Report – February 2023

Alan Jones

Introduction

Since my December Report I have not always been able to attend those meetings that I was scheduled to attend due to my wife's illness. I was therefore very pleased, and relieved, for Eddie Lord to step in as my substitute at short notice and he will no doubt give his feedback on the GATCOM meeting of 26th January. As I have received the Key Messages from the meeting, I will attach them to this report. Eddie gave me a feedback from the meeting which was very kind. It has been hard for me to come to terms that I have recently had to be substituted twice within a short space of time when these are the only ones I recall in well over 20 years serving on this committee.

However, I was able to attend both the pre-meeting and the NATMAG meetings on:

24th January 2023 – NATMAG pre-meeting

2nd February – NATMAG

2nd February – FASI-S Workshop

NATMAG MEETING – 2ND FEBRUARY 2023

You will recall that my last report covered the Extraordinary Meeting to Review the Noise Action Plan and from this we decided which actions to monitor during 2023. We monitored the first three actions at this meeting

Airspace Office Report

- Go-arounds is an issue that we watch very closely and 'runway occupied' is the main reason why a landing needs to be aborted. The major reasons are 'slow to roll' or 'slow to vacate' the runway but we were rather concerned that 7% of the reasons was due to wildlife. Although birds are often the problem, there seem to be more fox incursions.
- We also keep a keen eye on noise complaints and whilst the number of individual complainants has gone up by 6.8% from Q4 2021 to 2022, the number of complaints actually went down by 9.4%. Looking over the whole of 2022 we see that there were 16,431 complaints from 664 complainants whilst in 2019 (the last full year of operation) there were 25,593 and 698 respectively. It is interesting to note that of the yearly total of 16,431 complaints, one person at Broadbridge Heath was responsible for 2,400 of these calls for arriving aircraft.
- Lastly, on complaints, I provided a telephone number for complaints but it is interesting to note that only 97 of the total 16,431 for the year were made by telephone whilst 15, 166 were made on the web. The remainder were made using webtrak.

Noise Insulation Scheme

Some of you may have been able to take advantage over recent years of the Noise Insulation Scheme operated by Anglia Windows under contract to Gatwick Airport. We were given an update by Steve Mitchell of GAL who had carried out a survey of those who had taken advantage of the scheme. The survey was conducted in 2019 and just over 50% of those entitled within the noise boundaries had utilised the scheme. It is supposed that the take up might have been larger if so many of the house owners had not already installed their own insulation. However, there was an 81% satisfaction rate. A report has been produced in preparation to a new scheme being introduced to replace the existing one. In the recommendations it is suggested that the financial ceiling for homeowners should be raised.

NMB Update

Jonathan Drew, the Executive chairman of the NMB gave an overview of NMB activities. There were rumours that this forum was falling apart and up to six CNGs were going to quit because they did not think it was fit for purpose. Jonathan affirmed that he had spoken to several of the representatives and that none of them were leaving.

GACC has already resigned as there is no resolution to debates as all members have their own agenda.

Landing Gear Deployment Study

There had been some suggestions that landing gear was being deployed early over Lingfield which was adding to the arrival noise. A study has been carried out and 70% of aircraft still had their landing gear up over Lingfield but 30% were deploying over the town. It is estimated that an extra 2.5dB of noise is created through the deployment process so there will be some engagement with airlines to see if it is possible to raise the 70%. There can be other extenuating circumstances why and when deployment occurs. As a matter of interest, the most favourable distance from touchdown is to deploy at 4.5Km and Lingfield is 5.8Km.

Low Noise Arrival Metric

I have mentioned this in the past as it is a project that Gatwick promoted and the airport is going to trial this idea as a forerunner to it being rolled out nationally. It is a method of approaching the runway in a different manner with a stepped line of descent whilst being a continuous descent approach at a steeper angle. (If I have remembered it correctly from a previous presentation.) The airport has provisionally booked the week commencing 20th March to start a series of workshops with airlines.

Reduced Night Noise Trial

This trial was due to commence in 2020 or 2021 but was delayed due to a lack of aircraft, particularly at night. Now that the airport is up to about 83% of 2019 flights, it is a favourable time to start this trial on 7th September this year. Anything to keep aircraft noise down, particularly at night, will be welcome.

FASI-S MEETING – 2ND FEBRUARY 2023

This was another Future Airspace Change proposal (ASP) meeting for stakeholders and this was an opportunity for us to update ourselves on the progress of this huge development of how the airspace will be operated in the future. The number of aircraft flying, their potential speed, their technological improvements that can enhance safety and so flying closer together, has made this change possible and necessary.

FASI-S covers the airports in the south of the country and each will need to follow the comprehensive CAP1616 procedure which includes several stages of local consultation over the seven stages. As each develops their own airspace change, a central body will be responsible for integrating all the proposals. It will be up to the CAA to approve the central body's ASP proposals for the south. There will be a similar FASI-N for the north of the country.

GACT

If anybody is interested in applying for a grant from the Gatwick Airport Community Trust, the closing date for applications is 31st March 2023.

Future Meetings

3rd April – GACT Meeting
27th April – GATCOM Teams meeting
2nd May – NATMAG Pre-meeting
11th May - NATMAG