

# **Farnborough Noise Newsletter**

## **January 2023**

I'd like to say there has been some progress in the past month, but there hasn't. It's a pretty sad indictment of the way government and its bodies strangle the life out of democracy.

There has been no response from the CAA to the many emails, so the PIR rolls on, no doubt to the result they intended when they started the ACP in 2014. There is a meeting that has been set up by Jeremy Hunt with the DfT, CAA and Farnborough Airport but unfortunately it is after the end of the PIR. We are certainly not alone in this frustration. All airport groups we are in contact with have the same issues and until the law is amended, and the CAA is held accountable, little will change. Several Conservative MPs debated this topic in the House of Commons recently (see below).

You would hope that Rushmoor Borough Council would apply the relevant regulations it does have authority for and that it would fairly represent the community it serves. However, the challenges to the S106 planning conditions indicate this isn't the case. And to top it all off, the FACC isn't functioning and is not challenging Farnborough Airport/NATS to engage with stakeholders.

Previously, there was a group that was independent of the CAA to monitor noise (ICCAN - Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise), but it was abolished by the DfT in 2021 and its powers given to the CAA. The CAA has stated that the only way now to challenge the decisions it makes is with a Judicial Review. Last week the High Court concluded that the development of Manston Airport in Kent could not be challenged and a judicial review was refused. So where are the checks and balances to stop the aviation industry railroading everyone?

If you are limited by time, just read the first section below as it sets out very simply what is needed in order to break the current impasse.

### **News Summary**

- 1. What is needed from the PIR and from future engagement with the FACC/FAL/NATS/RBC**
- 2. Questions for FACC meeting on 9th February**
- 3. Presentation in FACC meeting to debunk the myths that the aviation industry is putting out gets delayed again**
- 4. FAL is intending to re-submit a planning application to be able to ignore noise complaints**
- 5. Challenge to Rushmoor Borough Council regarding S106 still pending**
- 6. House of Commons debate regarding aircraft noise**
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### **1. What is needed from the PIR and from future engagement with the FACC/FAL/NATS/RBC**

Everyone, from any of the stakeholder groups, will agree that the current situation is unsatisfactory, ineffective and will continue to escalate unless it is addressed. There is a wider issue with the CAA not being accountable. The only way to address this is to change the Transport Act and we will continue to support national efforts to address this. More locally, there needs to be proper engagement and dialogue with interested parties so that all opinions can be heard and compromises found. That's what democracy is supposed to provide. The current approach of submitting written questions and FAL/NATS/CAA/RBC/FACC evading answers is antagonistic and will result in an escalation of actions as stakeholders have no other means of engagement. There has to be face-to-face dialogue where the interests of **ALL** stakeholders can be represented, be that councils, the public, action groups, the airport, etc. The FACC is supposed to perform this role but it is totally lacking. Immediately, there need to be a series of face-to-face meetings with interested parties (FAL/NATS/CAA/FNG and others) to discuss the PIR. Then there need to be several face-to-face meetings to address the outstanding noise, pollution and emission concerns. Only then, with a reformed FACC, can these issues be reviewed in "business as usual". Those with influence need to get involved and make their views known. This really comes down to MPs, councillors and FACC members as there is a limit to how long the patience of the public will last.

### **2. Questions for FACC meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February**

The FACC meetings have now been so heavily restricted for the public and questions previously submitted have not been answered so in its current format it is probably of no use at all. FNG has collated questions from people who can't attend the meetings in the past but only been allowed to ask one question which is a massive disservice to people who have a right to be heard. Only 20 minutes once every four months is available to raise questions, which is clearly insufficient. The FACC's constitution states in Appendix 3 "Subject to those guidelines laid out in the Constitution and other documents available on the FACC website, members of the public are invited to ask questions of the Committee at meetings." But since the public can't speak, comment or raise any question in the meeting, this clearly isn't possible. In February's meeting, rather than ask questions of interest that will only be ignored, maybe everyone asks a question relating to the removal of the FACC chair and the re-constitution of the FACC.

### **3. Presentation planned for November's FACC meeting to debunk the myths that the aviation industry is putting out gets delayed again**

The FACC hosted a presentation in June 2022 by a group called "Sustainable Aviation" which was anything but factual. A presentation was proposed for the November 2022 FACC meeting to provide a more evidence-based evaluation of the options for aviation. That was delayed to February 2023's meeting and it has been delayed again to June 2023. With the expectation that it will be kicked further down the road, a public meeting is being arranged as soon as there is availability.

### **4. FAL is intending to re-submit a planning application to be able to ignore noise complaints**

The minutes from the last FACC meeting stated that FAL was going to re-submit the application to change the S106 agreement so that it can ignore what it considers "vexatious complaints". The reality is that there are certainly more people who would like to complain than those who do. The

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process to complain is deliberately difficult and the responses, when you do get one, do not address the issues raised. Many people have given up complaining as a result of this and the small number of people who complain a lot are merely the tip of the iceberg who have the time and patience to keep complaining. Rather than stifle this, FAL and the FACC should have a noise sub-group. This is what other airport groups have and it has been requested many times by FNG. The FACC is not the place to be discussing complaints data, it is the place to discuss what the common themes are and how they can be addressed. This topic is due to be discussed by the FACC. If you have a view, please send it to [admin@facc.org.uk](mailto:admin@facc.org.uk) before the FACC meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February.

### **5. Challenge to Rushmoor Borough Council regarding S106 still pending**

A complaint was submitted to RBC in November 2022 regarding four breaches by FAL of the S106 planning consent. These were:

- a. Allowing scheduled/non-business flights to operate
- b. Sound monitoring equipment not being made available
- c. Complaints not being managed properly (above)
- d. Air Quality Monitoring Scheme not being carried out properly

The complaint was rejected and has been escalated to the next level of complaint. A response is pending.

### **6. House of Commons debate regarding aircraft noise**

There was a debate in the House of Commons on 9<sup>th</sup> January about the impact of airspace changes at Luton Airport and the noise issues they have caused. <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2023-01-09a.391.0>. Many of the issues are identical to those at Farnborough (and many other airports). There has been a lack of consultation with impacted councils, restricted data and analysis, noise measurement procedures that are inappropriate and the CAA/airport colluding so that the PIR is not objective. The debate involved several Conservative MPs from the impacted areas. There has been active support from some of our MPs but no response at all over the past year from Angela Richardson (Guildford) and Jonathan Gove (Surrey Heath). I'm sure most constituents would expect their MPs to at least raise these concerns on behalf of their constituents.

### **7. DfT complaint regarding FACC**

The issues regarding the operation of the FACC are well known. The past four meetings have been a shambles and we had the remarkable situation following the last meeting where FACC admin said that the meeting's recording had been corrupted. However, it is still available on the Teams website. The issues were raised again in the last FNG newsletter and the breaches to guidelines documented. As it currently stands, there have been no changes. Nor has the FACC called an extraordinary meeting to discuss the issues which is in its Constitution. It is not acceptable that the FACC continues to be non-compliant with the government guidelines and there has been an even further restriction on public engagement through a unilateral decision by the chair since the last meeting. It is appropriate that the FACC members be given the opportunity to address these issues in line with the Constitution. Sufficient time has elapsed and, should nothing change immediately after the FACC meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February, a formal complaint will be submitted to the DfT.

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### 8. Farnborough Noise Group rebranding

Farnborough Noise Group is an Unincorporated Association, despite the Chair of the FACC refusing to recognise it. It was originally set up to challenge the noise, emissions and pollution relating to Farnborough Airport. Farnborough Airport has now joined the national Airspace Modernisation Strategy/FASI-S. Airspace changes at Farnborough have therefore become part of the wider airspace changes in the South East. As a result, the group is re-branding as FANG (Farnborough Airspace Noise Group). We will be raising funds through donations, crowdsourcing and grants. For example, Lush (the high street toiletries retailer) provides funding to environmental groups as part of its corporate social responsibility. It is likely that we will have to challenge the PIR in court. You will see the name, Facebook page and email address changing in the next month or so.

### 9. Tracking private jets

Tracking private jets of the ultra-wealthy and celebrities has been so effective that people like Elon Musk banned the accounts that were live-tracking private jets on Twitter. Newspaper editors have taken down investigations on various people (not this one - [private jet party](#)). It is relatively easy to access the data needed to track these people/planes. A training course is being run on 31<sup>st</sup> January and 2<sup>nd</sup> February to show how to do this. All you need is a laptop and some nerdy curiosity. If you'd like to know more, please contact FNG.

### 10. Another aviation petition

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the aviation industry is similar to the tobacco industry and the fossil fuel industry in that it wants people to continue consuming and flying. The CAA has conducted consultations and the public have expressed that they want to see information about emissions before they buy flight tickets. Not surprisingly, the operators do not want to do this. There is a new petition circulating demanding that the aviation sector must declare all emissions released by flying in adverts and competitions. <https://chng.it/hRrVcg4bhV>

### Aviation in the news

[https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/dec/30/tax-super-rich-private-jet-travel-fund-public-transport-uk-charity?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/dec/30/tax-super-rich-private-jet-travel-fund-public-transport-uk-charity?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/17/the-guardian-view-on-flight-shaming-face-it-life-must-change>

<https://ehjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12940-020-00690-y>

[https://www.caa.co.uk/media/egul5yds/2360-caa\\_env-sus-strategy\\_v6-2-front.pdf](https://www.caa.co.uk/media/egul5yds/2360-caa_env-sus-strategy_v6-2-front.pdf)

<https://aviationweek.com/special-topics/sustainability/opinion-inconvenient-truths-behind-sustainable-aviation-fuel>

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### Glossary

Acronym	Term	Explanation
ACP	Airspace Change Proposal	The CAA's process to change airspace (uses CAP1616)
AMS	Airspace Modernisation Strategy	Government's plan to re-design the UK's airspace. FASI-S or FASI-N (South and North) are part of this
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority	UK's aviation regulator
CCC	Climate Change Committee	Independent UK body formed by government to advise policymakers
CAP1616	CAP1616	The process the CAA must follow when considering a change in airspace
FACC	Farnborough Aerodrome Consultative Committee	The formal consultative body to engage with Farnborough Airport
FAL	Farnborough Airport Limited	The owner of the airport (previously TAG). Ultimate owner is Macquarie
ICCAN	Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise	Now abolished independent group established to investigate aircraft noise
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	UN global body advising governments on climate change
GA	General Aviation	Any non-commercial aircraft such as helicopters and light aircraft. Includes some jets
LGW	London Gatwick	London Gatwick
LHR	London Heathrow	London Heathrow
MIRA	Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets	Australian venture capital business that owns Farnborough Airport
PIR	Post Implementation Review	The 7 <sup>th</sup> stage of the ACP to determine if the anticipated benefits have been achieved (FAL's running from 1/4/22 to 31/3/23)
RBC	Rushmoor Borough Council	The Local Authority for Farnborough Airport