

# Farnborough Noise Group Newsletter

## January 2024

There hasn't been a newsletter for some time as the website [www.farnboroughnoise.org](http://www.farnboroughnoise.org) and Facebook page [www.facebook.com/groups/farnboroughnoise](http://www.facebook.com/groups/farnboroughnoise) have largely replaced the need for them. However, not everyone keeps up with websites and Facebook. As there is a lot going on at the moment, it is time for a newsletter..... in summary:

1. The PIR continues to be delayed.
  2. Aircraft continue to fly non-compliant flightpaths many times a day, every day, yet NATS/FAL won't discuss them and suggests the public should complain to the CAA.
  3. The airport submitted a planning application to increase the number of flights that FNG responded to. The decision date is early February. A petition against the proposal has 4,500 objections so far.
  4. The CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy (aka FASI-S) is continuing but there is insufficient information, questions aren't being answered and it is clear that the CAA will do what it has done before regardless of public opinion.
  5. Colin Shearn was given an Anti Social Behaviour Injunction and has stepped down as chair of FNG. The court case is 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> February.
  6. There is a large demonstration at the airport on 27<sup>th</sup> January.
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- 1) The PIR is six months late – but it wasn't worth anything without noise or pollution measurement anyway. We have a view as to why the PIR has been delayed – the CAA/FAL will get the flightpaths it wants in FASI-S without needing to be challenged by local objections to the PIR. Dropping the PIR also means that the CAA/FAL doesn't have to go back and do the noise and pollution measurements and recognise the airspace change hasn't met the objectives set.
  
  - 2) Despite thousands of complaints about flights, FAL/NATS won't discuss them because they would have to recognise there is an issue and then they would have to do something about it. The FACC is setting up a "noise subgroup" (something FNG has been demanding for years), but it will only consider Farnborough aircraft and FNG is not allowed to contribute.
  
  - 3) FAL's planning application to dramatically increase the number of flights so that it can provide more leisure flights (that it doesn't have permission) is part of Macquarie's masterplan. An increase in the number of flights would give it more bargaining power and better flightpaths in FASI-S (without more flights, Gatwick and Heathrow will have priority on new flightpaths). More flights and flightpaths would increase the value of the airport when sold. FNG produced a [comprehensive response](#) to the thousands of pages of documentation and offered to discuss it with councils and with Rushmoor Borough Council Planning who will not have the technical aviation experience needed to assess some of the content.

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- 4) Most people aren't aware that there are plans being developed by the CAA/FAL in the FASI-S programme to put an aircraft holding stack over Farnham or that plans are being developed to put new concentrated Gatwick flightpaths over this area, or that the government plans to double the number of flights into Gatwick/Heathrow to 2 million a year by 2040. That's because the public hasn't yet been informed. FNG and some local councillors have attended the consultation sessions. FNG has produced a [response](#) to the latest consultation documentation.
  
- 5) As you will know, FNG has been trying to engage with Farnborough Airport for several years but the airport won't meet to discuss the concerns of local residents and it won't respond to questions submitted. In-fact nobody (DfT, CAA, Farnborough Airport, NATS, Rushmoor Borough Council, Local Government Ombudsman or the FACCC) will answer questions and Colin Shearn was given an Anti-Social Behaviour Order by Surrey Police for "*asking too many questions*". This is now been reported in the [national press](#) and picked up by [civil rights](#) groups. Colin has spent £30,000 in legal fees to defend the ASBI case – money that would have been spent on local environmental work or pollution monitoring equipment. And public money has been spent by Surrey Police to pursue the case.

An example of the impasse with the various bodies: According to the CAA's procedures, Farnborough Airport was supposed to measure actual noise of all aircraft before the change in flightpaths were implemented in the 2020 Airspace Change Proposal. It didn't. FNG spent 18 months challenging this and the CEO of the CAA committed to MPs that noise would be measured during the Post Implementation Review (PIR). It wasn't, still hasn't been, and MPs haven't done anything to get the DfT/CAA/Farnborough Airport to do what it committed to do. Now Farnborough Airport has submitted a planning application with theoretical noise data that is modelled and with no actual measurements. The modelling only includes noise from Farnborough aircraft and it only considers noise two miles from the airport. Farnborough Airport has refused to provide noise monitoring equipment to FNG that it is legally required to do and Rushmoor Borough Council won't enforce the planning condition for FAL to provide the equipment (so we've had to buy our own noise monitoring equipment). Our eight local MPs are aware of this (we have offered to meet with them for the past two years to discuss the situation) but nothing has been done about it and we haven't met with any of them. All this activity is progressing in written correspondence because NONE of the organisations will have a sensible, face-to-face discussion. It is hardly surprising the UK's national productivity is so poor.

- 6) Since no one in authority is doing anything about the situation, environmental, wildlife and aviation groups have mobilised and there will be a large demonstration at the airport at the end on the month (see below). These demonstrations will continue regularly until there is proper discussion and actions are taken to address the valid concerns of the public. This is probably the last chance for our MPs and prospective MPs to make their position known before a general election and we welcome them to join the event below. The event is being organised by several environmental groups.

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### **Media letter (7<sup>th</sup> January 2024):**

*I'm writing to you to let you know about the above event and to ask you to notify people who are members / supporters of your organisation. I expect you will already know that Farnborough Airport is planning a significant expansion of its operations, which will result in doubling the number of private jets flights, with all the attendant increase in noise, pollution and emissions. There will be many negative effects locally; for instance, 30,000 children attend local schools under flight paths below 3,000ft. £2.5 billion could be wiped off the value of local housing.*

*Of course, there are wider environmental concerns. You will probably also be aware that a flight in a private jet is roughly 30 to 40 times more harmful to the environment per passenger mile than one in a normal passenger plane. These expansion plans are being made when millions of people across the world are already experiencing the devastating effects on their lives of climate change, and when scientists are issuing urgent calls for rapid reductions in the use of fossil fuels in order to keep us all safe. It's simply unacceptable that a few very wealthy people put their own desires for luxury and convenience over the rights of ordinary people for a peaceful healthy life on a habitable planet.*

*A great many local people have objected to these proposals both via the airport's 'Public Consultations' and through the planning application process. Unfortunately, we know that these processes are unlikely to be robust enough to prevent the expansion going ahead. A very visible and vociferous public campaign is necessary to persuade those with the political power to stop this. Individuals as well as local groups like Extinction Rebellion Waverley and Borders, Blackwater Valley Friends of the Earth and Alton Climate Action Network, have been organising regular public demonstrations at the airport gates in recent months.*

*On January 27<sup>th</sup> January we plan a much bigger demonstration than has so far taken place. The event will include a march from Farnborough Town Centre to the airport and a rally at the gates with various speakers. Please tell us if you or someone from your organisation would like to be included in the list of potential speakers. This will be a peaceful, family-friendly event, liaised in advance with the Hampshire police and properly stewarded to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all concerned.*

*We really hope that supporters of your organisation will join in with this event. A large demonstration of public opposition is crucial to the efforts being made by our group and others to halt this destructive plan. The march will start from Queensmead, Farnborough, GU14 7SB at 11am on Saturday 27th January. Please help us spread the word.*