

Noise and Airspace Community Forum (NACF)

Meeting Notes (29 Nov 2023, 13:00-16:00, London Heathrow Marriott)

Confirmed attendees

Name	Borough / Organisation
Andreas Lambrianou	Chair
David Hilton	Ascot Parish Council
Chris Carter	British Airways
Cllr Dr Wendy Matthews	Buckinghamshire Council
Darren Rhodes *	CAA
John Burton *	CAA
Liji Mohan *	CAA
Martha Power *	CAA
Ben Lippitt *	CAA
Laura Keith *	CISHA
Ian Greene	DfT
Gary Marshall	DfT
Margaret Majumdar	Ealing Aircraft Noise Action Group
Rob Buick	Englefield Green Action Group
Nigel Davies	Englefield Green Action Group
Paul Beckford *	HACAN
Christine Taylor	Harmondsworth and Sipson Residents Association
Armelle Thomas	Harmondsworth and Sipson Residents Association
Becky Coffin	Heathrow
Mike Glen	Heathrow
Dave Knights	Heathrow
Natalie Wallis	Heathrow
Lisa Forshew	Heathrow
Andy Knight	Heathrow
Richard West	Heathrow
Pierre Sohier	Heathrow
Michael Thornton	Heathrow Strategic Planning Group
Dr John Lees *	Iver Village Residents Association
Colin Stanbury *	Local Authorities Aircraft Noise Council
Cllr John Martin	London Borough of Ealing
Surinderpal Suri *	London Borough of Ealing
Amanda Nicholls *	London Borough of Lewisham
Deborah Petty	Molesey Residents Association
Robin Clarke *	NATS
David Matthews *	NATS
Bridget Bell	Plane Hell Action
Neil Maybin	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Peter Willan	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Cllr Mark Howard *	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Cllr Chris Howorth *	Runnymede Borough Council
Arvinder Garcha *	Stanwell Moor Residents Association
Cllr Lewis Mears *	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Dave Gilbert	Teddington Action Group
Stephen Clark	Teddington Action Group

* *Attended online*

Apologies

Rick Norman
Graham Young
Sue Janota
Carole Marr

Heathrow
Richings Park Residents Association
Surrey County Council
Windlesham Society

1 Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Andreas Lambrianou (AL) welcomed members to the forum.
- 1.2 AL advised that the draft meeting notes from the previous forum had been amended to incorporate requests from forum members. These were marked as final and circulated after the meeting.
- 1.3 AL confirmed that action 2.3 from the previous meeting concerning night-time runway alternation adherence had been completed.
- 1.4 AL reminded members to abide by the forum's Terms of Reference and CISHA's Code of Conduct which were circulated prior to the meeting. He appreciated that the forum covered emotive issues but stressed that it only worked when everyone behaved in a courteous manner, so members may be removed from the forum if the policies were breached.

2 Data Dashboard

- 2.1 Mike Glen (MG) presented Heathrow's Operational KPI Dashboard for October 2023. He advised that there had been 127 nights without late runners between 23:30 and 04:30 so far in 2023, exceeding Heathrow's internal target of 110 and improving on the 2019 total of 119 nights. He advised that future dashboards would measure Continuous Descent Approach (CDA) compliance from 7,000ft instead of 6,000ft following feedback from members.
- 2.2 Cllr Mark Howard (MH) asked for the dashboard data to show both percentages and absolute values. This was added to the November dashboard which was published after the meeting.
- 2.3 MH asked how many aircraft failed to maintain a minimum climb gradient of 4% between 1,000ft and 4,000ft. Sam Fountain (SF) advised that 15 aircraft had failed to comply in October 2023. Michael Thornton (MT) noted that compliance had dropped to 99.73% in September and asked to see separate data for easterly and westerly operations.
ACTION MG
- 2.4 Margaret Majumdar (MM) asked to see late running flights broken down into 30-minute intervals. **ACTION MG**
- 2.5 Armelle Thomas (AT) pointed out that 127 nights without late running flights meant that people were still being disturbed for two thirds of the year. Stephen Clark (SC) thought that measuring 6% climb gradient compliance and disturbance after 23:00 instead of 23:30 would be more informative.

- 2.6 Nigel Davies (ND) complained that Virgin Atlantic, Delta Airlines and Vietnam Airlines consistently flew outside of the departure routes and asked for analysis on which routes were causing the problem. SF advised that track keeping adherence for each departure route was published on Heathrow's website [here](#).

3 Deep Dive: Night Flights

- 3.1 MG presented a review of night flights at Heathrow, covering quota count, movement limits, dispensations and the number of late runners during the Summer 2023 season. He also discussed the day-to-day management of night flights by the Aircraft Operations Duty Manager (AODM). The presentation was circulated to members prior to the meeting.
- 3.2 Paul Beckford (PB) asked how the number of dispensations compared with previous years. MG advised that this would be provided in an annual dashboard.
- 3.3 Deborah Petty (DP) asked how large the AODM team was and how it made decisions. MG explained that there were 8-10 duty managers with a hierarchy in decision making, all trained to the same level and working to ensure consistency while making complex decisions.
- 3.4 SC asked if historic rights to night flights were protected by international agreements. Ian Greene (IG) advised that they were covered by the Airports Slot Allocation Regulations. He announced that the Department for Transport (DfT) would shortly be launching a consultation on airport slot reform. Further details are available on the [GOV.UK](#) website. Andy Knight (AK) reminded members that a paper discussing the allocation of slots at Heathrow had been circulated earlier in the year. This was recirculated after the meeting.
- 3.5 Christine Taylor (CT) noted that the reasons for dispensing night flights included insufficient hotel accommodation and asked how this had been impacted by the use of local hotels to house refugees. MG explained that Heathrow had access to room availability data and that some airlines resorted to using hotels further out, adding that the cost was borne by the airlines but any decision to refuse a night flight was not made on financial grounds.
- 3.6 MG explained that AODMs have a challenging role to balance the needs of the local communities, airlines, airport stakeholders and passengers. BB asked who the airport stakeholders were, and MG gave examples of UK Border Force, passenger teams and terminal teams.
- 3.7 AT commented that night flights disturbed millions of people, so if Heathrow aspired to be a good neighbour it should dispense as few night flights as possible. PW recalled that DfT had consulted on dispensations in 2021 and the outcome was still pending. MG advised that dispensations were based on the current published rules.
- 3.8 MG presented a series of case studies showing night flights that had been either refused, accepted or assisted through intervention. He noted that the focus was to achieve a balanced outcome, considering communities, airlines and their passengers, and added that the number of night flights has decreased compared to 2022.
- 3.9 David Hilton (DH) asked what was being done to improve air traffic control issues. MG explained that Heathrow attended regular meetings with EUROCONTROL and provided challenge through a number of forums and projects.

- 3.10 IG advised that DfT would be consulting on night flight restrictions for the period commencing October 2025 in the new year and would publish the new regime in the summer.
- 3.11 Surinderpal Suri (SS) asked if the consultation would take noise impact into account. IG explained that the purpose of the noise objective consultation had been to set a framework for how to assess and set restrictions to meet that objective. SS asked if it would rely on WHO guidelines. IG responded that the legislation relied on Section 78 of the Civil Aviation Act. He advised that there would be another NACF during the consultation period so specific questions could be taken then.
- 3.12 SC asked if the results of the Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE) study would feed into the consultation. IG explained that the ANNE study was being conducted by St George's University of London and the report would be peer reviewed, but it would not feed into the consultation due to legal timeframe reasons. He added that it may be preferable for the next regime to be shorter than five years.
- 3.13 MT asked if flights were permitted to depart early during the night period in anticipation of problems. IG advised that there were occasions such as during Low Visibility Procedures (LVP) when aircraft were permitted to land early, but this did not apply to departures.
- 3.14 MH asked how Heathrow was engaging with airlines that regularly operated late running flights. MG noted that Heathrow refused persistent late runners and held fortnightly meetings with the airline responsible for the largest number of movements. DH asked about a commitment made at a previous forum to look into persistent offenders. BC referred to the meeting notes from May 2023 and noted that Heathrow had committed to continue to work with airlines and was upholding that commitment.
- 3.15 Peter Willan (PW) gave a presentation on night flights. He proposed a number of recommendations including updates to dispensation guidance, Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG), the noise objective and evidence on health impacts. He also recommended placing WHO guidance on statute, introducing additional metrics, assessing the costs and benefits of night flights, banning QC2 aircraft at night and moving flights out of the night period. The presentation was circulated to members prior to the meeting.
- 3.16 AL advised that he was looking to apply some of his advisory budget to some of those areas.
- 3.17 AK commented that the presentation had covered a lot of ground and pointed members to Heathrow's response to the DfT Night Flight Consultation in September 2021 which stated Heathrow's position on those topics. This was recirculated to members after the meeting and is available on Heathrow's website [here](#).
- 3.18 AT referred to the polluter pays principle, commenting that 90% of people who do not travel pay for the 10% who do. She noted that there were 1,100 more flights in October than September despite the same number of passengers and that it was unnecessary to have 31 daily flights to New York. PW commented that air passenger duty was £3.6bn in 2018 which he believed should have been £15bn, adding that international transfer passengers were exempt. SS agreed that polluters should pay and noted the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) principle of controlling operations so as not to impact communities. IG asked members to provide feedback on the polluter pays principle in the consultation.

- 3.19 IG responded to a comment in the presentation that the only reason for night flights was that the DfT allowed them. He advised that traffic figures clearly illustrated a demand for night flights but that DfT heavily restricted them. He acknowledged that while the size of the noise contour had reduced, there had also been population growth and that it was the Government's job to find the right balance and not for the airport to solve all of these issues.
- 3.20 BC advised that the number of nights without late running aircraft was a top KPI for senior managers at Heathrow and that the charging mechanism also incentivised airline behaviour.
- 3.21 DP asked for data on the occupancy rates of late running flights. **ACTION MG**

4 Community Questions

- 4.1 Dave Gilbert (DG) gave a presentation on Performance Based Navigation (PBN), highlighting the negative experience of PBN over high density populations, calling for research on the effects of PBN and a 'do minimum' scenario for airspace modernisation around Heathrow.
- 4.2 AL noted that he was planning a deep dive session on PBN in 2024. Dave Knights (DK) offered to work with members to shape the structure of the session to help move the conversation forward. PW stressed that work on PBN should be completed before any assessment of route options for airspace modernisation. DK replied that there was still a long way to go in the design process.
- 4.3 BB noted that communities in SE London did not benefit from runway alternation. She asked where she could find noise complaint data and how far back it went. A link to the [noise complaint reports](#) for the period 2018 to 2023 was circulated to members after the meeting. Wendy Matthews (WM) added that some communities close to the airport also had no benefit from runway alternation.

5 Heathrow Updates

- 5.1 AK gave an update on the introduction of easterly alternation at Heathrow. He explained that groundworks were required on the airfield which required planning permission from the London Borough of Hillingdon. He advised that Heathrow would shortly be seeking the views of Longford residents on plans to construct a noise barrier on the airport perimeter. He added that the proposed designs for the barrier would be submitted to Hillingdon as part of Heathrow's formal planning application next year. AT asked how the residents would be contacted. AK advised that letters would be posted through their doors.
- 5.2 DK gave an update on airspace modernisation, explaining that the airspace team had been informed by CAA on 30 October that their submission had not passed the Stage 2 Gateway of the CAP1616 airspace change process, as it had not met all of the criteria relating to stakeholder engagement. They were surprised and disappointed by the decision as they had gone well beyond the requirements of CAP1616. He added that they had recently met with CAA to discuss next steps, and the minutes from that meeting would be published on the CAA portal.

6 AOB

- 6.1 AL proposed that the next deep dive session should be on departure profiles. DG felt this was too soon, so AL proposed having a separate discussion offline. BB commented that the aviation consultancy To70 had scoped a study on arrivals and suggested a deep dive on that. AL suggested that this might be a study for 2024 if there was sufficient budget, as well as a possible study on noise metrics.
- 6.2 SC stressed that studies should be carried out on an independent basis so that they could be accepted by everyone. BB added that the budget for independent technical advice should be allocated to the community groups as Heathrow had huge resources. AL reminded members that the budget was allocated to the independent chair and was not a community budget or a Heathrow budget.
- 6.3 AL closed by announcing that AK was leaving Heathrow so this would be his last forum. He thanked AK for his contribution to the NACF and wished him well for the future.

Date of next meeting

Wed 7 Feb 2024 (13:00-16:00) – Radisson Blu Edwardian, 140 Bath Road, Hayes, UB3 5AW.