

Noise and Airspace Community Forum (NACF)

Minutes (24 May 2023, 13:00 – 16:00, London Heathrow Marriott)

Confirmed attendees

Name	Borough / Organisation
Andreas Lambrianou	Chair
David Hilton	Ascot Parish Council
Cllr Luisa Sullivan	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Dr Wendy Matthews	Buckinghamshire Council
John Burton	CAA
Darren Rhodes *	CAA
Laura Keith *	CISHA
Ian Greene *	DfT
Gary Marshall *	DfT
Margaret Majumdar	Ealing Aircraft Noise 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
Rick Norman	Heathrow
Andy Knight	Heathrow
Pierre Sohier	Heathrow
Natalie Wallis	Heathrow
Richard West	Heathrow
Sarah Jane Pickthorne	Heathrow
Michael Thornton *	Heathrow Strategic Planning Group
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
Pete Glass	NATS
Bridget Bell *	Plane Hell Action
Graham Young	Richings Park Residents Association
Peter Willan *	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Neil Maybin *	Richmond Heathrow Campaign
Stephen Clark	Teddington Action Group
Dave Gilbert *	Teddington Action Group
Carole Marr *	Windlesham Society
Cllr Malcolm Richards*	Wokingham Borough Council

* *Attended online*

Apologies

Ian Jopson	NATS
Spencer Norton	British Airways
Sue Janota	Surrey County Council
Liz Sugg	CISHA
Mike Glen	Heathrow

1 Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Andreas Lambrianou (AL) welcomed members to the forum.
- 1.2 AL noted that the minutes from the previous meeting had been circulated later than usual and offered members further time to digest them, adding that some comments had already been received as documented below.
- 1.3 David Matthews (NATS) had asked for his name to be added to the list of attendees.
- 1.4 Ian Greene (DfT) had asked for an amendment to para. 4.5 about feeding into the IGCB(N) process.
- 1.5 Rob Buick (RB) (not present at this meeting) had written asking for it to be noted that Tim May (TM) had stated that no Government department had undertaken any research into the health implications of concentrated flying. Ian Greene (IG) provided some context to the comment, explaining that although there had not been any specific studies in the UK as there had been no routes on which to base research, work had been done in the Survey of Noise Attitudes (SoNA) study on the final approach into Heathrow which was effectively a concentrated flight path. Stephen Clark (SC) disputed this saying SoNA did not specifically cover concentration and if TM or IG believed SoNA covered the impact of concentration with PBN, they should be invited to the NACF to confirm the DfT's position.
- 1.6 Margaret Majumdar (MM) questioned whether Rick Norman (RN) had said that nobody looked at the detailed information about every late running flight previously provided by Heathrow (para. 4.6), as he knew that she looked at it.
- 1.7 Armelle Thomas (AT) advised that she was waiting for a response about adding noise levels to the data dashboard. AL replied that this would be discussed after the meeting. AT added that it was not fair to expect people who bought a property that had been previously vacated under Heathrow's relocation assistance scheme to know they were moving close to an airport (para. 5.3). She also asked for para. 3.13 to be amended to clarify that domestic passenger duty would be halving in April.
- 1.8 Carole Marr (CM) asked for an amendment to para. 4.2 to clarify that she had submitted a question on curved approaches to AL which she expected him to follow up with Heathrow's airspace team. **ACTION AL**
- 1.9 Bridget Bell (BB) complained that a map provided for her showing heights above sea level for Camberwell was not adequate and requested one for the whole of the south-east of England. AL questioned whether that would be the best use of the forum's resources. BB noted that a response had been provided about noise monitors (para. 2.11) and asked for all members to be copied into responses. She added that an update on noise monitors had not been provided at the meeting (para. 2.13) and that an end date of the 2040s for the updated Noise Insulation Scheme should be included in the minutes.
- 1.10 SS asked if the £30,000 limit for noise insulation would be sufficient for large community buildings. RN explained that the limit only applied to residential buildings and was enough to cover 99% of previously insulated properties. He added that there was no limit for community buildings, and some had cost several million pounds.
- 1.11 AL advised that the minutes would be amended as appropriate. **ACTION RW**
- 1.12 AL went through the actions from the previous meeting as detailed below.

- 1.13 **RN to meet with SS (2.5)**. RN confirmed that the meeting would take place the following day.
- 1.14 **Review of noise complaints process (2.9)**. AL advised that he had reviewed Heathrow's noise complaints policy and felt that it was robust. He added that he would refer the noise complaints system to an independent technical advisor to carry out a review of the process and the quality of responses. **ACTION AL**
- 1.15 **Invite Defra or DHSC to join the forum (3.5)**. AL confirmed that he would liaise with John Burton (JB) to invite the relevant people. PW asked if they would be invited to join or observe. AL confirmed that they would be invited to join. **ACTION AL/JB**
- 1.16 **Publish data dashboard online (6.1)**. AL confirmed that Mike Glen (MG) was looking into this.
- 1.17 **Frankfurt noise monitors (6.3)**. AL confirmed that he would set up a meeting with RN and RB to discuss. **ACTION AL**
- 1.18 **Engine Ground Runs (8.2)**. AL advised that this was now being covered in Heathrow's Local Community Forum.
- 1.19 **New developments affected by airspace modernisation (8.3)**. AL advised that RN would cover this at his meeting with SS.

2 Data Dashboard

- 2.1 RN presented the data dashboard for May 2023. The presentation was circulated to members after the meeting.
- 2.2 MM asked what time period was used for data showing the number of nights without night flights. RN explained that this specifically referred to the period from 23:30 to 04:30. WM pointed out that this meant there were still early morning arrivals from 04:30. RN confirmed that those were scheduled operations.

3 Deep Dive: Night Flights

- 3.1 Paul Beckford (PB) and RN presented a deep dive session on night flights. The presentation was circulated to members after the meeting.
- 3.2 PB explained that the objectives for the session were to gain a common level of understanding of the existing night restrictions and historic trends; to understand more about how Heathrow seeks to manage late running operations and report on night flights; to explore and understand different perspectives on the costs and benefits of night flights at Heathrow; and to identify areas of common interest and agree potential next steps to be taken that could help to reduce the impact of night flights.

- 3.3 RN explained that the Government sets night-time operating restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted as these airports are designated for the purposes of noise regulation under the Civil Aviation Act 1982. He explained that the Government's overall policy on aviation noise was to balance the economic and consumer benefits of aviation against their social and health implications in line with the International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) Balanced Approach to Aircraft Noise Management. He noted that the current night noise objective was to "limit or reduce the number of people significantly affected by aircraft noise at night, including through encouraging the use of quieter aircraft, while maintaining the existing benefits of night flights".
- 3.4 PB highlighted that almost half of late runners during Q3 2022 had been dispensed and called for greater transparency on the decision-making process, adding that some of those flights had departed after 01:00 which was only supposed to occur in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.5 RN showed examples of night flight reports including data on dispensed operations which he suggested was similar to data referred to by MM that was previously presented at the Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee (HACC). The reports were circulated to members after the meeting.
- 3.6 RN proposed a number of discussion areas around reducing noise impact, reducing late runners, the new night noise objective and dispensations.
- 3.7 PW stressed the importance of moving arrivals between 06:00-07:00 to later in the day, recognising that there may be legal challenges from airlines so they would need to be involved in the discussion.
- 3.8 David Hilton (DH) felt that Heathrow had more control over late departures and could make the easiest gains there. RN explained that Heathrow could not restrict the permitted operations of airlines but had built up a series of voluntary arrangements over the years such as not landing before 04:30. He added that the airport also intended to introduce a voluntary measure to restrict flights after midnight to only those required in very exceptional circumstances from 2025, as part of the Heathrow 2.0 sustainability strategy. He noted that Heathrow was also looking at airline performance before 23:00 and specific flight numbers that ran late too many times. DH recalled Heathrow taking similar action in the past and asked how many of the serial late runners could be reduced. Becky Coffin (BC) recognised that Heathrow had the ability to make change happen faster, and she was in talks with RN and Heathrow's Director of Operations about how to engage with airlines on this.
- 3.9 AT stated that Heathrow was in the wrong place and impacted millions of people. She asked how the money made from night flights by the airport and airlines compared to the cost to the NHS of heart attacks, stroke, depression, lack of sleep and child development, noting that such analysis had never been done because Heathrow would not do it.
- 3.10 Deborah Petty (DP) suggested that 23:30-04:30 was a very narrow definition of night-time and felt that Heathrow's latitude on that was a good selling point for airlines. RN responded that Heathrow defined night-time as 23:00-07:00 and that sleep disturbance was calculated for that 8-hour period. He added that Heathrow had some of the most stringent night-time restrictions in the world and was copied by many other airports as best practice, with airports such as Hong Kong and Madrid using a similar night quota system. He suggested looking at Heathrow's response to the Government's Night Flight Consultation (available [here](#)) for more information.

- 3.11 Peter Willan (PW) asked why aircraft ran late when there was ample capacity between 22:00-23:00. RN explained that from 21:00 the risk of a delay started to increase, and it was the role of the Airport Operations Duty Manager to identify and try to mitigate those risks. PW suggested that one solution was to push the slots forward. RN advised that Heathrow was busy all day so moving even a few flights would have a consequence.
- 3.12 PW claimed that there had been no improvement in night noise for the last ten years, quoting figures from Heathrow's current Noise Action Plan which estimated the total number of people affected by noise levels above 50dB L_{night} at 207,200 (2006), 199,300 (2011) and 221,200 (2016). RN advised that the data included population encroachment, noting that Heathrow could not control population movement or residential development, but it was making improvements in contour area that it could control. Cllr Malcolm Richards (MR) asked if Heathrow was invited to comment on new developments. RN advised that this was not currently the case, but that Heathrow was looking to establish a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with local authorities so that they can advise on potential developments and acoustic protection.
- 3.13 MM understood that early morning arrivals from 04:30-06:00 were mostly for passengers transferring to other destinations in time for the working day, so there was no benefit to the UK because they were exempt from air passenger duty, not spending any money and just using Heathrow's facilities. She added that it was obscene for people to be woken up at 04:30 for that reason and called for the flights to be moved into the daytime period. RN responded that all passengers were different, and some would be connecting to other UK destinations, so it was more complex than had been stated.
- 3.14 SC noted that there were more departures over his area between 22:00-23:00 than any other time of day and said they should be redistributed. He referred to the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation that noise levels produced by aircraft during night-time should be reduced to below 40dB L_{night} . PW added that background noise levels in Richmond were sometimes below 35dB and called for a target for reducing noise.
- 3.15 PB wanted to understand the process that Heathrow would need to go through to move flights forward from 22:00-23:00 to 21:00-22:00. BC advised that there were many factors, some that were in Heathrow's control and some that were not. She committed to providing further information. **ACTION BC**
- 3.16 PW suggested that arrivals between 06:00-07:00 were a bigger problem than late runners for residents in Richmond, with at least 10 unscheduled arrivals every morning during that hour, as pilots race to the front of the queue to land first. RN advised that NATS had been working with the operations team to discourage such behaviour and reminded PW that the scheduled arrival time referred to the time an aircraft arrived on stand, not the time it touched down. PW added that the Airports Commission had concluded that there was no economic justification for flights before 06:00. RN explained that the statement had been made in the context of a third runway, adding that the Airports Commission had also said that in the absence of a third runway there would be a strong case for more flights. (For more information see Chapter 14 of the [Airports Commission Final Report](#)).
- 3.17 SS referred to measuring the number of people in the 48dBA 6.5hr night contour and suggested that it should be measured over 5 hours instead. RN explained that it was all relative as it was about looking at trends.
- 3.18 PB stated that there was an absence of comprehensive analysis and suggested an independent technical advisor should be engaged to inform the scope of an overarching study on the impacts of aviation noise.

- 3.19 The outcome of the deep dive was an agreement by the forum that an assessment of the cost and benefits of night flights was needed, and that the chair would appoint an independent technical advisor to draft the scope of that assessment with input from a sub-group comprising relevant forum members. **ACTION AL**
- 3.20 The forum also agreed that the chair should write as soon as possible to the DfT in relation to the recently closed Night Noise Objective consultation to express support for a SMART objective and use the framework (rather than the content) of the Dublin Noise Abatement Objective as an example of good practice. **ACTION AL**

4 Airspace Modernisation Update

- 4.1 Natalie Wallis (NW) gave an update on Heathrow's Airspace Change Proposal for airspace modernisation. The presentation was circulated to members after the meeting. She explained that Stage 2 of the CAA's airspace change guidance CAP1616 required the development of a list of options that aligned with the Statement of Need and Design Principles, which were developed with stakeholders at Stage 1 of the process. She noted that there would be online engagement sessions in July to discuss the Initial Options Appraisal (IOA).

5 Noise Action Plan Update

- 5.1 Pierre Sohier (PS) gave an update on the development of Heathrow's Noise Action Plan (NAP) for the period 2024-2028, noting that a public consultation for the proposed plan would run for six weeks from Monday 5 June to Monday 17 July 2023. More information is available at www.heathrow.com/quieter.
- 5.2 PW asked if there would be an impact assessment of the NAP and whether it would be monetised. BC explained that the requirements of a NAP were set out by Defra and did not include what PW had mentioned, adding that if the NAP did not meet Defra's requirements, then Heathrow would be asked to improve it.

6 AOB

- 6.1 PW recalled that Heathrow had previously looked into adding 25,000 extra flight movements and asked if that was still on the agenda. Andy Knight (AK) explained that this had been a plan for early growth as part of Heathrow's expansion programme, noting that expansion was now paused so there were currently no plans to introduce additional flights. PW claimed that there should therefore be capacity to move the night flights into the daytime. AK explained that Heathrow had been looking to introduce early terminal infrastructure capacity as part of its expansion plans, but the capacity was not currently there. BC added that any such proposals would have to go through the normal planning process.

Date of next meeting

Thu 27 July (13:00-16:00) – Heathrow Academy, Newall Road, Hounslow, TW6 2AP.