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Dear Supporter,

Unprecedented Times

There is much to report since our last newsletter. Let me start with the disappointing - but not entirely unexpected - news that Stansted Airport won its appeal following the Public Inquiry earlier this year. As matters stand, the airport now has permission to handle 43 million passengers per annum ('mppa') compared to 35mppa previously. More about this later.

Since our last newsletter we have also had a change of chairman. As had been planned for some time, Peter Sanders retired at our Annual General Meeting on 26 May and I have taken over at the tiller. It is a humbling responsibility to follow in Peter's footsteps but, like Peter, I was a founding member of SSE in 2002 and I've been his deputy for many years. My first - very agreeable - task, as chairman, was to welcome five new members to our committee at the AGM.

We have also had a change of name since our last newsletter. Following unanimous approval at the AGM we are now, officially, Stansted Airport Watch ('SAW'). We haven't disbanded SSE but merely kept it in reserve for a time when we might again in future be fighting specific expansion proposals either for a second runway or for any increase in Stansted's current planning cap.

Meanwhile there is no shortage of work to do in containing the impacts of Stansted Airport's operations within its currently authorised planning limits. And, despite the disappointing outcome of the Public Inquiry, we haven't yet given up the fight on the 43mppa planning application.

43mppa Planning Application

Briefly to recap, this battle began in June 2017 when Manchester Airports Group ('MAG') submitted proposals to Uttlesford District Council ('UDC') to increase Stansted's permitted throughput above the (then) 35mppa limit. MAG expected to obtain approval within four months but four years have now passed and the planning application is still in dispute.

We are very pleased to confirm that, on 7 July 2021, UDC submitted an application to the High Court seeking leave to challenge the Public Inquiry decision. Although we have been critical of UDC's handling of the Public Inquiry, we now want to put these differences behind us and we have notified the High Court that we intend to be represented and present evidence in support of UDC.

We intend to be very careful and selective in our participation at the High Court so as to limit our own costs and to avoid the risk of an adverse costs award. Our financial resources have been severely depleted by this four-year battle against the 43mppa application which is why an appeal for funds is included with this newsletter (more later). However, our view is that having come this far, we need to see it through to the end.

Assuming the High Court agrees to hear the case, it is likely to be about November before the hearing takes place. The central theme will be aviation's impact on climate change and it is possible that the case will be widened to include consideration of expansion plans for other UK airports.

Aviation's climate change impact is a matter of growing international concern and to be raising this in the High Court in November - at the same time as the UK is hosting the COP26 International Climate Change summit in Glasgow - will help to highlight the issue. It will be an important opportunity to advance our campaign in the 'Court of Public Opinion' as well as in the High Court.

Other activities

As always Committee members continue to be active on various fronts. Recent activities include:

- Updating our website, trailer and other campaign materials to reflect rebranding to SAW;
- Responding to DfT's preliminary consultation on renewal of Night Flying Regulations;
- Preparing the publication of the 2022 SSE (now SAW) Community Calendar;
- Responding to HM Treasury consultation on reforming Air Passenger Duty;
- Responding to Competition and Markets Authority consultation on 'Greenwashing';
- Stakeholder participation in the Airspace Modernisation proposals for Stansted;
- Preparatory work for the legal challenge to the 43mppa Public Inquiry decision.

More information can be found on our website at <https://stanstedairportwatch.com/>

Impact of Covid-19 on Air Travel

Stansted handled just 766,000 passengers in the first six months of 2021 compared to 13.5 million passengers in the first six months of 2019 (i.e. pre-pandemic). This resulted in a reduction in the number of flights - in round terms - from 90,000 in the first half of 2019 to 15,000 in the first half of this year. This was despite a slight increase (+7.0%) in cargo flights over the same period.

We are fortunate to have Professor Jangu Banatvala, an eminent virologist and local resident, as a member of our committee and we benefit greatly from his insights into Covid-19 and its likely future course. He is not at all optimistic about the prospects for an early return to normality.

Financial Position

I would have much preferred my first member newsletter not to have included a plea for donations but the stark reality is that our financial position is currently a matter for concern.

This should perhaps not be surprising because our battle against the 43mppa planning application has already lasted for over four years during which time we have pursued a High Court challenge, a Court of Appeal challenge and, more recently, a lengthy Public Inquiry.

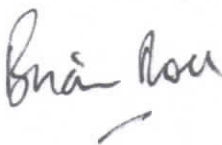
To date, this battle has cost us in excess of £300,000 and we're not finished yet. As explained earlier in this newsletter, we now face another High Court challenge. It has always been our ethos to challenge expansion at every turn. We would risk inviting expansion proposals if we were viewed as a 'soft touch', and so we try to leave no stone unturned in opposing expansion of Stansted Airport and seeking to minimise its impacts upon local communities and the environment.

However, we cannot do this without your help. We are almost entirely a voluntary organisation but we have bills to pay, and we currently have some very large bills arising from the exceptional legal and Public Inquiry costs we have faced in recent times. May I therefore refer you to the enclosed leaflet and ask you to please consider making a donation to the extent that you are able.

I am confident that, once we have dealt with the immediate financial pressures, we can then look forward to calmer waters which will provide an opportunity to rebuild our finances.

With many thanks for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



Brian Ross, Chairman