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Dear Supporter,

Preparing for the Future

Whilst we are waiting for the outcome of the recent Public Inquiry to be announced, I wish to advise you of proposed major organisational changes within SSE aimed at ensuring that our work continues to be appropriate for the present and as effective as possible in the years to come.

The proposed changes will be put to a vote at the Annual General Meeting on 26 May. More details about this are enclosed with this letter but let me firstly explain the background, the rationale and the nature of the proposed changes.

Background

In 1965, proposals were announced for Stansted to become 'London's third airport', and potentially bigger than Heathrow. This threat led to the formation of the North West Essex and East Hertfordshire Preservation Association ('NWEHPA'), a campaign group which would galvanise opposition to the proposals. After highly effective engagement in several rounds of expansion proposals, NWEHPA fell relatively dormant whilst retaining a significant number of members.

There was then a sudden wake-up call in 2002, when the Government again published proposals for major expansion at Stansted, potentially to four runways. This led to the establishment of Stop Stansted Expansion ('SSE') under the umbrella of NWEHPA. SSE is not a separate legal entity but instead operates as a campaign working group as a part of NWEHPA.

SSE has, of course, established its own public identity over the past 19 years and has notched up some considerable successes. Most notably, Stansted continues to be a single-runway airport and Stansted was not even shortlisted by the Airports Commission for major expansion.

Rationale for Change

Regardless of the outcome of the recent Public Inquiry, it is highly unlikely that Stansted Airport will apply for any further increase in its capacity for many years to come. In the 12 months to 31 March 2021, Stansted has handled just 3 million passengers and it will be a long and bumpy road for Stansted to recover, even to its pre-pandemic (2019) passenger throughput of 28 million passengers per annum (mppa). The current planning cap of 35mppa is unlikely to be reached within the next decade and it is questionable whether permission to grow to 43mppa – i.e. the issue at stake at the Public Inquiry – will ever be needed.

In addition to the expected long-term impact of Covid-19 on international air travel, there is growing recognition that the UK will not be able to meet its statutory target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 unless aviation emissions are brought under control. This almost certainly means that aviation growth will need to be constrained.

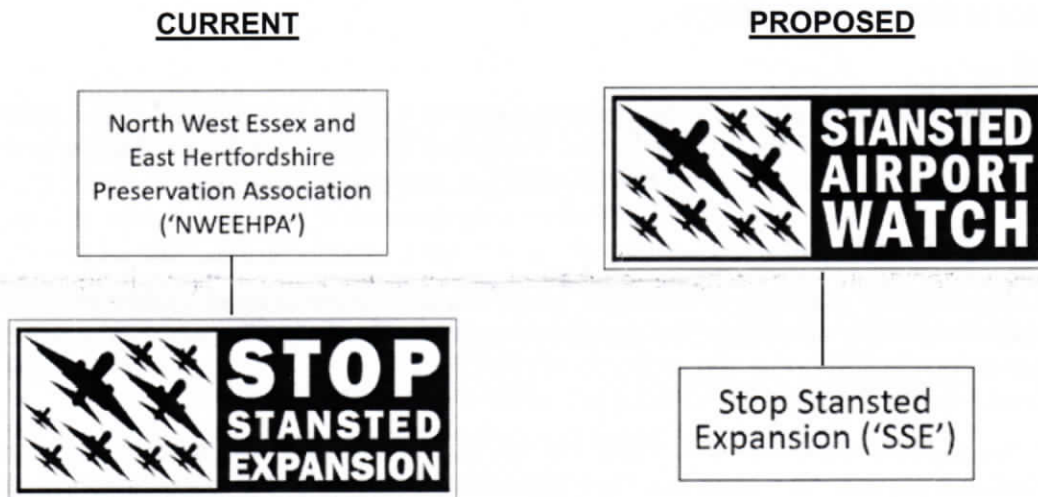
In the absence of any anticipated threat of Stansted seeking permission for further expansion in the course of the next decade, it is questionable whether 'Stop Stansted Expansion' continues to be an appropriate name for our campaign. Over the years, however, SSE has done far more than just dealing with the threat of expansion, for example, campaigning on night flights, on changes to flight paths, on the phasing out of noisier aircraft, on climate change, on homeowner mitigation and compensation, and far more besides.

All of that work will continue to be necessary and the view of the SSE committee is that this is the right time to re-focus the campaign on the task ahead. Rather than having to oppose expansion proposals, **the need will be to ensure that the airport's authorised operations cause as little harm as possible and, wherever possible, are managed so as to reduce harm.**

We must also be mindful of the fact that most of the current members of the SSE committee, to put it politely, are not exactly in the 'first flush of youth'. If there were to be another threat of airport expansion in, say, ten years' time, the current team would not be the best people to handle that challenge. It is time to start passing the baton to the next generation and to use the current hiatus to allow new blood to learn and gain experience of dealing with the key issues.

The Proposals

First, we believe that a new name, 'Stansted Airport Watch', is needed in order to demonstrate what we believe will be the nature of our work over the coming years. SSE would not be disbanded but instead would be put into hibernation - to be revived if and when necessary. The proposed constitutional position can best be explained by the following diagram:



You will see from the above that, constitutionally, we would bring about these changes by re-naming our parent organisation, NWEHHPA, to become Stansted Airport Watch ('SAW'). SSE would continue to be a working group, as before, but would no longer be the 'engine room' for the campaign. SAW would become the parent organisation as well as the engine room. The current SSE website, stationery, press releases etc would all be re-branded 'SAW'. To help convey continuity, the SAW logo will replicate, as closely as possible, the current SSE logo. The colour scheme will also be the same.

For those who have standing orders in favour of SSE, there is no need for any action on your part because SSE will continue to exist as an integral part of SAW. A small number of our members have standing orders in favour of NWEHHPA. Again, no action is required at this stage. The proposed changes first need to be approved by the AGM and, if so approved, it would then be up to our bank to advise whether it will be necessary for standing orders to be amended. We hope it will not be necessary but, if otherwise, we would contact the individual members concerned.

It is also intended to use the opportunity of this year's AGM to revise and update the Constitution to allow for wider membership participation on SAW's committee and to broaden the organisation's objectives beyond North West Essex and East Hertfordshire. A copy of the proposed Constitution is enclosed, together with an explanatory note.

With regard to personnel, most members of the current SSE and NWEHPA committees have indicated their willingness to continue to serve in the new organisation, as members of SAW's executive committee. Some of our existing long-serving committee members will, however, be standing down at this year's AGM to make way for new members to join the committee. We are very keen to find new blood in order to refresh the campaign going forward.

I shall myself be standing down after this year's AGM, having been a founder member of SSE in 2002, a member of NWEHPA for much longer than that, and Chairman of SSE since 2004. My Deputy Chairman at SSE, Brian Ross, has indicated his willingness to stand as Chairman for the coming year, and this would help to provide continuity during the transition. It will, of course, be a matter for members to elect whom they choose at the AGM and, indeed, it will also be entirely for our members to decide whether the new constitutional proposals should be adopted.

Please make every effort to attend this year's extremely important AGM which will take place on **Wednesday 26 May 2021 at the Silver Jubilee Hall, Takeley, starting at 8.00pm**. This needs to be a socially-distanced event and so it would be helpful if you could advise by email to info@stopstanstedexpansion.com or telephone 01279 870558 if you plan to attend.

The AGM agenda is set out overleaf. Our annual accounts will be posted on the SSE website at <https://stopstanstedexpansion.com/about-us/financial-accounts/> as soon as they become available and printed copies of the accounts will be provided at the AGM. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions or concerns regarding the proposals outlined in this letter.

Please give serious consideration to standing for election to the new SAW committee. You would be making an important contribution to the local community and I believe that you would find it both stimulating and rewarding. All appointments are only from one AGM to the next and so you would be able to decide in 12 months' time whether or not to seek re-election. If anyone would like to discuss this in advance, please feel free to telephone me on 01799 520411 or Brian Ross on 07850 937143.

I normally end my member letters by thanking you for your ongoing support, and I do so again now. On this occasion, however, having served as your Chairman for the past 17 years, I need to add a special personal thank you because it has been an honour and a privilege. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM on 26 May and being able to thank you in person.

Yours sincerely



Peter Sanders, Chairman