

RACC Public Domain information.

Minutes of a Meeting of the Rochester Airport Consultative Committee (RACC) held at Rochester Airport on 14th December 2012 at 16:00

Organisations represented by delegates:

Rochester Airport Limited (RAL)

Medway Ward Councillor (MWC)

Medway Council (MC)

Tonbridge & Malling Council (TMC)

Medway Aircraft Preservation Society (MAPS) Limited (MAPSL)

The Chairman

Minuting Secretary from GASCO

1. Welcome & Apologies

The Chairman opened the meeting at 16:00, welcomed the members, most of whom had attended the previous meeting 14 months ago.

Apologies had been received from delegates from MAPSL, Kent County Council (KCC), Skytrek (ST) and BAE Systems (BAES), all of whom had received Medway Council's briefing documents in advance or had actually attended the briefing.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2011 were accepted and signed as a true record.

3. To Appoint New Chairman

As the Chairman had recently taken over as Chairman of Rochester Airport Limited there would have been a conflict of interest had he remained as RACC Chairman. He proposed that a new Chairman should take over the role, which was unanimously accepted. The new Chairman thanked the members and said that he would endeavour to uphold his predecessor's fine example. It was his first duty, as well as a personal pleasure, to express thanks for all the hard work that his predecessor had done for the organisation and, especially, for ensuring that its importance, as a statutory body, was properly recognised. Sorry as we were to lose his Chairmanship, we would all congratulate him on his appointment as a Director and Chairman of RAL, a role in which we hoped he would have equal success.

4. To Consider the Details of the Media Launch on 10/12/12

MC said that events had gone very well and better than he had dared hope. Everything appeared to have worked to time and plan. An impressive job had been done on the visual presentation and the Airport Operators' inputs had been well received. The press and TV coverage had been as good as could be expected. There had been good coverage in the Medway Messenger with only one slightly negative comment. RAL said that he was pleased and impressed with the team and what they had put together and they should be congratulated. The local response seemed quite upbeat.

The proposal was to go to planning on Tuesday and should be passed (if no objections) by the Cabinet in five working days. Thereafter, the plan should proceed in a good timely manner.

MAPSL confirmed that its Board had formally approved the plan.

The Chairman pointed out that RACC allowed for comments from individuals as well as from representatives of organisations. On behalf of the RACC, he congratulated MC on the way the launch was handled and on the Council's excellent document.

RAL thanked the local councillors for their support. Timing was critical, in terms of the political process and the 'drop-dead' date in 2014. If we were not keeping to the timetable, we should be told.

TMC had reported back on the positive step forward with the development of the Airport, which was fantastic news for all concerned.

RAL mentioned the timescales involved with such a large planning application and concerns about traffic at the Bridgewood roundabout, which might result in an objection from the Highways Agency. This was something to keep in mind. MDL said there would be dual access to the development. The Kent Transport Plan stated that the whole gyratory system around the Bridgewood roundabout was a priority that needed sorting out.

MWC said he had lived at the foot of the runway for a number of years and represents the area. He had been surprised at how little response there had been from the local community but there was relief that the Airport was here to stay. The leaflets delivered had helped to explain the facts.

5. To Consider Matters Arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

The action on RAL to circulate details of airport events to RACC members had been achieved. Next year's events would be circulated once dates had been confirmed.

The question of the Airport's relationship with Medway Council had been superseded in the light of current events.

RAL confirmed that the trial for Runway 02 had been very successful and would be continued as there had been no complaints.

RAL said that MWC and he had carried out the actions on signage and clearance was awaited to approve the installation of a sign on Bridgewood Manor roundabout saying 'Rochester Airport'.

In relation to other signage there seemed to have been a communications gap which RAL would follow up with KCC

The tour by BAE Systems 1st year apprentices had taken place.

6. To Consider the Airport Managers' Report

RAL handed out copies of the Airport Manager's Report to the meeting (copy attached).

MWC believed that PC Townsend-Blazier would not be visiting Rochester Airport. While a police presence did not directly impact the Airport, it was useful having the base near to incident hotspots.

Rochester Airport's efforts, put into work-experience pupils, was appreciated and valued by local schools. RAL added that a pupil from Fort Pitt School assisted in the Control Tower on a Wednesday afternoon as she was considering ATC as a career.

RAL reported that the microlight school at Rochester fitted in well as the training was controlled and well -managed.

Chairman thanked RAL for the report.

7. Any Other Business

MWC commented on the long-running saga over signage at the Lord Lees roundabout. The Airport sign further up the Maidstone Road would now have an aeroplane painted on to it.

Countryside Properties wanted to build high-density flats on the college site, close to aircraft movements. Objections had been made to the Planning Department and there could also be problems for the Airport. The planning hearing was to be on 2nd January 2013 and the Airport could put in an objection by e-mail. The Board had agreed that it was an item that RACC should address. RAL said that the sound people had changed the company which had been monitoring noise and a visit was expected on Monday.

It was confirmed that the on-going conflict between the two flying schools at Rochester was in the process of being resolved, with a satisfactory solution for both sides.

The Chairman asked for a contact list of the members of RACC and the organisations they represent so as to ensure that representation was sufficient.

He also commented on the RACC representation on websites.

He had found many references on the internet to the RACC and other ACCs but none gave the information he was seeking. The main ones found were:

- Medway Council: (RACC as an "outside body)
- Rochester Airport
- The Liaison Group of UK Airport Consultative Committees

He had noted that:

- None gave membership (even an outdated list) or affiliations represented

- None showed who may join or be represented, and how.
- None had an easy link (if any at all) to the constitution.

So he asked:

Did the RACC recognise this as a problem?

If so, did it need addressing now?

If so, where should an “official” site (i.e. one created and maintained for the RACC itself) reside, and who should administer it?

It was agreed that the RACC would be hosted on the RAL website and would be maintained as a separate section. MC would be given a link to it from its own site that mentions RACC as an “Outside Body”. It was agreed that RAL would implement this and that PB would action.

Action: RAL

8. Date of Next Meeting:

To be confirmed once the date of the Master Plan was known.

RAL showed the TV coverage of the Rochester Airport Development Plan at the close of the meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Minutes Secretary for her invaluable help.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked the members for their contributions and declared the meeting closed at 17:10.