

Minutes of a Meeting of the Rochester Airport Consultative Committee (RACC) held at The Holiday Inn, Chatham on Friday 20th July 2018 (17:40)

Present:

M. Moulton (MM) – Chairman
D. Searle (DS) – Rochester Airport Ltd (RAL)
P. Britten (PB) – Rochester Airport Ltd (RAL)
K. Carr (KC) – Rochester Airport Ltd (RAL)
R. Heaps (RH) – MAPS Ltd.
Phil Cole (PC) – MAPS Ltd.
Allan Sullivan (AS) – TMBC
Stephen Morley (SM) – Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance Trust (KSSAAT)

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence:

The Chairman welcomed everyone attending including SM who was a new member representing the Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance.

This meeting was later in the year due to several issues around the weather, illness and holidays.

Members present took turns to introduce themselves and the organisations they represent.

Apologies had been received from: Anne Chapman, Local Resident Group; Steve Bursi, BAE Systems Ltd; Trevor Clarke, Medway Borough Council; Rupert Turpin, Medway Borough Council; Phil Rudd & Garry Price, Skytrek Flying School; Nigel Tiller, Aylesford Parish Council and Penny Gould, Secretary.

The Chairman opened the meeting with the following statement.

‘I would like to say how pleased I am that we are meeting again to conduct business of the many people who provide and enjoy the amenities of Rochester Airport, and so benefit the public.

The local industrial archaeologist John Preston, in a recent lecture to PAFRA, pointed out that the lease to create an airport at this site was granted by the Council in the 1920s, with the proviso that it should be an amenity to benefit the whole community. That condition has indeed been fulfilled ever since, as is testified today by Airport users and by visits from members of the public of all ages and occupations.

The formation, by statute, of airport consultative committees helps us to maintain the ethic of this Airport’s founders and I am grateful for the attendance of members who share their expertise and who take that responsibility seriously.

I would like to invite all who wish to do so, to outline the way in which their activity, including RACC membership, does benefit the public. This might perhaps be done after a period of reflection, if required, and added as an addendum to the published minutes’.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 10th March 2017:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th March 2017 were accepted and signed as a true record.

It was agreed that a two-week turnaround would be the aim for Minutes to appear on the Rochester Airport Ltd website.

3. Matters Arising not covered on the Agenda:

PB advised of a new member group requesting membership of the RACC. Following acceptance, the request was then subsequently withdrawn. Members of the RACC were disappointed to hear about the withdrawal.

4. Planning Application Progress:

PB gave an up-to-date report, which was attached to these Minutes.

PC MAPS were concerned but never got involved in any dispute.

DS would like to add a note about the fantastic efforts of KC & PB over the months, they had both completed all that had been asked of them.

DS also added that Medway Council were still very supportive, although there was political uncertainty at present.

MM thanked PB for his report.

5. Airport Manager's Report:

A report had been prepared by KC for the meeting and was attached to these Minutes.

AS mentioned that a couple of residents had spoken to him about the airport. KC requested AS to see if the residents would like to talk to him direct? AS will follow up on this.

MM thanked KC for his excellent report. He drew attention to the Airport as a public amenity and it was good to see it being so well used as such.

6. Other Business:

RH: MAPS Ltd activity continued. Visitor numbers had increased due to the Spitfire currently being restored in the workshop. RH would also like to add a note of thanks to the airport for their help and support.

SM: During the next 2-3 weeks the KSSAAT HQ would be fully open. The forward operation base for the helicopter was already live, although it must be remembered the helicopter base would remain at Redhill. In September there would be an open day and plans are in place for a couple of corporate functions.

PB Confirmed that, whatever happened, the land for the airport would remain, even without a paved runway. The hangars would be completed and MAPS Ltd re-located into a new hangar.

MM thanked everyone for attending.

7. Next Meeting: day, date and time:

It was proposed that, once Planning Permission was rolling, a meeting would be held shortly after. Tentatively, KC suggested a winter meeting.

There being no other business the meeting was closed at 19:13.

Signed

Dated

UPDATE ON PLANNING.

1. Revised application with EIA submitted Oct 2017.
2. Planning agents for Medway Council (MC) demand further work including enhanced noise.
3. DEFRA demand air quality study.
4. Highways England, HR1 demand safety cases and traffic surveys.
5. This work has now deliberately stalled.

SOUTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (SELEP.)

1. A 35% gap in funding uncovered by QS due to 5-year stale quotations. The £4.4m grant agreed will not increase.
2. SELEP will not allow additional private funding to a project they are delivering.
3. SELEP demand revised business case.
4. £2million shortfall is identified.
5. SELEP look for 'outputs' which a runway does not provide.
6. Decision taken to remove runway from business case as there was a high risk of failure/funding refusal if we only did some of the infrastructure work.
7. In May remodelled business case went back to SELEP and further clarification requested.
8. 15th June 2018 funding is unanimously awarded.

REVISED PROJECT AS FUNDED BY SELEP

1. Removal of paved runway.
2. Acknowledgment that the airport belongs to Medway Council not RALTD. MC will therefore be managing the entire project with an overview from RALTD QS.
3. All other works to be done to include:
 - o Complete refurb of H3.
 - o Refurb of hangar 4.
 - o Construction of new hangar (5)
 - o New MAPS hangar.
 - o Hub building
 - o Control tower.
 - o New helipads
 - o New fuel farm.
 - o New runway lights.
 - o Refurbished/new apron.

PLANNING

1. Withdrawal of existing planning application
2. Permission already granted for new hangars, all refurbishments, aprons, fuel farm and MAPS hangar.
3. New application to include new hub building, control tower and resiting of helipads
4. Application expected to be presented mid-August with normal planning terms.
5. No restrictions on movements.

FUTURE & TIMETABLE

1. Precise timetable being agreed by MC.
2. Going to tender ASAP.
3. New hangar 5 first item to be started in autumn.
4. Project time approx. 1 year, to finish winter 2019.
5. Runway 34/16 to be closed in due course.

We have no choice but to accept the SELEP decision. We have little influence over their decision and it was not possible to build a business case which would include a paved runway. We did try and were extremely disappointed at the time of this decision. Looking forward we take the view that we can continue with just a grass 02/20 main and relief and winter operations will continue as is.

As Directors, we cannot take decisions that could place the Company in jeopardy and considering the above and summer profitability we can continue. Completely new buildings will be a lot cheaper to maintain with cheaper utilities. We also bore in mind the economics of the newly constructed air ambulance headquarters and forward base. We believe that once the development work commences more business will be attracted. Enquiries are already being received.

We have not increased hangarage or airfield fees since December 2015, this is deliberate due to the deteriorating conditions and future expectations. We can no longer ignore this, in view of increasing staff costs and doubling of our rates last year. Landing fees etc. will also increase. Rents and leases are due for renegotiation late this year.

AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT TO ROCHESTER AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE – 20th July 2018

From the Watch Log

RFFS put on standby for various incidents. Rough running engines, doors opening, oil flaps open, number of landing gear issues, weather standbys. A couple of incidents on the airfield. I am pleased to report no injuries on any of these incidents.

Noise Complaints

I report 22 questions/complaints, 8 of these are noise complaints, 8 Low flying complaints, during take-off and Landing, 3 of these would not qualify as a complaint as no personal details were supplied. These have been logged during the last 16 months since our last meeting.

Airport Security

Two fence posts have been broken during the last year down Laker Road. Following the February Snow 100m of fencing was replaced.

Hangar 3 alarm went off for no apparent reason on four occasions last year.

Three visits by travelers in the Toys R Us car park, stayed for less than a couple of day's.

Following damage to a fabric hangar and theft of petrol, tools and aviation fuel, reported last year the man arrested from Chatham was sentenced for 2.5 years and another 1.5 years for other offences. My thanks to the local Police for following up on these incidents.

Christmas Night fence was damaged in a couple of places, PC World was broken into and nothing was stolen.

January 14th early evening, the tool storage for the builders of KSSAAT was broken into and £18.5K of tools taken. A white Ford Transit with two or more white males were videoed entering and exiting the site.

General

Since our last meeting 5 scout/cub groups (90 children given an insight into the Airport, a tour of control tower and hangars, the tour also included an overview of an aircraft.) With another 2 already planned for this Year.

13 local schools visited, with a total of 608 children.

3 local groups visit 40 people in total.

9 Kent Fire and Rescue (KFRS) visit to support the ongoing training for KFRS personnel and the new Rochester fire station.

19 work experience pupils have been supported by Rochester Airport, with another 1 planned for later in the Year.

Operation Propeller, 5 second world war veterans were to fly from Rochester in 3 aircraft. Unfortunately, two canceled due to poor weather.

Good Friday spot landing competition cancelled due to poor weather, rescheduled to May Bank Holiday.

Aircraft movements were slightly down on previous year due to weather. Busiest Months being June-September with July being the busiest month of the year.

Air Watch had a number of successful meetings in the airport café and a number of exercises in the local area.

A few ATC squadrons have used the airport for drill and band practice.

Continuing to support local group with car parking. (Anne Chapman/Southern Highlanders/Graham Underwood)

Model flying evenings have stopped for 2018.

Southend have requested RNAV approaches to NATS and CAA.

NATS LAMP project has been implemented over the Rochester area.

Brenden O'Brian Flying Circus has set up at Headcorn with H300 helicopter and PA-18 fix wing.

Hangar 3 continues requiring attention. Successful repairs carried out at great expense.

KSSAAT purchased the Hangar from AV8 Helicopters September 2016, you can see the new KSSAAT HQ building, which should be opening during August 2018.

Visit by Arthur from CH4, also was very good to the Pilgrim School who were visiting at the time.

APPG are Likely to visit Rochester this year.

LAA Fly-in last year with 13 visiting aircraft.

Chairman of Network Rail visited Rochester and spent some time with the helicopter team.

Biggin Hill update with the demise of GA.

Kelvin Carr, Airport Manager, Rochester Airport Ltd.

Would you kindly log as a complaint that on the 22nd May at approximately 1345hrs an aircraft twice passed over our property at a dangerously low altitude. We were able to easily read the ID of G-****. This action is unnecessary and potentially dangerous, inconsiderate idiots like this do nothing to foster good neighbour relations.

I trust you this complaint will receive your attention? Regards, Mr B.

KC e-mailed a reply, it's on the climb out on a hot day, in short. Mr B replied with Friday evening: Dear Mr C.

Thank you for your email and explanation. I did not need confirmation the aircraft was in proximity to our property, it flew directly over us, on two consecutive occasions a fact you fail to mention.

The aircraft had not banked and certainly was not at a height of five hundred feet, it was much lower. I fully appreciate how the elements affect climb ratios, regardless of what your control tower reports from their position half a kilometre away. Other aircraft had previously taken off using this same runway without trying to hit our chimney, there is no justification or need to fly in such a dangerous inconsiderate way.

If student pilots are taught to pilot in this way it is little wonder we have reason to complain. Thank you for logging this as a complaint and please be aware we are circulating our neighbours to bring these unnecessary incidents to your notice so that incidences of this nature are properly recorded in the future. We do realise complaints will be dealt with in similar fashion.

As responsible aviation operators perhaps you will provide these people with some guidelines to avoid bad behaviour like this?

Regards, Mr B.

Mr F phoned to ask how much longer do we have to put up with the Autogyro. Whilst I was still on the phone G**** landed and I asked K if this was his last detail, K confirmed. Mr F wanted me to log his phone call as a complaint as he and his neighbours are fed up having to accept the noise from the autogyros, he has been up every day this last week. KC confirmed address and assured Mr F it would be logged. Mon 29th 09:08 9cct 10:19, 11:59 6cct 12:46 (Interestingly, K was off yesterday Sunday 28th) 28th "0" movements. Sat 27th Local + Cct detail 13:07 6cct 13:49. Frid 26th 3 cct details. 10:01 6cct 10:45, 12:24 6ccts 13:04, 14:57 6 cct 15:46. Thurs. 25th 08:49 local 2cct on rtn 09:37, 10:21 rtn 11:08, 12:58 9cct 13:56. Wed 24th 11:19 8 cct 12:13, 13:20 5 cct 14:04, 14:46 1 cct 15:00. Tue 23th 09:57 rtn 19:23. Mon 22nd 09:13 rtn 2cct 1156, 12:52 4cct 13:29.

Mr F phoned to register his complaint about the autogyro which has been going around all day, you can set your watch by it! It is very upsetting when at this time of the year you try and spend time in the garden. G-**** had just completed a 50 min session with another session completed in G-**** between 08:33 and 09:21. K advised there would be another detail of 45 min or so later. Mr F was advised of this. I assured Mr F his complaint would be logged.

49 E-mail 22 May 2017 Monday 17:38:00 Mr B
50 P 29 May 2017 B/Monday 12:50:00 Mr F

Maidstone Road B/Hill
Golding Close

51 P 13 June 2017 Tuesday 14:01:00 Mr F

Golding Close

52	P	19 June 2017	Monday	14:01:00	A Lady	Wilson Avenue	Not Supplied	A Lady from Wilson Avenue phoned about a microlight that had been circuiting all day, every 5 min or so. Only possible aircraft was G-OSVN Autogyro who had just completed a cct detail (13:07 - 14:01) 8 cct in total. The Lady said it was totally unacceptable. She was advised the aircraft had only been up for just under an hour and had finished it's detail, was unable to advise if they had finished for the day, asked if she wanted us to log as a complaint, the Lady said not yet.
53	P	01 July 2017	Saturday	12:48:00	A Lady	Not Supplied	Not Supplied	A Lady phoned to complain about a helicopter which is going around and around to the north of the airfield. KC advised that there was nothing he could do as it was a Police helicopter on task. The Lady said "Thank You" confirmed it was Police and then hung up. The Police helicopter was on task for approx. 40 min.
54	P	22 July 2017	Saturday	12:38:00	Mr M	Wilson Ave		Mr M of Wilson Ave phoned to congratulate all the pilots that have flown today, "They have been most courteous, long may it continue"! KC thanked Mr M.
55	P	22 July 2017	Saturday	12:55:00	Mr M	Wilson Ave		Mr M phoned to advise that G-**** was far to low, just missing the tops of his conifers. Not the 4' glideslope and could we have a word with the pilot. Many thanks.
56	P	23 August 2017	Wednesday	15:35:00	Mr F	Golding Close		Mr F of Golding Close called to complain about the noise from the autogyro, keeps on going over and cutting his engine over his house. The noise pollution is unacceptable. "Can't he go somewhere else"! KC explained about the wind being 200'. Said I would log his complaint.
57	P	03 September 2017	Sunday	10:02:00	Mr E	Wilson Avenue		Stated an aircraft Cessna type came over his home very low - Below the tree line! Gave the Reg G- OLA approx. 10:58 local time. LC said the manager would call him back. KC phoned Mr E who used to work in the towers at BAE. Said that the aircraft was very low thought it was coming through my roof. I highlighted that no aircraft with that Reg has landed at Rochester. (A Cessna C175 N Reg had flown a couple of ccts around this time on a sale demo flight, this aircraft has a much larger engine than any of the other Cessna's based at Rochester, this aircraft landed at 10:01Z? Followed on with a conversation about our development and all aircraft going over his house.
58	P	12 September 2017	Tuesday	15:05:00	Mr F	Golding Close		Mr F called to complain about the Autogyro. It's been in the cct all afternoon. It isn't allowed, he shouldn't be doing ccts. The noise is very unacceptable, he is also switching off his engine over my house! That is very disconcerting. I would like you to register my complaint. (G-**** 2 cct details, 13:09 5 cct's 13:55 and 14:42 5 cct's 15:22)
59	P	14 September 2017	Thursday	09:42:00	Mrs C	Common Lane		Mrs C and her husband have lived at this address for over 32 years, Helicopter was hovering from 00:30 - 04:15 hours over Common Road? KC phoned Mrs C back to advise this was a police helicopter looking for a potential suicide lost person 03:52 - 04:18 hours, the MOD confirmed a Chinook helicopter was in the area on exercise around 00:30 hours. Mrs C was very happy with my reply.
60	P	24 September 2017	Sunday	13:32:00	Mr B	Prison Borstal		Mr B phoned to complain about low flying aircraft today. KC explained that we are using 16 and the aircraft were coming into land over the prison. One of the Guvnors has visited us to see and be shown the site etc. This Guvnor was from one of the high security Prisons where aircraft are not allowed to fly over. Happy with my reply.

61	P	09 February 2018	Friday	10:01:00	Mss J	Borstal	Reported a low flying aircraft that just missed the chimney of Pilgrim School. KC phoned the school who didn't know anything about this. Head Teacher said she would come back to me, also stated that Mss J had spoken to her that morning and said nothing? Mrs H called back and advised that nothing had happened, she had spoken with the lunch supervisors and they would have reported anything like this. Mrs H will also be having words with Mss J. By the way our school is close/under the M2 motorway bridge? KC thanked her for her help. KC phoned Mss J to advise who accepted what had been said, her daughter was the one who reported it to her!
62	P	23 April 2018	Monday	13:58:00	?	Burham	Not a complaint! Likes the airfield but could we see if anything could be done about the EFATO place, could the location change where the instructors pull the throttle back? KC said he would talk with the flying school. Very happy with my reply. ?
63	P	08 June 2018	Friday	13:50:00	C	Wilson Avenue	Not a Complaint, we like the airport! What's going on? Just had a very busy hour on 02 and advised that the circuit traffic had also just landed. KC offered a visit etc. Happy and thanked me for my time. A male phoned up to ask if a twin was inbound to us as it was less than 200' over his house and looked as if it was going to crash. KC advised that it had just landed and it was a BE 200 a little larger than the normal C-172, because of it's size it would appear lower. The approach was normal to high for rwy 16. The person took my name and hung up!
64	P	23 June 2018	Saturday	07:59:00	?	?	Complaint about low flying aircraft. An aircraft has just flown very low over my house this morning. Also since July last year aircraft keep fly low over my house, which is at the top end of Eccles near the school, this is an issue! Kc advised she lives under the approach to 02 rwy and next time this happens to call him so I can look into this matter. Happy with my response. She has phoned the CAA who advised she needs to supply the registration of the aircraft.
65	P	28 June 2018	Thursday	11:45:00	Mss F	Greenfield Close Eccles	KC was covering lunch in the tower, Joanne phoned up to advise low flying aircraft has just passed G**** had just landed then Joanne said and another one G**** was reporting final and then landed, when it was just coming over the threshold it was approx. 150 - 200' so was higher than normal? Mss F was advised of this. An e-mail was sent and answered the following Monday. Not a complaint But I have a very ill boy who is being troubled by the noise from the helicopter, is there anything you can do? KC replied that we would see if anything can be done.
66	P	29 June 2018	Friday	13:04:00	Mss F	Greenfield Close Eccles	Helicopter operating at Rochester, Mr B is unable to enjoy his garden... KC returned Mr B phone call, He advised KC that there were other days planned, he is also unable to enjoy his garden! KC said we would do what we can, No promises.
67	P	08 July 2018	Sunday	11:01:00	A lady	?	A man left a message on KC mobile. Lives in Wouldham and have been buzzed all weekend by a helicopter, who do I speak to get it stopped? May be I will go to Medway Council to get it stopped. No Name, Phone Number or address supplied.
68	P	08 July 2018	Sunday	11:14:00	Mr B	Maidstone Road B/Hill	
69	P	08 July 2018	Sunday	15:30:00	A Man	Wouldham ?	

70 P 08 July 2018 Sunday 15:30:00 Mss G

Wouldham

Complaint about Helicopter, keeps going round and round also low. KC advised that the helicopter was providing flight experience today. Surprised at the flying low comment as the helicopter was High in the circuit which would put the helicopter greater than 1,500'.