

June 2010

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depends on
your support

TAKE OFF

The journal of HACAN



Campaigning to
win again!

Victory!

The new Government has scrapped plans for a third runway at Heathrow. After nearly a decade of campaigning, the coalition opposed to expansion at Heathrow has scored a famous victory. It was a third runway at Heathrow that the UK aviation industry wanted above all else. It has suffered a shattering defeat. The Government has also promised to block any plans for new runways at Stansted and Gatwick. BAA has said it will not pursue plans for new runways at Heathrow or Stansted.

The national picture has radically changed since the publication in 2003 of the previous Government's Aviation White Paper which planned to cater for an almost trebling of passengers using UK airports by 2030 through the construction of up to six new runways across the UK. None is now being actively planned.

The White Paper was killed off a couple of months before the General Election when a High Court judge ruled that it was no longer relevant because it did not take account of the Government's latest policy on climate change or adequately incorporate the new cost of carbon. The case was brought (in the form of a Judicial Review against the Labour Government's decision of January 2009 to give BAA the green light to draw up detailed plans for a third runway) by the 2M group of local authorities, HACAN, NoTRAG (the No Third Runway Action Group) and a number of national environmental groups.

It is expected that the new Government will begin to draw up a new aviation policy. Early indications are that it will seek to manage demand by ruling out new runways, through investment in high-speed rail and by replacing Air Passenger Duty with a per plane tax. We will be pressing for a commitment, possibly in the form of a legal agreement, that the third runway will remain off the agenda.



HACAN Annual Meeting: 15th July

7.30pm, in St Anne's Church Hall, Kew Green
(about 5 minutes walk from both Kew Gardens or Kew
Bridge stations; or 391 bus; parking fairly limited)

An opportunity to discuss our campaigning plans
following the 3rd runway Campaign

We welcome as many of our supporters to our AGM
as possible. It is a chance for you to make suggestions
about our campaigning and to hear our ideas.

Victory Celebrations

"The victory was no fluke. It wasn't a question of luck. It was the result of a clear strategy, a radical approach, daring tactics and an utter refusal by the campaigners to believe that we wouldn't win".

We are putting together a short book telling the story of the 10 year campaign to stop expansion at Heathrow. We are hoping it will be available within the next couple of months. We will be putting it on our website.

See back page for celebration event

A Successful Campaign

There are a number of key reasons why, against all the odds, the campaign was won

1. We worked as a coalition



We put together the most wide-ranging coalition ever assembled against airport expansion in the UK. It included residents' organisations, environmental groups, over two dozen local authorities, a cross-party group of MPs and peers and direct action activists. The coalition gave us a stronger voice and enabled us to campaign on a wider range of issues: noise, climate change, community destruction.

2. We challenged the economic arguments



We didn't just campaign on environmental matters. We challenged the economic argument that the Government and the aviation industry made for expansion. They argued that, if Heathrow didn't expand, London's economy would suffer. Our economic report, commissioned from the independent Dutch consultants CE Delft, showed that would not be the case. It found that, because of all the other attractions London had for business, firms would not relocate to other cities if Heathrow did not expand. The report played an important role in convincing politicians that the economic case for expansion was shaky; what was needed was a better not bigger airport.

3. We put forward solutions



In 2006 we carried out a short survey which looked at the destinations served by Heathrow. We found that between a fifth and a quarter of all flights were to destinations where a fast, affordable rail serve could be a viable alternative. As part of AirportWatch, the national umbrella body of organisations opposed to expansion at the UK's airports, we argued for a fair price for air travel: that its fuel should be taxed; that its exemption from VAT should be removed; and that it should pay its full environmental and social costs. That would guarantee a switch from air to rail.

4. We fought a pro-active campaign



We set the agenda through publishing our own reports, organising public meetings, demonstrations and flashmobs, liaising with the direct action activists and even staging our own alternative exhibitions during the consultation period. We tried to put the Department for Transport and BAA on the defensive. We didn't attempt to talk to them. They wanted a third runway and more planes on the existing runways. We didn't. End of conversation! Only by challenging them had we any chance of winning.

Our Next Challenges

The big challenge is to improve things for people under the current flight paths

Retain Runway Alternation

Runway Alternation – where planes when landing at Heathrow switch runways at 3pm to give people in the areas closer to the airport a break from the noise – is critical for people living in these areas. All political parties are committed to retaining it but they may come under renewed pressure from BAA and the airlines to ease some of the restrictions now that the third runway has been dropped. We are exploring legal ways whereby runway alternation could be guaranteed. BAA is currently experimenting with procedures known as TEAM and TED which allows it to use both runways for “short” periods of the day to relieve congestion on the ground or in the air. We will be working to ensure this doesn't lead to the end of runway alternation by stealth.

Curb Night Flights



The current night flight agreement with the airlines comes to an end in October 2012. The Department for Transport expect to start consulting on a new agreement by the end of this year. Currently 16 scheduled flights – all landings – are permitted between 11.30pm and 6am. There are, however, no restrictions between 6am and 7am when there are around 65 flights. We aim to talk with the new Government to explore ways of reducing night flights. In particular, we will be urging it to re-examine the previous Government's claim that the 16 flights permitted before 6am are essential to the economy. It defies commonsense to believe that they are.

Quieten the Skies

The absence of planes after the eruption of the Icelandic volcano brought home to so many people just how much noise Heathrow aircraft are creating over London and the Home Counties.

Over the last few years HACAN has produced a series of reports and videos showing how over the last decade aircraft noise has become a real problem in areas far from Heathrow. It has been exacerbated in some areas by the increase in flights from City Airport and the new flight paths they are using.

Below is the outline of a practical plan to quieten the skies:

- **End the practice of Heathrow operating at 99% capacity.** This is the reason why so many planes are being held in the skies over London, causing unnecessary extra noise, emissions and air pollution.
- **Introduce a steeper 'glideslope' for aircraft when landing.** This would mean planes are higher for longer. We understand the industry is examining the practicality of this.
- **Encourage planes to join their final approach path as late as possible.** Since the mid-1990s, aircraft have been directed on to their final approach path, sometimes 20 miles from the airport, resulting in such a concentration of noise in places like Vauxhall – see the video on our website – that the overall noise climate can be worse than West London, which at least has the benefits of runway alternation.
- **Encourage fewer, if bigger planes, to use Heathrow.** Sensible use of the larger aircraft coming on the market could be a win-win situation, allowing more passengers to use the airport but with fewer planes. The Government's proposed Plane Tax could be the vehicle to encourage this to happen.
- **Curb expansion at City Airport.** For parts of East and South-East London the combination of noise from Heathrow and City Airport has become a real problem.

New Transport Team

Philip Hammond, MP for Runnymede and Weybridge, has been appointed Secretary of State for Transport.

Theresa Villiers, MP for Chipping Barnet, becomes the Minister of State for Transport. She will have responsibility for aviation.

The two Under-Secretaries at the Department are **Norman Baker MP** and **Mike Penning MP**.

Potentially it is a strong team with Theresa Villiers having shadowed transport for the Conservatives in opposition and Norman Baker shadowing for the Liberal Democrats.

City Airport Campaigners Go To Court

Fight the Flights, the campaign group which represents residents affected by City Airport, has won the right to mount a Judicial Review against the decision of Newham Council, the planning authority, to grant the airport permission to increase flights by 50%. The High Court challenge will be heard on the 18th and 19th November.

Fight the Flights is also asking for a full and public review of the new flight paths which were introduced last year. In order to cater for the increase in the number of jets using the airport – rather than the smaller, quieter turbo-props which used to predominate – take-off flight paths have been extended, bringing aircraft noise to whole new swathes of East London. NATS (National Air Traffic Control) and the Civil Aviation Authority are reviewing the flight paths this Summer. Fight the Flights have gained widespread support from local authorities and MPs across East London for their call for a public review.

It is expected that an All-Party Group will be set up in Parliament to focus on City Airport. And, later this year, the Environment Committee of the Greater London Authority will be mounting an Enquiry into the situation with the airport.

Celebrate!

28th August is the likely date for party in Sipson to celebrate the success in getting a 3rd runway and mixed-mode dropped. The details are still being finalised but a large number of people are expected to attend: the many organisations and individuals who were part of the successful campaign. You are all invited!

Check out our website for updates.

Information

Track Flight Paths on Screen
Check out Webtrak on www.baa.com/noise

BAA Complaints Line - 0800 344 844
It is not usually staffed. The service is useful for getting factual advice or registering a complaint. But don't expect action from BAA.

Check the Newspapers
For a daily digest of aviation stories carried by the national media, try the excellent (and free!) website: www.transportinfo.org.uk

If you want regular news by email.....
The newsletter comes out twice a year. If you want a more regular update on news, events and actions you can take, sign up to Update which is emailed out to people usually about twice a month. If you want to receive it, email us on info@hacan.org.uk

Direct Action - it's not just a youth thing
HACAN does not organise direct action but if you are interested in taking part in direct action or simply want to find out more about it, we can put you in contact with the right people – email us on info@hacan.org.uk or call 0207 7737 6641 or contact Plane Stupid: www.planestupid.com

Take Off
Take Off is compiled by John Stewart, assisted by Laurie Anders, printed by RAP Spiderweb and published by HACAN, PO Box 339, Twickenham, TW1 2XF, tel 020 8876 0455, email info@hacan.org.uk
www.hacan.org.uk

Our Administrator, Nicky Warren, writes:

A big thank-you to all of you who regularly renew your membership. Just four things that would make my life so much easier:

- If you are able to renew as quickly as possible after the first request, it would save us the cost of sending out a reminder letter and maybe deleting you altogether!
- If you send us a cheque, please give your full address and membership number as well as your name as obviously there are a number of members with the same name.
- If you send us a donation, please make it clear that it is a donation in addition to your membership subscription. It gets complicated if you send a donation in lieu of your subscription.
- And, please, please, print your email addresses!