

Consultative Committee

DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

12 JANUARY 2017

PRESENT: Alan Tolhurst OBE (Chair)
Councillor R Blake (Doncaster MBC), A Bosmans (FODSA), M Cotterill (Peel Airports Management), Councillor D Lelliott (Rotherham MBC), Parish Councillor N McCarron (Blaxton Parish Council), K Naylor (Doncaster Sheffield Airport), County Councillor C Pearson (North Yorkshire County Council), Councillor D Pidwell (Bassetlaw DC), A Shirt (Committee Secretary), Y D Woodcock (Ex-Officio) and Parish Councillor J Worthington (Cantley with Branton Parish Council)

Apologies were received from: Councillor J Blackham, P Cole, Councillor J Cox, D Fell, Councillor R Franklin, Councillor B Mordue, Councillor P J O'Connor, M Di Salvatore, Councillor I Saunders, Councillor P Skelding, Councillor A Smith and Councillor C L Strange

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed Members to the eleventh Annual General Meeting of Doncaster Sheffield Airport Consultative Committee.

Introductions were made and apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 MINUTES OF THE ACC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14 January 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

No matters were noted as arising.

4 CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair reported upon the national and global aviation scene and operations at Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

Travel Industry

The Chair reported that, 2016 had been a difficult year for the Travel Industry which had a clear impact on Aviation. Events such as the continuing Arab Spring, the war in Syria, terrorist activity, the drop in the value of the pound, and increases in the cost of fuel, had created challenging trading conditions.

During the year there was the demise of the Low Cost Holiday Group, as well as questions raised about the financial health of Monarch Airlines. Furthermore, only a week or so ago, there was the failure of the All Leisure Group.

There was also the referendum result on EU membership which served to add to the uncertainties.

Despite the media and political clamour for information on the Government's plans, it was not yet clear how Brexit would impact on the stream of industries and sectors, including Travel and Aviation, which are monitored by EU agencies under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

While the failures in the Travel Industry cannot be ascribed solely to the uncertainties over Brexit, it seems unlikely that the situation will change much in 2017. All the signs are that initially the focus of the EU negotiations will be on the immigration, the single market and trade developments with the wider market.

Terrorism

The Chair highlighted that there was the ever present threat of Terrorism; the Terrorist attacks in important aviation hubs such as Brussels, Paris, Nice and Istanbul adversely affected the travel business to these cities and reenergising the traffic did take time. Fortunately, the travel trade public is more stoical; even defiant and gradually the travel trade to major important cities is being restored including the Flybe flights to Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin.

Airport Commission

The Chair commented that it was not all bad news, and that, there were some bright points, many of which had an impact on Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

The announcement in October that there would be a third runway built at Heathrow had prompted a debate on how better use could be made of regional airports. Certainly those airports located furthest from the south east could see opportunities opening up for them. Whether the developments in the south east would have a significant impact on DSA remained to be seen. Against this backdrop Peel's proposals on the development of a main line station at the airport is an excellent strategic move.

APD

Air Passenger Duty continued to make it into the headlines; despite stalwart efforts by airport operators and airlines for the government in England to reduce the crippling financial burden on passengers by reviewing its APD plans, the tax was still being applied, albeit with some reductions in charges for children. The reluctance to change, grates, given the decision in Scotland to remove the Duty.

Drones

Turning to operational matters, the increasing use of Drones during the year produced some worrying reports of near collisions between unmanned vehicles and aircraft in the vicinity of airports. The problem has grown to such an extent that the CAA is consulting on ways in which Drone operators might be regulated. The sad point is that, the vast majority of operators act with due respect for the safety and privacy of others; it is the thoughtless few who get the whole a bad name. The Chair commented that, if penalties are introduced, they will be stringent and act as a deterrent.

As part of Members keeping abreast of developments, the ACC and Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee had received a briefing on Drones and the use of Lasers near airports. So far, there had not been a major problem at DSA.

Local Scene – Developments

Turning now to the local scene, 2016 had seen many interesting developments. The Chair commented that he had selected a few which he believed showcased the considerable strides Peel Airports Ltd is making as a generator of economic wealth in the region.

Passengers

During the year, DSA celebrated welcoming its 10 millionth passenger, which was a significant milestone, especially bearing in mind the challenges which the Aviation Industry has faced since the start of the economic downturn in 2008. It was also good to note that August had been the busiest month on record for passenger throughput, compared to similar months in other years.

Surface Access

Access to the airport for Sheffield City Region and further afield was greatly enhanced with the opening of the Great Yorkshire Way in February; and this, coupled with the introduction of the Meet and Greet service, had been a real benefit to business and leisure travellers alike, speeding up their passage through the system. Furthermore, Flybe's offering of services to major European destinations had increased even more DSA's connectivity as a major international destination for the North.

Towards the end of the year Members had received the announcement that plans were being developed to build a direct rail link to the Airport. The proposal included the construction of a spur of the East Coast Mainline service, which would permit trains to stop within the boundary of the airport. Such a service, together with the improved access which the Great Yorkshire Way offers, must surely make DSA more attractive to travellers, than, say, Leeds-Bradford. The extension to the Great Yorkshire Way was expected to be started in the next few months.

Business Developments

The news the Aerocentre Yorkshire had been selected as one of the schemes put forward by the Sheffield City Region for inclusion in the Northern Powerhouse

Investment portfolio gave a tremendous boost to local regeneration plans and served as a strong endorsement of Peel's commitment to the regional economy.

Marketing

In keeping with other changes, a new Airport website was introduced during the year. The new layout and content had been widely welcomed as was the Airport's first commercial in prime-time programmes on ITV Yorkshire. Exposure to a much wider audience than was the case previously, can only be good.

Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee

The Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee held quarterly meetings during the year and received some very interesting briefings on the Policing services at the airport. Members also received a most informative briefing on the use of Drones and Laser pens near airports. UK Border Force staff had given the ACC an insight into the valuable security and customs service which the Agency provides; the briefing was so good, that Members even felt sorry for the people who face the wrath of passengers asked to unpack their luggage when suspicions are aroused.

One item of particular note for the Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee was the important part played by local representatives in creating an effective liaison between the Airport and the local community. As a result of a misunderstanding on the part of local representatives from Tickhill there was a sharp increase in complaints from that Town following the introduction of services by Flybe. The Tickhill residents had been told that aircraft from DSA should not be flown over the Town and that they should complain when they did. In the event, the problem was solved when local representatives realised that they had misunderstood the aircraft departure information and that, all aircraft were being operated to approved standards and procedures. Since then, the number of complaints from Tickhill had fallen considerably.

Complaints

In relation to complaints, the overall number of complaints received by the airport had significantly increased during the year. There had been an increase over the summer due to complaints received from Tickhill residents and training flights continued to generate high numbers of complaints.

Looking Ahead

The publication of Peel's document 'Vision for Transformational Growth' demonstrated that the Airport is primed for growth. The document set out the considerable potential the airport offers and how the key developments in 2016 were but steps along an ambitious journey which will see the Airport play an even greater part in the prosperity of the city region, in the Northern Powerhouse and nationally.

The Chair rounded-up his Annual Report by thanking his colleagues for their contribution to the oversight of the Airport, which the Committee performs. Understanding the complexities of Aviation is not easy and the part Members play in creating an effective link between the Airport and local communities is crucial to the success of the Airport as a critical element in the regeneration of the city region.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Steve Gill and his colleagues for their support of the Committee and for their openness in tackling some sensitive, challenging issues, especially regarding noise.

Y Woodcock along with all other Members of the Committee thanked A Tolhurst for his continued work on behalf of the Airport Consultative Committee.

Y Woodcock referred to the Airport's Special Assistance Service, asking if this service could be publicised further. Y Woodcock suggested that the airport made contact with Doncaster Deaf College to inform them of this additional service.

K Naylor reported that information regarding the Airport's Special Assistance service was available on the airport's website and that contact would be made with the Chair of Doncaster Deaf College.

K Naylor reported that airport personnel carrying out front-line customer service roles were due to receive general disability awareness training shortly. Additionally, a Disability Access Audit of the airport's facilities had been carried out late last year; the results were awaited.

In relation to Drones, Parish Councillor McCarron informed the Committee that the Government had launched a consultation on drone safety which included new measures to ensure the successful uptake of drones is matched by strong safeguards to protect the public. The consultation put forward a number of proposals to develop the UK's policy and regulatory framework which included:-

- Mandatory registration of new drones;
- Tougher penalties for illegal flying near no-fly zones and new signs for no-fly zones at sensitive sites such as airports and prisons;
- Making drones electronically identifiable so the owner's details can be passed to the Police if they are spotted breaking the law; and
- The consultation will also consider whether there is a need for a new criminal offence for misuse of drones.

A copy of the DfT's press release 'New proposed measures for drones in the UK' (21 December 2016), along with a news article published in The Guardian on 21 December 2016 are attached to the minutes for Members' information.

Parish Councillor McCarron suggested that Members display the above press release and news article on their village noticeboards.

RESOLVED – That the Chair's Annual Report be noted.

5 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

A report of the Committee Secretary was presented setting out the current membership of the Airport Consultative Committee and the Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee.

Councillor Blake reported that she represented both the Rossington and Bawtry ward and asked that this be updated on the membership report. **ACTION: A Shirt**

Councillor Pidwell informed the Committee that he was of the understanding that Jim Bamford had retired from Nottinghamshire County Council. **ACTION: A Shirt to obtain confirmation from Nottinghamshire County Council.**

RESOLVED – That the Committee notes the current membership of the Airport Consultative Committee and Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee.

6 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2017

RESOLVED – That the following schedule of meetings be agreed:-

Airport Consultative Committee

Thursday 12 January 2017 (AGM and Ordinary)
Thursday 6 April 2017
Thursday 13 July 2017
Thursday 19 October 2017

Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee

Thursday 16 March 2017
Thursday 22 June 2017
Thursday 14 September 2017
Thursday 7 December 2017

All meetings will commence at 10:00 am in the Blenheim meeting room in Heyford House, Doncaster Sheffield Airport, unless stated otherwise.

CHAIR