



10th March 2014

Ellisfield Parish Council
Chairman Cllr Timothy Guinness,
Widmoor Farm,
College Lane,
Ellisfield,
Hampshire.
RG25 2QE

Dear Mr Guinness,

TAG Farnborough Airport (TAG), the privately-owned operator of Farnborough Airport, plans a substantial increase in the number of aircraft arrivals and departures at Farnborough and has proposed significant changes to arrival and departure flight paths to accommodate this growth. To enable these changes TAG has now formally applied for the creation of a very large volume of new lower controlled airspace (down to very low levels in some places) across Hampshire, Surrey, West Sussex, the Isle of Wight, part of Eastern Dorset and part of Southern Berkshire.

Estimates suggest 30,000 passengers per year currently use Farnborough. TAG is now applying for approximately twice the volume of controlled airspace that London Gatwick Airport uses to handle 34.2 million passengers per year. So on current numbers TAG is proposing over 2,000 times more controlled airspace per passenger than London Gatwick Airport requires. We believe this is a completely disproportionate proposal today and for any approved future expansion of aircraft and passenger movements at Farnborough; it will have a significant adverse effect on the people living and working in the affected areas as well as other legitimate airspace users in the South of England.

Your community is listed in the TAG's proposal document as a 'stakeholder', meaning TAG believes your [town] [village] [community] will be affected by these changes.

To date, requests for new controlled airspace have only been approved by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for 'Commercial Air Transport' operations for airlines. It is unprecedented for new controlled airspace to be created solely for 'Civil Commercial' operations, such as TAG's business and private jet operations at Farnborough.

The huge volume of airspace affected by this proposal is currently a major shared aviation thoroughfare; the gateway to, from and across central Southern England. Currently there are orders of magnitude more aircraft operating in this airspace than are landing and taking off at Farnborough. If the requested controls were applied, most of these 'non-Farnborough' aircraft would be diverted around and under the new controlled airspace and be 'squeezed' into the narrow remaining corridors. This has serious consequential noise, pollution and safety implications. Some aviation organisations, flying and gliding clubs and related businesses would face severe restrictions; others may have to close down altogether, with the associated job losses.

To summarise, there are many serious consequences over the very large affected area:

- **Increased noise and environmental pollution including over previously unaffected areas due to the large number of 'non-Farnborough' aircraft forced to divert around and under the huge volume of proposed controlled airspace**
- **Serious safety issues - increased controlled airspace means other aircraft have to operate in the remaining, much reduced, uncontrolled airspace**
- **Job losses and potential business closures due to the resulting severe airspace restrictions on aviation organisations, flying and gliding clubs and related businesses**
- **Extremely serious impact on aviation sport and recreational interests**
- **Reduced educational and training opportunities in aviation**
- **Fewer opportunities for the disabled to pursue aviation activities**

This matter is of great concern not only for everyone living in the affected area, but for all organisations engaged in local government, the management and protection of the environment, aviation organisations, flying and gliding clubs and related businesses that will be impacted.

How are Airspace Change Proposals managed?

The procedure for making changes to UK airspace is managed by the National Air Traffic Service (NATS) under the auspices of the CAA. It begins with an Airspace Change Proposal. The proposer (TAG) is required to issue a Consultation document. At the end of a short consultation period, TAG themselves will compile the results of the Consultation for review by NATS, the CAA and interested parties. If approved, legally-binding changes are implemented.

On 3rd February 2014 TAG issued the Consultation Document. Despite the enormous scale of the proposed changes and potentially very serious impacts, there is only a short period to respond – the consultation period closes at 23:00 on Friday 2nd May 2014.

Why is Lasham Gliding Society (LGS) writing to you about this?

As one of the many aviation organisations in the region, we believe our operations and those of other gliding and flying clubs and related businesses in the area will be very severely impacted. LGS is properly engaged in the consultation process but we realise that this sort of proposal is complex and technical and the impact may not be easy to understand fully for those not familiar with the detailed requirements of modern aviation.

We are also unsure whether all the proper representatives of the 'stakeholders' identified by TAG have received notice of this Consultation. Consequently, as a responsible organisation which has always sought to engage with community representatives we want to ensure that you are aware of the changes TAG is seeking to impose.

Given the potential magnitude of the issues and the expected impact on people living and working in the affected areas, you may wish to submit a formal response to these proposals.

How to respond to the Consultation:

There are two ways to respond:

- Via the web site, which also contains all the documentation:
www.Consultation.TAGFarnboroughAirport.com
- By writing to this address:

Farnborough Airspace Consultation Responses
PO Box 584
Hounslow
TW3 9QP

The questionnaire on the web site has been written by the organisation wanting these major changes and contains pre-defined lists of alternative answers which restrict the range of possible responses. However, written responses in any format must also be accepted and considered.

LGS is making a thorough technical analysis of the TAG proposal. LGS has a number of members who are very experienced at a professional level on airspace matters and we have previously identified and communicated to TAG detailed alternative technical solutions which work at other major airports internationally and we believe are entirely workable for Farnborough. These solutions would avoid the wide negative impact of the TAG proposal but have been largely ignored by TAG.

We are keen to ensure that you are adequately briefed on both sides of this argument and are aware of the reasons why we believe the TAG proposal is not a reasonable and proportionate way to deal with any issues Farnborough may have. Please contact me with any questions when you have studied the TAG proposal and I will be pleased to see how LGS can assist you further.

Yours sincerely,

Werner Stroud
General Manager, Lasham Gliding Society.

Lasham Gliding Society (LGS), based at Lasham Airfield near Alton, Hampshire since 1951 is the largest centre for gliding in the world.

LGS supports the training and development of glider pilots from all walks of life across the South of England, with 63,000 or more aircraft and glider movements per year.

Fully self-funded, we sponsor a large Cadet group (youth group) and support those with disabilities who are learning to fly.

Lasham is also home to several other clubs, including the Imperial College (University) Gliding Club and the Crown Services Gliding Club.

The British Gliding Team, which competes in the World Championships, train at Lasham and some members are based here.

Our 600+ members are engaged in many different gliding activities including aerobatics, cross-country flying and competing at Club, National and International levels.

Many National records have been set with flights from Lasham.

Lasham is home to the new national Gliding Heritage Centre, the only dedicated collection of vintage gliders in the UK - many of which are airworthy and regularly flown at Lasham.

Numerous people also enjoy our relaxing and environmentally-friendly form of aviation through our Trial Flights programme, which is open to all members of the general public.

Lasham Airfield is also the base for a number of aviation related commercial businesses which provide significant employment for the local area.

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