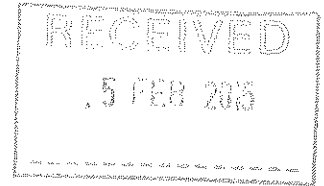


CHARLWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

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Airports Commission Consultation  
PO Box 1492  
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29<sup>th</sup> January, 2015



Dear Sir Howard,  
**Airports Commission Consultation on a second runway at Gatwick**

**Why Charlwood is important**

Charlwood is no ordinary Surrey village. It is our misfortune that we share a common boundary along our southern border with Gatwick Airport.

Charlwood is an important historic village with a fine Norman Grade 1 listed church with nationally important wall paintings and over 80 other listed buildings. The enclosed book CHARLWOOD – "a village on the edge" gives a visual impression of our village and the people who live here.

Our rural parish is in the Green Belt and is largely farmland with trees, hedgerows and two Woodland Trust woods open to the public and well used: one, Glovers Wood is an SSSI. Our two long established communities, Charlwood, with some 600 properties and Hookwood, with approximately 400 properties, together with a village primary school and a number of small businesses, make up for a thriving and friendly community with many different social activities enjoyed by the different generations.

**The character of our parish as we know it is now faced with the possibility of being totally overshadowed by a vastly increased airport following the building of a second runway at Gatwick - an airport bigger than any yet experienced in the UK.** Even though the current plans for a new runway are mainly on the south side of the airport there would be strong development pressure to the whole area to the north. For the past sixty years the Green Belt policy, rigorously enforced by Mole Valley Council has been remarkably successful in preserving the rural character of the parish of Charlwood and ensuring that all airport related development is located either in the Crawley industrial area or on brown field sites. This policy has been upheld by many Inspectors. In physical terms this protection of the Green Belt has been reinforced by the construction of massive earth bunds on the N W side of the airport. :  
Our answers to the questions in The Airports Commission's consultation are as follows:

*Q1: What conclusions, if any do you draw in respect of the three short-listed options?*  
**That the Gatwick option would be a disaster for the residents of Charlwood and Hookwood. Whilst no buildings would actually be demolished in our parish our communities would be changed and suffer immeasurably, not just from the physical changes involved locally, but from the sheer size and scale of an airport neighbour larger than any the UK has yet experienced, together with all the resulting associated activity and development.**

**We therefore object to the proposal put forward by GAL for a second runway at Gatwick.**

The reasons we object, specific to Charlwood Parish residents, are as follows:

1. The extension of the airport boundary further west, bringing the airport closer to Charlwood, and within our parish boundary and onto Green Belt green fields.
2. Further extension of the airport boundary to the west (in Crawley Borough Council) for the formation of End Around Taxiways (EAT's), wrapping the airport physically around Charlwood and increasing the ground noise.  
The Commission has omitted to include these alterations in paragraph 36 under the heading *Appraisal Modules: Quality of Life, Community*.
3. We object to the proposed siting of four maintenance hangars and a potential tenfold increase in cargo facilities on the northern side of the airport on our parish boundary, with additional ground noise as well as visual intrusion. We object that Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL), despite admitting there will be an increase in noise for Charlwood and Hookwood, are not proposing to build a ground run pen.
4. We object to any increased use of the Povey Cross entrance. Although neither the Commission nor (GAL) refer to any change to the legally controlled entrance to the airport at Povey Cross, we are seriously concerned that the increased development of maintenance and cargo facilities to the north of the existing runway would put pressure on GAL to open up this entrance. Control of this entrance is vitally important to control traffic coming from the west through Charlwood. Indeed when the M25 is jammed we suffer traffic diverting through the villages. When the M23 is completely log-jammed GAL have on occasion had no alternative but to open this entrance to relieve the situation, and we are concerned that this would become more frequent.
5. We object to the closure of the Lowfield Heath Road (well used both by local residents and as a rat run) which would double the traffic on the Ifield Road to Crawley. When this is combined with the doubling of the total airport traffic it would mean a quadrupling of the traffic on the Ifield Road junction in the centre of the village. This in turn would involve traffic engineering which would urbanise the village and damage our Charlwood Conservation Area.
6. We object to the increased air noise due to the proposed increase in the number of large long haul aircraft on the existing runway.
7. We object to the massive predicted increase in road traffic through Charlwood and Hookwood. Since there is no direct main road from Gatwick to the west, use of sat-navs already brings traffic through the rural road system. We object to the inevitable increase in such traffic causing serious deterioration in safety for pedestrians, noise, pollution and the quality of life for residents.
8. GAL have suggested, in order to achieve their ambitious target of increasing the proportion of passengers on public transport, that on airport parking spaces should be limited. This would have a serious adverse effect both in increasing on-street airport passenger parking in our parish, and also increasing the number of off-airport carparks starting up with or without planning permission in local fields and private properties.

*Q2: Do you have any suggestions for how the short-listed options could be improved, ie their benefits enhanced or negative impacts mitigated?*

If the Commission were to recommend a second runway at Gatwick we request the following and that they should be written into a binding legal agreement with GAL:

1. Confirmation that there would be no increase in the use of the Povey Cross Entrance to the airport, to deter traffic from the north and west through the rural road network.

2. That there should be earth bunds, 15 metres high, around the north and northwest of the airport to protect the village from noise and visual intrusion of the proposed hangars and EAT.
3. GAL and not local taxpayers (for our residents - Surrey County Council and Mole Valley District Council) should be responsible for paying for the resulting road and infrastructure improvements, as well as hospitals, schools, doctors and health facilities.
4. We are concerned that no attention has been given to the rural roads to the west of the airport. A large increase in traffic, as stated above, funnelled through Charlwood, emphasised by the closure of Lowfield Road, would result in a serious increase in noise and pollution, and a serious deterioration in safety and quality of life. The Commission needs to address this issue, and to put the responsibility on GAL, the Highway Authority and County Councils, with sufficient funds from GAL, if necessary, to build a by-pass.

*Q3: Do you have any comments on how the Commission has carried out its appraisal?*

We are pleased that the Commission have questioned many of GAL's assertions and we were pleased by the comment from Sir Howard Davies at the Public Session in Crawley that he had not been influenced by the mass of advertising to promote Gatwick by GAL.

*Q4: In your view, are there any relevant factors that have not been fully addressed by the Commission to date?*

1. We are concerned that there is insufficient recognition of the effect of the airport proposals, together with all the attracted business, on the rural countryside and landscape. There appears to be a lack of understanding of the impact of urbanisation of countryside on community life.
2. On behalf of our residents who travel outside our parish we are extremely concerned about the probable congestion on the M25, M23 and other main roads in the vicinity of the airport, as well as the overcrowding of trains especially after 2040. We are also concerned that Gatwick Airport is basically dependent on the single M23 motorway and single Brighton railway line.
3. If permission were granted for a second runway at Gatwick, consideration needs to be given by the Airports Commission to the impact of the devastation for our parish and residents that will occur during the flattening of the local fields, demolition of listed buildings and other properties, diversion or closure of roads, together with the construction of the runway, taxiways, terminal and other associated buildings. This will occur over many years and during this time the small communities of Charlwood and Hookwood, living immediately adjacent to the airport, will be subject to noise, dust, disruption, inconvenience and upheaval.

*Q5: Do you have any comments on how the Commission has carried out its appraisal of specific topics?*

- a) *Strategic fit* – No comment
- b) *Economy impact* - We note that the economic benefits for the nation of a second runway at Gatwick would be only half the benefits of a runway at Heathrow. That does not justify the damage that the Gatwick runway would do to our parish.
- c) *Local economy impacts* – Small businesses in our parish would suffer from shortages of labour and from the impact of traffic congestion on our local roads.

- d) *Surface access* – The impact of increased road traffic on our parish has been mentioned above. The probability of traffic congestion at many local road junctions would lessen the reliability of surface access to the airport for both passengers and employees.
- e) *Noise* – See above
- f) *Air Quality* – Since Charlwood village lies to the north west of the airport, and Hookwood to the north, we are not in the line of the prevailing southwest wind. Nevertheless, on any day when the wind blows from the east or south airport pollution is blown in our direction: our residents may well suffer a serious increase in pollution from a two runway airport. This would be greatly increased by the additional road traffic and congestion.
- g) *Biodiversity* – We share the concern expressed by The Woodland Trust at the proposed destruction of ancient woodland, albeit not in our parish. We are also greatly concerned as to the future of Brockley Wood on the airport and its continuing health and survival amidst an increasingly built up environment. It forms an important role along the Sussex Border path and in protecting Charlwood from airport noise.
- h) *Carbon* – No comment
- i) *Water and flood risk* – Parts of Charlwood parish, like parts of the airport, are already flood plain risk areas. The substantial increase in airport hard surfaces and roofs would inevitably increase the amount of run-off and increase the risk of flooding, especially for Hookwood.
- j) *Place* – As described in the opening paragraphs of this letter and the enclosed book CHARLWOOD - “a village on the edge” Charlwood is a very special village with much of the centre of the village classified as a Conservation Area. The enlarged airport and the increased traffic through the village would have a serious impact on the quality of life of our residents and the character of the village.
- k) *Quality of life* – We have already mentioned the impact of increased noise and traffic jams. The increase in population due to airport employment and new firms attracted to the area would put great pressure on our local East Surrey Hospital, local doctors and health services, as well as local schools.
- l) *Community* – The large scale new works to the airport and surrounds would inevitably change the character of our community. The impact of the demolition and construction works would continue for many years causing disturbance.
- m) *Cost and commercial viability* – The cost of all the infrastructure required should be borne by the airport and not by Surrey County Council.
- n) *Operational efficiency* - The proposed airport has to be squeezed in between Charlwood and Crawley which means that the design is cramped. The fact that the existing terminals are on the north of the existing runway means that either a large number of aircraft would have to cross the existing runway, or that End Around Taxiways would have to be constructed (a concept previously untried in England), which as stated above would bring the airport and noise closer to our village.
- o) *Deliverability* - We have little trust in GAL’s promises. All the promises made by GAL for mitigation need to be put in a legally binding legal agreement.

*Q6: Do you have any comments on the Commission's sustainability assessments, including methodology and results* – They do not include any assessment of the destruction of 19 listed buildings. The majority, if not all, of the listed buildings to be demolished were in Charlwood until the County and parish boundary changes in 1974. The list contains Lowfield Heath Church, Grade 2\* and churchyard with the graves of the original Charlwood parish, including the War Memorial. It would be difficult to move and re-erect these fine buildings in the timescale envisaged by GAL. But if they are to be moved we would put in a plea that they should come to Charlwood. For 500 years until the 1974 boundary change they were part of Charlwood and so relocating them in Charlwood would preserve some historical continuity, as indeed was the case a few years ago when the Lowfield Heath Windmill was moved to Charlwood.

*Q7: Do you have any comments on the Commission's business cases, including methodology and results?* – No comment

*Q8: Do you have any other comments?*

In years past Charlwood Parish Council had a good working relationship with the BAA owned Gatwick Airport, our neighbours over the boundary hedge. At the time of the change in ownership the Charlwood Parish Council invited GAL's Chairman, Sir David Rowlands, and CEO Stewart Wingate with supporting staff, to visit our parish to form a similar relationship. Despite their promises that day to regularly visit again no member of GAL staff have done so. We were therefore not impressed to receive an invitation at this late stage to join with, we understand, 244 other parish councils and amenity groups at a series of group meetings with GAL. We are disappointed that GAL take so little interest in the local environment of their immediate neighbouring community and therefore have little trust in their promises of mitigation and commitments were a second runway to be recommended.

We have concentrated our objections and comments on what would be the effect of a second runway on our parish and for the people living immediately adjacent to the airport. We do however share the concerns of local councils about the wider implications for the future of Surrey and West Sussex were the development to go ahead. In particular we support the response from Mole Valley District Council and the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign.

Yours sincerely

