

## **Re: The establishment of a new EU funded light-freight/package air-road-rail-sea hub**

I am writing concerning the restoration of Manston Airport to full working status, possibly incorporating a new EU funded lightfreight/package air-road-rail-sea hub

The fourth longest non-military airfield south of Manchester is Manston International Airport in Kent, at 2.75km long.

It is standing idle, because the owner has just shut it, we think in an attempt to build housing.

The airport closure was announced on the very day government support for new air-routes was announced. (Southend has already benefitted.)

KLM had been operating for just over a year, had plenty of bookings in the pipeline, but were told to leave, as were Newmarket Holidays.

May I point out that Ann Gloag, Pauline Bradley and Manston Skyport Ltd took over the running of the airport on 29 November 2013,

She promised to give the venture a full 2 years.

On 19 March 2014, it was announced that a 45-day consultation period into the closure of the airport had begun.

So the closure was actually announced 5 months 2 weeks 2 days after its new owner started running the airport. Was that a fair trial ?

Have recent owners have spent anything on advertising Manston Airport ? Have you ever seen an advert for Manston Airport ? On a London Tube ? In a travel agency ?

This is high-lighted by a visit to the nearby city of Maidstone (40 miles from Manston), by the leader of the "Save Manston Airport" group - the commonest response by the good people of Maidstone : "What Manston Airport ?".

This is no surprise to me - the only reason I knew that KLM had started flights to Schiphol Hub in Amsterdam, was I was driving past the airport perimeter daily, and there was a KLM banner on the fence saying flights were about to start ! I first flew in the second week, I last flew on the last day, and I flew in-between, and most flights were pretty full.

We had KLM offering 30 minutes hops to Schiphol Hub, Amsterdam, then links world-wide - but they were told to leave.

Manston Airport ran so simply and well that KLM only required a 30minute check in, making it a great London airport.

USA airfield operators RiverOak offered the full asking price of £7million, had it turned down, and still state :

"RiverOak has developed a long term plan to own and manage Manston as an airport ....."

"It remains committed to investing in and developing Manston as a successful diversified aviation services, cargo and potential future passenger airport facility, and values Manston as an important piece of aviation infrastructure that is very important to both Kent specifically and the United Kingdom in general. ...."

They were influential in setting up Alliance Fort Worth Airport in Texas as a major freight/package hub, and want to do the same for Manston :

[http://www.alliancetexas.com/Portals...ce\\_Airport.pdf](http://www.alliancetexas.com/Portals...ce_Airport.pdf)

There is EU funding for freight hubs, in particular for moving long distance freight from road to high-speed rail.

We note the following European goal and the availability of Horizon2020 money : the following goal is set up in the 2011 Transport White Paper:

“30% of road freight over 300 km should shift to other modes such as rail or waterborne transport by 2030, and more than 50% by 2050, facilitated by efficient and green freight corridors. To meet this goal will also require appropriate infrastructure to be developed.”

Manston Airport has HS1 trains, 1 hour 17 min from St. Pancras International in London via Ashford International, money already in place for further speed upgrades this Autumn, money just announced for a new adjacent HS1 station (the existing one at Ramsgate is all of 3 miles away). It has dual-carriage-way roads from the heart of London to the airport boundary fence via the M2 & A299 , from Ramsgate Port via the A299 and from Dover Port via A256 & A2.

So our suggestion is to use EU money to upgrade the new funded HS1 station to be a light-freight/package air-road-rail-sea hub.

Particularly use the modern freight handling at Manston, which has an excellent reputation, full plane loads being unloaded and the plane back in the air in 80 minutes. Then use EU funding to move perishable air freight arriving in the UK to the high-speed rail system rather than just the road system, which will give final destination access right up through the back-bone of England.

The good people of Kent and local businesses are incensed by the closure of their airport - the Save Manston Airport group has 20,000 passionate supporters trying their hardest to get Manston Airport opened again, and we particularly support the RiverOak bid and increased cargo usage.

Thanet District Council have just had a meeting that endorsed a Cabinet meeting and a further full council meeting to discuss : “Council affirms its considerable disappointment at the recent closure of Manston as a regional airport. We recognise the public support for its continuation as an airport and endorse the steps taken to date towards that objective. ...”

Kent County Council motion : "Kent County Council supports the actions taken so far by Thanet District Council to retain Manston as a regional airport. We recognise the value that a regional airport brings to East Kent and are disappointed at its closure...."

Please, PLEASE, why don't people use joined up thinking, we feel for the people near Heathrow Airport and Gatwick Airport, that are faced with their houses being destroyed. Here at Manston we want these planes that are fuelling the need for new runways at other London airports.

#### **Local Asset : Manston Airport :**

Fourth longest non-military runway South of Birmingham, widest in Europe, 5m thick.

Very often fog free when other London airports are fog-bound and closed.

Frequently used as a diversionary and emergency landing airport, for above reason and because much of the approach is over the sea.

Good modern freight handling equipment.

No nearby nuclear reactor or major bird problems (cf. Boris Island Environmental report, & 4 recent USAF deaths).  
Dual-Carriageway road from boundary fence via A299 & M2 into Central London, via A299 to Ramsgate Port and via A256 & A2 to Dover Port.  
HS1 railway from St. Pancras International and Ashford International (with an extra already funded upgrade due to start this Autumn) to within 3 miles at Ramsgate Station and funded new HS1 station within a hundred yards of airport perimeter.  
These fast and convenient modes of transport act to bring people though Kent on their way to international destinations and may result in their stopping to visit Kent on their way through or on another journey.

**Factors we must consider in the cost of loss of Manston as a working airport:**

Direct loss of jobs.

Loss of related supply and associated jobs.

Cost of loss to public and local businesses : 1/2 to 1 day work for each journey to Gatwick or Heathrow, plus £100 to £250 extra cost for road-rail-parking-hotel per return journey times total number of flights made per year by Kentish people.

Loss of easy access to Kent by foreign holiday-makers, and by foreign visitors to Kentish businesses.

Manston Airport acts as a reliable, high quality, technically competent guardian of the aquifer located under it.

Let us not consider that the loss of any one battle to re-open Manston Airport will be the end of the struggle. Manston has too long a history for that : A recent newspaper article about a Berlin airport that closed in 2008 was titled "Battle rages over Hitler's airport." Do not expect the battle over Churchill's airport, whose RAF motto was "Arise to Protect", and whose supporters have "Invicta" as their County motto, to end any sooner.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]