

Consultative Committee

DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

28 JANUARY 2021 – VIRTUAL MEETING

PRESENT: Alan Tolhurst OBE (Chair)
A Bosmans (FODSA), G Finch (Peel Land and Property & Doncaster Sheffield Airport), Councillor M Greenhalgh (Doncaster MBC), C Hall (Doncaster MBC), Councillor R A Jones (Substitute for Doncaster MBC), Councillor D Lelliott (Rotherham MBC), Councillor J Milne (West Lindsey District Council), Councillor B Mordue (Doncaster MBC), County Councillor C Pearson (North Yorkshire County Council), Councillor C Perraton-Williams (Lincolnshire County Council), Councillor D Pidwell (Bassetlaw District Council), A Platts (Doncaster Chamber), Councillor C Rosling-Josephs (Sheffield City Council), A Shirt (Committee Secretary), K Stow (Doncaster Sheffield Airport) and Councillor T Taylor (Nottinghamshire County Council)

Guest: P Kennan (SCR LEP Board Private Sector Board Member)

Noise Monitoring & Environmental Sub-Committee representatives:-
Town Councillor A Cropley (Bawtry Town Council),
Parish Councillor N McCarron (Blaxton Parish Council) and
Parish Councillor J Worthington (Cantley with Branton Parish Council)

Apologies were received from: S Boote (Doncaster Sheffield Airport),
Councillor S Cox (Doncaster MBC), J Dyer (Doncaster Chamber) and
Councillor R Franklin (Barnsley MBC)

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

An extended welcome went to Peter Kennan, SCR LEP Private Sector Board Member (Transport & Environment) to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 MINUTES OF THE AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 30TH JANUARY 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 30th January 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Annual General Meeting held on 30th January 2020.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair introduced his Annual Report, stating that, 2020 was like no other year before, with working from home, virtual meetings, social distancing, and other changes to ways of life. Then there was the confused messaging from Government, not least that on quarantining and test and trace.

Divergent messages from different parts of Government backed by hastily approved restrictions and laws made many in the industry feel let down by Government, even though Ministers said they were committed to careful and balanced plans to bolster travel.

And now we are in another lockdown. So, I suppose I need only say “pandemic” and that’s the year in a nutshell.

Obviously, the challenge facing the Government is one nobody would wish upon themselves. Imposing restrictions is an agonisingly hard decision to have to take; but the challenge for businesses like DSA is not made easier for knowing that.

In the absence of a national strategy, the aviation industry has had to do their best in coping with the consequences of Covid 19 and make best guesses on what the future might be. Even the Government’s Global Travel Taskforce review, although welcome, produced more questions than answers.

The consensus is that the future will not look like the past and it’s unlikely that travel activity will get back to 2019 levels until 2024 at the earliest. The Committee would be looking at some scenarios in the Ordinary ACC meeting.

Some think there will be significant pent-up demand for travel as households look for opportunities to spend the estimated £100bn they have saved since March last year.

But, it’s unlikely that the way ahead will become clearer until vaccination programmes internationally have had a real impact in controlling the virus.

Many think the pandemic will lead to a smaller aviation sector: it could easily be a case of survival of the fittest. In fact, in 2020 over 70 airlines globally went to the wall while others are just hanging on, witness the news a week or so ago about Norwegian Air.

However, some have seen the pandemic as an opportunity, with several new strategies being developed.

For example, late last year wide bodied jets were being retired earlier than expected with an increasing emphasis on developing fleets of smaller, more fuel-efficient commercial aircraft, probably with single aisles.

Pressure was building on development of new aviation fuels, on commercial electric-powered aircraft: even hydrogen-powered aircraft are now being researched as the sustainable agenda gains further attention.

In particular, noise and its impact on health is being addressed more vigorously, not just noise linked to aviation but to all other forms of transport. We've all got used to a quieter world.

After more than a year of people trying to avoid meeting in close contact, will seat occupancy rates have to be reduced with an inevitable impact on operating costs and margins? Will non-profitable routes still be available as sector activity steps up? What about business and first-class sections, will these still be affordable?

Changes will probably incur extra costs and we could see the end, or at least a reduction, of cheap flights.

That said, Aviation is a key element in economic recovery and the government cannot afford not to support the industry. For example, continuation of business rate relief, fresh financial support and cash for testing would help.

Last year, some passengers whose flights were cancelled for legitimate reasons had their tickets refunded but many customers of well-known airlines have yet to receive compensation.

Companies like Wizzair did act honourably and most claimed refunds were received within five days. Wizzair also designated DSA as a second UK base with plans to operate flights towards the end of the year. Tui also planned a restart as restrictions on international travel allowed.

For its part, the ACC wrote to the Mayor of Sheffield City Region stressing the key part played by DSA in regeneration and seeking local leaders' support in presenting the airport's case more strongly to government.

The ACC had received no reply to the letter, not even a mere acknowledgment. The Chair could only conclude that, the City Region officers are unaware of the Committee's independence and that no reply reflects the disdain with which the airport's case is held.

In December, Andrew Shirt and I attended a virtual meeting of UKACCs. It was noted that all airports were badly affected and several airlines and airports had needed to let staff go.

The meeting also welcomed the Union Connectivity Review which was circulated last year for consultation. A UKACCs letter was subsequently sent to DFT recording the members' views and a copy is in the next meeting agenda.

The ICCAN report on Best Practice Engagement Between Airports and Communities generated much debate.

Members were opposed to the suggestion that separate local noise monitoring groups should be set up, as nearly all ACCs consider noise and health, but do so separately from their main agendas.

Finally, Members felt that the independent role of Consultative Committees should be maintained and that Committees should focus more on the impact the sector has on the economy as part of the building back better agenda rather than on passenger services and environmental issues.

Having said earlier that, perhaps 2020 could be summed up in a word, I have gone on at some length, and I haven't even mentioned Brexit or the return of Boeing 737 MAXs to service!

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair congratulated Chris Harcombe and Kate Stow on their promotions and wished them the very best of good fortune in their new expanded roles.

Members joined the Chair by thanking Andrew Shirt, once again, for keeping the Committee so well informed on developments and for producing such professional Minutes which give coherence to Members' ramblings.

Finally, the Chair thanked all ACC Members, for their contributions throughout the year. He added that the virtual meetings did seem to have worked well, but maybe, just maybe, he hoped to see a return to the normal pattern later this year.

On behalf of the Airport, K Stow thanked A Tolhurst and Members for their continued support.

Referring to the letter issued to the Mayor of Sheffield City Region, Members' expressed their disappointment that no reply had been received to date.

To provide a link between the Airport, ACC and Sheffield City Region LEP and Mayoral Combined Authority, Members' agreed that representatives from the Sheffield City Region LEP and Mayoral Combined Authority be invited to attend future meetings of the ACC. **ACTION: A Tolhurst / A Shirt**

On behalf of the Mayor, P Kennan apologised for the delay and said that he had previously followed this issue up with the Mayor's office and would do so again.

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

5 ANNUAL 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.

It was highlighted that the nominated substitute Member for Auckley Parish Council had now stepped-down; the Committee Secretary would be notified of a replacement in due course.

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

6 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2021

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

Airport Consultative Committee

Thursday 28 January 2021 (AGM and Ordinary)
Thursday 15 April 2021
Thursday 15 July 2021
Thursday 14 October 2021

Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee

Thursday 25 March 2021
Thursday 24 June 2021
Thursday 23 September 2021
Thursday 9 December 2021

All meetings will commence at 10:00 am, and Members notified of the meeting arrangements in advance of the meeting.

CHAIR

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