

Expansion of Bristol Airport to 12mppa

PINS Ref APP/D0121/W/20/3259234
Planning Application Ref: 18/P/5118/OUT

Proof of Evidence for PCCA

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Name: David and Elizabeth Vaughan
Public Inquiry into Bristol Airport Planning Application: 18/P/5118/OUT
Appeal reference: APP/D0121/W/20/3259234

Dear Sir/ Madam

We are writing about our concerns re the Appeal by Bristol Airport against the above Planning Application's refusal which is to be considered by a Public Inquiry in July 2021.

This statement is on behalf of Elizabeth, my wife, and I. She has read its contents and agrees.

We live in the South of the village of Cleeve, directly under the flight path of both arrivals to and departures from Bristol Airport; as there is no variation in flight paths, we experience noise constantly when Bristol Airport is operating. Our property has been in Elizabeth's family since 1926 and Elizabeth grew up there. In 1985 my wife became a part owner until her mother's and aunt's deaths in February 2015 after which we bought out the other partial owners. We lived in the former house for one year, but the heavy noise levels and some other factors led us to demolish the existing house to build a new house with significant sound insulation. It is noteworthy that the property's value hardly increased between 1985 and 2015 in absolute terms, when similar property's rose significantly with the different valuers all commenting that the airport's activity was the sole cause of the apparent valuation lag; in 2015 before we purchased 100%, a sale process resulted in only one buyer at a distressed price with viewers commenting on the aircraft noise.

We are constantly aware of aircraft during the day through the loud overhead noise from departing and arriving aircraft directly overhead which stops any ability to hold a conversation when an aircraft is in the proximity. This noise level has increased during the past decade with the expansion of the airport. During Winter, the situation is more tolerable due to the significantly lower frequency of aircraft and the fact during darkness our house is now well sealed from the aircraft noise.

Despite what the Airport publicises about noise mitigation measures, its Spring/Summer/Autumn flight schedules, which have significantly greater flights and in particular night flights that operate throughout the hours of sleep, are intrusive and burdensome on our enjoyment of life because of the greater time spent out of doors and the fact that the flights throughout the night means noise passes into the house due to the open windows that allow us to breath cool and fresh air; surely a right that any person is allowed to enjoy without having to bear the noise that means sleep is broken when aircraft fly in or out of Bristol Airport. We have had a flat beside Hammersmith Bridge and now at Kew Bridge which are affected by Heathrow's inbound flights, there we benefit from

mandatory enforced varied flight paths which give us respite from noise during part of the day as well as the banning of flights during the hours of sleep. We are unaware of any mitigation measures offered by Bristol Airport to alleviate noise coming through open windows/doors of houses on their flightpaths during Spring/Summer/Autumn; indeed, the obvious measure open to us is to close all windows/doors and then install and use air conditioning, a measure that is not offered up by Bristol Airport and one which would entail costs for us and adverse climate warming implications on the area which are overlooked by Bristol Airport's impact assessments. Summer is bad due to the holiday flights, but the night flights, particular those around 1-2am, seem to occur for most of the year; especially those months in Spring/Summer/Autumn when windows and ventilation is open. Frequently sleep is broken at 1-2am due to those incoming flights.

Bristol Airport is unusual in the UK because it is the second highest airport. Its flightpath consequently means that houses sharing its high location, relative to lower-level houses, bear a bigger noise toll. Our house is higher up the King's Wood hill than most of the houses in Cleeve (and where the Airport's noise monitor is situated near by further south on the A370) and this markedly accentuates the noise experienced compared to the Airport's geographical noise band map which makes no allowance for ground height, only distance away from Bristol Airport.

We have complained to the Airport about specific aircraft only to be told there was no threshold exception. It seems Bristol Airport is the "Wild West" as far as neighbourly consideration is concerned: flights currently land and take off throughout the night; during one particularly disturbed Friday night, we counted the overhead flights and then checked against Bristol Airport's web arrivals/departures to learn that there had been more flights between midnight and 7am than there were scheduled to be between 7am and mid-day! We are often woken-up 2-3 times a night due to a bunch of flights around 1-2am in the Summer. This is not good for anyone's sleep patterns. If rules are considered necessary for Heathrow, we fail to see why Bristol Airport can operate without curtailment during the summer nights.

This last year when the flights have been considerably reduced due to Covid restrictions has been bliss compared to the previous few years and has really brought it home to us how noisy the nights have become, especially during the last 5 years. A whole night's sleep without interruptions should be a basic right of the Airport's neighbours. The night flights at present are restricted to 3,000 movements in the Summer and 1,000 movements in the Winter, between 23.30 and 06.00 hours; but we gather the Airport is requesting that they have an allowance of a certain amount of night flights for the whole year, i.e. without any seasonal restrictions, meaning most of the allowance will be shifted to the Summer when noise impact is at its worst when the Airport has spare capacity during the daytime. It seems Bristol Airport is trading on being the 'one' to offer night flights when the destination of the flight has stricter night flight rules: why are residents not similarly being protected?

Bristol Airport appears to us (and we have had experience of living under one of the Heathrow arrival flight paths) to be served mainly by older aircraft, such that residents bear the brunt of their louder noise. Measures should be imposed on Bristol Airport that ensure aircraft that fly there are noise and fuel efficient and whilst Bristol Airport is currently

arguing its airlines' fleets will modernise to less noisy aircraft, there is no certainty as to when these new aircraft become operational and given Covid's impact on airlines, any replacement schedules are likely to be delayed to conserve funds, so we are very dubious that this will be effected before 2030.

We are also concerned about helicopters that fly low and some have circled endlessly in circuits; apparently during Covid's First Lockdown, the airport was used to practise landing and taking off. We endure helicopters' low flight paths over the house, some making a terrible noise as they have jet engines. Helicopters are classified as small aircraft by Bristol Airport, which have no high-level flight path requirement to alleviate noise levels (something helicopters should be able to manage without any operational or safety difficulty). As there are no flight path restrictions over small aircraft, their noise is unregulated whilst being sometimes worse than some of the louder aircraft. When we have complained, Bristol Airport "bats" the issue away under the "small aircraft" label: Bristol Airport does not behave as a courteous, sympathetic, and listening neighbour to its community. There are usually more than 10 helicopter flights daily.

In August 2019, we held a party and some friends camped overnight in the garden: not an experience they are likely to repeat due to the constant noise of the aircraft which was so bad that they did not get any sleep.

Finally, we have concerns regarding the airport's traffic levels and its light and air pollution.

We live on the A370 south of Cleeve and the level of traffic that goes past and then enters Brockley Combe is high: Brockley Combe is just not suited to those levels of traffic given its hilly and windy road which narrows to a single carriage way near to the Airport.

At night when looking towards the airport, we see a significant amount of light and when the planes go overhead the landing lights shine onto our land (an SSSI due to the endangered Horseshoe bat which is extremely sensitive to light); have studies been conducted on the impact on the SSSI's horseshoe bat population to see how they are being impacted by the Airport's flight traffic overhead?

On occasions we smell the fumes of the overhead aircraft as they take off or land; if we can, this means the environment and the health of those under the flight path are being adversely impacted.

Yours faithfully

David Vaughan