

I am writing as a local resident. The recent reduction in flights in and out of Bristol airport due to Covid has highlighted how intrusive and pervading aeroplane noise is. I have made my own efforts to reduce carbon emissions. I plant hundreds of trees every year, and now travel by electric bike, rather than car whenever possible. Now it is time for Bristol airport to reflect and change the way it operates.

Human beings benefit from prolonged periods of quiet and tranquillity. It helps us behave more reasonably towards each other. Nothing about an airport promotes tranquillity. The aeroplanes take to the skies, and bombard anyone on the flight path with intrusive and annoying noise. They belch out carbon dioxide.

People drive to airports in a state of heightened anxiety – will we miss the plane? What have we forgotten? And just occasionally, what are we doing to destroy the planet?

It comes down to a quality of life, immediate or sustained across generations. How can I destroy any future my descendants might enjoy for a short, short term gratification – a holiday somewhere else, taking me away from one hum drum existence to another? What quality is there in a sardine experience in a depleted atmosphere, observing our fellow human beings behave like toddlers without their favourite toy?

It is possible to describe a quality of life in simple concrete terms: To sit on a hillside and enjoy a view, undisturbed by the relentless thunder of engine jets: To listen to birdsong not drowned by a helicopter clatter.

We have been at plenty of technological crossroads before. We are now in a position to feed, shelter and protect the whole world. We can use technology to deliver a world fit for all humans, not just those we know, or those who look like us, or those who live on this island. We have become a capable and knowing species. We do not need to fight each other, or monopolise resources. There is plenty of everything to spare. Let us share with good grace. Let us relinquish unnecessary demands on resources – airport expansions are just one unnecessary demand. Help us save us from ourselves and reject this expansion application.