

CASE PRESENTATION FOR BRISTOL AIRPORT ( BIA )  
EXPANSION APPEAL ( GATELY-GHAM.1...)

My Name is Roger Sirett and I live in the village of Farmborough. I am appealing as an individual, plagued by the existing Airport, but also as a member of the original "Stop Bristol Airport Expansion" Group which fought and won the case against expansion in the early " Noughties." We challenged all the BIA Consultations and beat them 2-1 against all their expansion plans. We had no resources except determination and the correctness of our cause, as opposed to the huge resources held by the Airport where funding came from share holders in Australia and Spain. We were naturally delighted with our success as we had no cash backing and were seldom exposed within the Media whereas the Airport had International shareholders funding them. The figures I want to highlight from that time are; only 10% of people wanted the airport to be at Lulsgate and expand , more than 50% didn't want that and certainly didn't want night flights

So why am I plagued and why was the original campaign not to allow expansion, correct ?

Because of the prevailing South West winds the Incoming Aircraft to BIA begin their descent by lining up on the Church Towers of villages that are right on their descent path. They start over Farmborough and then move to Compton Dando, Norton Marleward, Chew Magna and finally Winford. These names are reminiscent of an Agatha Christie novel or Flanders and Swann singing about the demise of the railways. Sadly these names which should be representative of the peace of the Somerset countryside now mean Route 1 to BIA bringing back Tourists from their spending spree in Europe which the original manager Mr. Skipp assured all those who wanted to listen to him would actually improve the economy of the local area and Bristol. How wrong was he ? and it didn't take him long to move on further South West.

When the wind changes direction the descent path becomes the take off path and the residents of the aforementioned villages then become recipients of the roar of engines as the aircraft try to gain altitude. As a result whole areas of Somerset are wrecked from these descents and take offs which makes a mockery of the original " Noise Contours " presented by BIA on the original plan which said the only people affected by aircraft noise live between Congresbury and Winford. BIA in its lack of wisdom and common sense essentially said nobody else between Bath and Weston-Super-Mare would be affected by aircraft noise. This epitomises everything else that Airports put out, including BIA, when they do not want to tell the truth as really they know everyone will be affected by aircraft noise, but this is their way of saying in which areas they acknowledge it is worst and where they will be prepared to spend money to help combat aircraft noise in homes and businesses.

With the successes of the defeat of the BIA Consultations, residents between Bath and Weston-Super-Mare, immediately affected by aircraft noise and pollution affecting this wonderful area of Somerset countryside, should have had their successful stated views granted, but BIA Continues to spread both within the Lulsgate original footprint, with hotels and parking, and on to Green Belt and near SSSI sites to accommodate extra Parking as result of no improvements in BIA Access over a 20 year period. Another example of the grotesque over use of the area around Lulsgate is the fact that there are now night flights into BIA despite the fact that when Lulsgate was sold to BIA by Bristol City Council there were no night flights and this should have been continued. A Particular nonsense associated with this night flight issue is the fact that one of the last flights into Lulsgate brings the Bristol Post. This then has to be off-loaded on to lorries and taken to Filton thus bringing further noise and pollution to Bristol because the Post Office Sorting Office was built there assuming the Filton Airport was the obvious place for BIA to develop with its close links to the M4 and M5 and natural link to the Rail system in Bristol. How wrong they were !!

Why have these indiscriminate actions continued to blight Lulsgate ? The answer is sadly simple. BIA protested against the fact that they had lost their Consultations and North Somerset Council having turned down their plans to expand based on the outcomes of the Consultations realised that financially it could not continue to legally to fight the BIA Plans in court as they had limited finance to fight the case. As such the plans were called in by the Conservative Government and their Minister , a certain Mr.Pickles, simply gave BIA Permission to proceed with their plans . I doubt if Mr.Pickles even knew where Lulsgate is. All the Conservatives were interested in was allowing air travel to rapidly increase as they saw it as the way for the economy to succeed. A view in modern life that does not hold water. Quite the opposite and casual flights to holiday centres need to be greatly reduced because of Climate Change. Sadly an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the edge of the Mendips continues to be desecrated with noise and Pollution from an Airport that should never have been given permission to build and expand there and the whole area has become a glorified car /plane park permeated with the stink of Kerosene

So why has the current BIA Airport failed ? and the current one should not be allowed to increase in both actual size and passenger size.

BIA has always said how concerned they were about climate change and that aircraft will make less noise and burn less polluting fuels; even become electric. The world climate simply does not have the time for this to happen. Decisions need to be made now to sort out solutions to Climate problems not 5,10, 20 years ahead. The fine words of BIA re-Climate change are really a severe irritant to them. What they are really interested in is what profits they are making, how much they can pay their share holders and what they can individually pocket themselves. Anything that reduces these targets tends to get binned. Those of us with a more perceptive caring attitude to the world and want the next generation of children not to have to solve the problems that we are leaving behind for them see the problems head-on.

The aircraft we now have are the greatest polluters in the world. They travel the globe in huge numbers, some for business, most for pleasure. This Inquiry and BIA need to recognise that during this desperately sad Pandemic aircraft have hardly flown. Not only does that provide a much more pleasant environment in Britain but Scientists in major cities have recorded much improved air for people to breathe and there are encouraging reports that even the ice sheets of the two Arctic and Antarctic Circles have noticed less ice melt. But this is not a reason to say “ well let’s take the breaks off and do more flying “ Quite the opposite because in Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland rivers have burst their banks and swept huge swathes of villages and towns away. Dams have nearly burst and many citizens have been killed and many more are missing. In Western America and Canada huge uncontrolled forest fires have been burning with subsequent loss of properties and life The same loss of human and animal life occurred in Australia last year and only this week Chinese people were drowned in Tube trains when local rivers burst their banks and flooded the underground system. Not that long ago in history the area around BIA Experienced some of the worst flooding ever experienced in the country when 6-7 inches of rain fell in a very short period and the River Chew was seriously flooded as the water was released to avoid the Chew Valley Barrage from collapsing and all the villages as far as Keynsham were badly damaged and people lost their lives in Keynsham as cars were swept off the bridge and the persons inside were drowned. These are the ones that make the headlines but these new highs of temperatures and excessive rain in short periods are classic examples of a Climate that is rapidly and dangerously changing.

BIA Apparently want to be a part of this disastrous Climate Change just to take more British people on holiday to Europe and to fulfil the wishes of those who have money invested in BIA. They really ought to be more considerate and thoughtful or they ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Access to the Airport is another major reason why BIA should not be allowed to expand its operations. Access was always poor, and with the current size of the Airport activities, it is a local disaster. This used to be a Private Airfield with limited private flying and a few commercial flights but it was a tiny set up. Now it has thousands of flights a year, millions of passengers but pathetic communications. None of their original stated ideas to solve this problem have really come to fruition. Apart from Bus routes from Bath via Keynsham to Lulsgate and a smaller set up going to Westonn-Super Mare there is really nothing else. BIA as usual "bulled" its way past this problem and stated

"We will determine the impact on local and rural road network from Airport traffic and develop appropriate mitigation measures where necessary." From which I can only tell the Inquiry they either decided there were no problems and so did nothing or it was the usual "sell the idea speak" that goes with developments like this i.e we are actually going to ignore the problem and hope it will go away, said openly and probably with 2 rude fingers stuck up to the local population who have to put up with the shambles on a daily basis. It is a grim routine coping with too much traffic coming from Bath through narrow country lanes not designed for this purpose and often full of farm tractors and trailers. I know this is accurate because it is on my doorstep and I often have to use these roads and drivers of Taxis's, 4x4s, minibuses, private vehicles see the narrow roads as a challenge to their masculinity and the fact that they are late for a take off and it is really frightening what they get up to. To think of an increase in passengers is ludicrous and dangerous. If the airport had been where common sense said it should have been on the old Bristol Airport these problems would never have arisen. Lulsgate and its surrounds would still be beautiful Somerset instead of which it has become a factory for passing through humans as rapidly as possible at all times of the day and night depending on narrow, dangerous country lanes to deposit the humans on site.

On top of this cities like Bath are having to charge large fees to traffic to cope with air pollution much of which is caused by aircraft flights, that is causing serious health problems to its residents. If this continues Bath may well lose its UNESCO City Rating. I'm sure if the roles were reversed BIA would be up in arms to protect its Investors and their own pay packets.

Finally, I ask where has democracy gone when thousands of people affected by BIA voted for BIA not to happen at Lulsgate and then have their decision over turned by one individual in Government who probably doesn't know where Lulsgate is and what effect his wrong decision will have on the lives of thousands of Somerset citizens whilst allowing the greatest Polluter of the Earth's atmosphere to ride rough shod over the decision that the inhabitants of the area clearly wanted. No BIA at Lulsgate or EXpansion !!!

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