

I am making this statement on behalf of 'Chew Valley Plants Trees', a voluntary organisation formed a year ago with the single aim of doubling tree cover in the Chew Valley by 2030. We are fuelled by a passion for the value of trees to capture carbon and to support wildlife.

The Chew Valley has only 7% tree cover at present, (the UK average is 13% and the European average is 32%) so we are catching up with national averages and we have a huge challenge ahead of us to pursue our goal.

In 2020 we planted our first 1000 oaks across the Chew Valley in a number of locations. We are taking care in our decision making, aiming to plant the right tree, in the right place, for the right reason.

To double the tree cover of the Chew Valley we need to plant between one to two thousand hectares of woodland; 250 acres each year.

It is our belief that the seriousness of the present Climate and Nature Emergency demands a radical REDUCTION in carbon emissions and at very least a PAUSE in any growth or development that increases carbon emissions.

Before the Covid Pandemic this might have felt like an impossible dream, but during the various lockdowns, The Chew Valley has benefitted from the reduction in noise pollution, from improved air quality and from being able to walk and cycle on roads not dominated by airport traffic. It was a joy to hear the birds singing and to see the sky uninterrupted by contrails. As a result of this many of us have decided to fly less in the future.

That said, we are NOT asking for an end to air travel, but rather, for the Airport to only seek expansion if and when developments in technology have enabled aviation to be truly net zero in every part of its operation, without the use of offsetting.

Increased planes, over the next decade, will inevitably mean increased carbon is burnt. Technological solutions for zero carbon flight, if they can be made commercially viable, will not be available in this key decade when we are seeking to grow our tree cover to capture EXISTING carbon.

An expansion of the airport would effectively wipe out any impact we might be having by planting trees. This is heartbreaking and also unacceptable at a time where we all need to pull together to survive the impacts of our heating planet.

We therefore ask that you refuse this appeal so that the expansion of Bristol Airport cannot go ahead AT THIS POINT IN TIME. There is no reason why the airport should not apply again if and when the technology is in place to fly commercially without using fossil fuels in any part of the operation (including scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3 emissions.)

To do so would give us a fighting chance of leaving behind us a better world for our children and a legacy of health and wellbeing in our beautiful valley which so many people enjoy for leisure and tourism, as a bolt hole away from city life.