

**Statement to the public enquiry on Bristol Airport Expansion,
Poppy Brett, 16th September 2021**

My name is Poppy Brett. I've lived in Bristol for 26 years. I am not someone who normally speaks at public enquiries. I'm here because I am deeply worried about the future of the planet. Much of what I have to say comes from the heart. I am not a technical expert, but will do my best to explain why I believe the plans to expand Bristol Airport should not be approved and will refer to relevant conflicts with government policy in doing so.

We are facing an unprecedented climate emergency. We have known about it for a long time. In 1980 President Jimmy Carter published his Global 2000 report calling on the world to unite and act. But humanity has failed to take the threat seriously.

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report warns that global warming, rising sea levels and extreme weather events are now inevitable, and a continued failure to act will have catastrophic consequences.

The UK has enshrined in law, under the Climate Change act of 2008, legally binding targets to **reduce** emissions. I am not a statistician or climate scientist but common sense alone tells me that airport expansion means increased emissions. Increased emissions from both aviation and associated car journeys. However you look at it, whatever arguments are made and put forward by the Airport's environmental impact assessment team trying to justify expansion, they **cannot** claim a reduction in emissions.

On 27 June 2019, Net Zero became law, requiring the UK to reduce net emissions of greenhouse gases to zero by 2050. The only path forwards for Bristol airport therefore is that

- a) they should not expand and
- b) they should actually reduce current emissions over a sustained period of time in order to meet net zero by 2050.

For individual schemes like this, carbon is often taken to be close to irrelevant in the context of all emissions. Project promoters often argue that the law doesn't apply to them. But when this assumption is made incrementally across the whole transport sector (aviation expansion, roads programme, HS2) the cumulative impact is vast. The prospect of keeping temperature increases within safe limits will be destroyed. So the expansion must not be allowed and the law should apply to individual projects. Without this, the law is toothless.

The expansion of the airport will also have a huge impact on the already fragile local transport system, generating a huge number of additional car journeys. As someone

who enjoys leisure cycling, I am concerned about the impact on the Avon Cycleway which crosses the A38 to the east of the Airport. It's an 80mile circular route mainly using quiet lanes and traffic free paths.

When established over 30 years ago, traffic in the airport area was light. Successive airport expansions and the current proposal will increase traffic and danger to such an extent, that the viability of this valuable community resource enjoyed by thousands of people, will be seriously threatened.

The Dept for Transport Active Travel policy –Gear Change (2020)-states ‘We will ensure that all new housing and business developments are built around making sustainable travel, including cycling and walking, the first choice for journeys.’

The airport proposals are in conflict with clearly stated government policy. If you approve this, the airport must provide a safe and attractive alternative route giving direct traffic free access into their facility for visitors and staff.

Personally, I have decided that I won't be flying again.

On 9th August 2021, the day the IPCC was published, my 21 year old said, “Mum, you know you're not going to have grandchildren”. He explained that he and some of his friends had decided they couldn't responsibly have kids with such a bleak ecological outlook.

Whether or not he and his friends have children is irrelevant. At 21 I wasn't even thinking about children. I just assumed I'd have them. It would be a personal choice based on my circumstance, not a decision I was having to make for humanity. He and his friends shouldn't be discussing children. The fact that they are having such conversations, hides an [underlying anxiety](#)¹ about the future and shows they understand the severity of the issues we face. That they feel they have to take courageous decisions and make such sacrifices, also shows what poor decisions our generation has made, and continues to make.

Whilst Bristol Airport spends millions on its plans to expand, many young people are not planning their next flights, or hoping to go globe trotting. They are wondering what kind of future they will have. My decision, not to fly, feels like a tiny sacrifice in comparison to theirs.

On the same day my 16 year old, who has her first cleaning job, asked if I thought the business she cleans for would consider letting her buy refillable cleaning

¹ A recent scientific study of 10,000 young people led by the University of Bath has found that 4 in 10 young people are concerned about having children due to climate crisis.

products. My heart burst with pride at her willingness to play her part, and it burst with sadness at her belief that her actions would make a difference.

The actions of individuals will count for nothing if they are not matched by the actions of corporations and governments. I am sad, frustrated, angry that those in the position to make the difference that counts, to take the decisions that will really have an impact, are prepared to plough on with ecologically damaging, unlawful projects that, in the end, will serve no one if we destroy the fundamental ecological building blocks for life.

This proposal is in conflict with high level and specific government policies as I outlined. It is also a moral outrage in the midst of the climate emergency. I strongly urge you to recommend refusal.