

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Exeter Airport Consultative Committee held at Online via zoom on 22 September 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.50 am

13 Declarations of interest

Councillor Dean Stewart, Ottery St Mary Town Council, he is an aviation consultant.

14 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2021 were confirmed as a true record, subject to Councillor Dean Stewart's declaration of interest being amended to 'aviation consultant'.

15 Matters arising:

Ian Payne's retirement from Devon Air Ambulance Trust

The Chair informed the Committee that Ian Payne, Flight Operations Director, would soon be retiring from the Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT). He had been the Flight Operations Director since 2014 and had previously had a significant role in setting up a police air presence. On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked Ian for being a member and his valuable input into the EACC, and wished him a long, happy and healthy retirement. Ian Payne thanked the Chair for his kind words and commented that it had been a privilege to serve, especially with the emergency services, and that he had worked with some very clever, gifted, dedicated people.

The potential impact of ending the furlough support on employment at the airport

This would be covered under item 5 on the agenda.

The use of social media to provide an effective interface between the Airport Consultative Committee (ACC) and the local residents.

The Committee discussed the need to be more proactive with getting the message out there, letting people know about the ACC and what it did. Councillor Dean Stewart offered to set up and manage a Facebook page to get information out to local residents. Social media was a very useful tool for two-way communication. The ACC were asked to think about what it was trying to achieve and what it wanted social media to do. It was hoped that the public would be more aware of the existence and role of the ACC in the community and would be more involved in it. It was also hoped that there would be a better understanding of the relationship between the airport and the ACC. However, it was noted that simply putting information online did not necessarily engage people – content was vital.

The views of members on Zoom meetings

It was noted that a virtual meeting had been held due to high covid infection rates. It was hoped that the next meeting of the EACC on 8 December 2021 would be held in person at Exeter Airport. The committee agreed that whilst Zoom meetings were useful and functional, physical meetings were preferable.

16 **Report from the Operations Director EDAL**

The Committee received a verbal report from Stephen Wiltshire, Operations Director, Exeter Airport. He confirmed that the airport would be happy to support the ACC's social media presence.

Exeter Airport welcomed the Government's announcement to make travel easier, with removal of the traffic light system and testing requirements. However, the Operations Director cautioned that there was still a tough winter ahead. The airport had a job retention scheme in place in order to ensure that it was in a good business place after the winter. Passenger numbers had been significantly down over the summer, and the budget down by 52%. There was currently 169 staff on flexi furlough and 207 full time equivalent employees in the business. Covid numbers had been very low and the airport continued to carry out covid security and safety measures.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked the Operations Director for his report.

17 **Report from Will Campbell, General Manager, Exeter Aerospace**

The Chair reported that Exeter Aerospace was a real success story. By 4 October 2021 it would have 48 full time equivalent employees and 15 contract engineers from the local area. It was operating with a full load of work and was almost ready to accept apprenticeships from Exeter College.

18 **Report from Ian Payne, Head of Air Operations, Devon Air Ambulance Trust**

The Flight Operations Director, DAAT, thanked the Operations Director from Exeter Airport for all its support in accommodating its various requirements. Devon Air Ambulance was currently up 30% on what it would normally be doing at the current time of year, with staff working very hard. During an average 10 hour shift the aircraft would often only be on the ground for 20 minutes to refuel and restock medical equipment. The Flight Operations Director reported that the new aircraft was a good investment and that the older aircraft were due for an upgrade. The annual cost to operate an aircraft was £6.5 million.

DAAT were looking at new innovative ways of fundraising. There was a high turnover of staff in the DAAT shops and sales were struggling. Volunteers tended to be older people and the Trust needed to start attracting younger people, with innovative online communications and social media being used to attract a younger generation. The Flight Operations Director outlined the DAAT pre-covid income streams and it was noted that more innovative ways needed to be found to fund raise, such as on-line giving. Currently 75% of the income stream was from legacy income (this used to be 30%). The DAAT had good community support but shops and community fund raising events had been restricted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There were many community landing sites across the area. It was noted that some objections had been received to training flights in the evening at the Clyst St Mary landing site. The Flight Operations Director explained that they tried to do night training as early as possible in the evening, but this was not always possible in the summer. Night training was a mandatory training requirement, but DAAT tried to spread its training across sites in Devon and were sympathetic to particular concerns.

DAAT and Exeter Airport were requested to send a precis of their work to members of the EACC so that these could be included on the various parish council webpages and parish magazines to raise local awareness.

The Flight Operations Director thanked the people of Devon for their support and enthusiasm. He was again thanked for all his work and wished well in his retirement.

19 **Report from Anne McLaird, Aviation Southwest**

Anne McLaird advised that Aviation Southwest continued to offer commercial flight training as well as recreational private pilot licenses. Due to Brexit a flight school was about to be opened in Malta in order to achieve a European license.

There had been a number of noise related complaints, with issues mainly from light aircrafts. One individual had made 15 separate complaints and Anne would be investigating this with a representative from Exeter Airport. Aviation Southwest maintained a close relationship with the airport and would continue to monitor noise complaints. It was noted that noise was an issue with every airport and that it was a contravention of the Air Navigation Order to fly below 500 feet.

20 **Noise report for the airport**

The Operations Director, Exeter Airport outlined 19 noise complaints that had been received since the previous meeting. 13 of these had been from the Broadclyst area.

21 **The Civil Aviation Authority has re-commenced the 'Airspace Change Proposals' project in which Exeter Airport is seeking to gain control over large portions of the skies over Devon. This is an important safety issue.**

The Chair explained that the Civil Aviation Authority had recommenced the 'Airspace Change Proposals' project in which Exeter Airport was seeking to gain control over large portions of the skies in Devon. This project had been suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic, but had been circulated to stakeholders and was likely to be fully implemented in 2024/25.

It was noted that Exeter was one of a few airports that had open airspace all around (outside of 2 miles). The flight paths varied so much the noise footprint was spread across the community. It was important for the airport to be given control over large swathes of Devon and safety wise this was a big step forward. There was an environmental benefit to controlled airspace, with a reduction in additional air miles.

Concern was expressed that determining flight paths could result in the same houses being flown over continuously. All parish councils in the area would be consulted on the routes. The EACC were reassured that the principles of the project would be that the airport had more control and that the airport had a noise abatement criteria which must be adhered to.

22 **Report on a presentation given by Ampaire Inc on the feasibility of electric powered commercial flight. This culminated in a**

demonstration flight of a partially electric powered aeroplane between Exeter and Newquay

The Chair reported on a demonstration he had attended at Exeter Airport on an electric powered aircraft from the east coast of America, along with representatives from Nottingham University. The Chair explained the engines, electric motor and battery, as well as the location and function of the aircraft. He concluded that it was possible to have an electric motor powerful enough for a flight, but the limitation on all flights would be the battery. At present all funding on research was focused on car batteries, not for aeroplanes. He believed that change would happen but the pace of change would be very slow as land based travel was prioritised. It was acknowledged that there was a common aim to 'green up' air travel, but there were limitations on this.

23 To consider joining the United Kingdom Airport Consultative Committees (UKACCs) on an annual membership

Members of the EACC were asked for a steer on joining the UK's Airport Consultative Committee (UKACC) on an annual basis. The UKACC was a national forum which was recognised by and fed into the Department of Transport. Most airports in the country supported it and membership would be funded by Regional and City Airports.

The EACC agreed that it would be a good idea to join UKACC as it was a useful resource and source of information.

24 Complaints handling

There was nothing further to add on this item.

25 Any other business

There was no other business raised.

26 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the EACC would be held at 10am on Wednesday 8 December, with the intention of holding a physical meeting if Covid infection rates allowed.

Attendance List

Richard Bartlett – Independent (Chair)
Chris Daly – Aylesbeare Parish Council (Vice Chair)
Lesley Bayliss – Cranbrook Town Council
Gary Collier – Clyst Honiton Parish Council
Chris Gains –
Henry Gent – Broadclyst Parish Council
Margaret Hall – West Hill Parish Council
David Harvey – Exeter City Council
Victoria Hatfield – Exeter City Council
Councillor P Hayward – East Devon District Council
Anne McLaird – Aviation South West

David Montgomery – Clyst Honiton Community Association
Ian Payne – Devon Air Ambulance Trust
Christopher Scanes – Bishops Clyst Parish Council
Dean Stewart – Ottery St Mary Town Council
Stephen Wiltshire – Exeter Airport

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott

Officers in attendance:

Alethea Thompson – Democratic Services Officer, EDDC

Apologies:

Andrew Bell – Regional and City Airports Group
Will Campbell – Exeter Aerospace
Colin Trudgeon – Bishops Clyst Parish Council
Jeremy Wollen – Rockbeare Parish Council
Andy Wood – Service Lead – Growth, Development & Prosperity, EDDC

Chairman

Date: