

BLACKBUSHE AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 19:00 ON TUESDAY 23rd JANUARY 2024
 AND extra questions from public consultation meeting 31st January 2024
 AND questions from the Yateley Society Meeting on 1st February 2024.**
Present (at the 23rd January Meeting):

Chris Gazzard	Blackbushe Airport [CG]
Michael Bagshaw	Chair [MB]
Cllr Tim Davies	Hampshire CC [TD]
Cllr Peter Cullum	Rushmoor BC [PC]
Cllr Richard Quarterman	Hart District Council [RQ]
Alison Hewitt	Yateley Society Chair [AH]
Mary Ferris	Yateley Society [MF]
Cllr Stuart Elborn	Hartley Wintney Parish Council [SE]
Cllr Adrian Collett	Hampshire County Council [AC]
Cllr Philip Todd	Eversley Parish Council [PT]
Clare Silcock	Secretary [CS]

		Action required by
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Cllr Nick Allen (Sandhurst Town Council)	
2	AGENDA Outline of Blackbushe Ownership & Land Structure Proposed Land Exchange Submission Timeline Q&A Section 16 Application Vision for Blackbushe Airport Phasing Q & A on Vision	
3	Mike Bagshaw as The Chair opened the meeting by introducing himself and Chris Gazzard the Managing Director and asked all the Committee Members to introduce themselves. He then outlined the agenda as detailed above and handed over to CG. PLEASE REFER TO THE POWERPOINT FOR A LOT OF THE INFORMATION GIVEN BY THE MANAGING DIRECTOR – THE MINUTES BELOW JUST ADD CONTEXT IN PLACES TO THAT POWERPOINT.	

4	<p>PROPOSED LAND EXCHANGE</p> <p>Slide 5 – the disused runways area has been leased to the RSPB for 11 years who will look after it to ensure habitats are looked after and grow.</p> <p>Slides 7-10 – The airport is seeking to deregister the common land because of the challenges it faces in building structures on the land which will enable the airport to be sustainable in the future. Cottage Farm is an area of land that lies adjacent to Yateley Common and will help connect the common land better, as currently there is an area to the south of the land which runs very close to the A30 which is very narrow and at times very muddy to pass through. Opening the Cottage Farm area will connect the common a lot better.</p> <p>The irregular shape of the Release land on the airport will be explained in more detail later but it runs alongside the A30 and enables hangars to be built in that area.</p> <p>The small parcel of land at the bottom of Cottage Farm land is owned by Hampshire County Council, and they keep this to use it to potentially exchange for when they want to widen highways which overlap with common land.</p> <p>CG talked through the maps on slides 10 & 11 and explained that integrating the Replacement Land (Cottage Farm) means that fences will be taken down, a lot of bushes and trees which make up the boundary will be left, but there are natural areas where the public can walk through to the Cottage Farm land.</p> <p>Slide 13 shows the replacement land in more detail and the points of access and possible routes that people could take to cross to other points in the common. The red squares on the map would be information boards, the yellow dotted routes could be routes that the public may like to take. The intention is to let the land establish itself over the first two years so routes can naturally evolve and then the land management team will cut the area on a seasonal basis to ensure good growth and good pathways are in place. In the pre-consultation the airport have been in discussions with Natural England and the Open Spaces Society. The Airport has every intention to work alongside local community groups to ensure the replacement land is well integrated and looked after. CG intends to attend all the Yateley Common Management Committee meetings to provide accountability for the Environmental Management Plan.</p> <p>CG went through the Submission Timeline (slides 19-23) and said he fully expected the process to go to a full public inquiry probably to be held towards the end of 2024. He encouraged everyone to look at the Blackbushe Airport website (www.blackbusheairport.co.uk/consultation) where the full documentation could be viewed. Members of the public can comment on the application via the website, by email or post (details in slide 25). He also explained that BAL would be putting forward planning</p>
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	applications alongside the s16 process, some of which would be under permitted development.	
5	<p>Q & A on the subject of Land Exchange</p> <p>CG had received a question from RQ prior to the meeting so addressed this question first:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <p>RQ - I note that the Replacement Land will not have any Public Rights of Way established across it, although the Environmental Management Plan refers to the maintenance of mown paths across the land. Why not define these as Rights of Way?</p> <p>CG - The entirety of the Replacement Land will be subject to rights of access which will be secured via the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, but also in an irrevocable deed under Section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1923.</p> <p>Most of Yateley Common is covered by informal paths which have developed over time as the use of the land has changed. If we were to prescribe routes at this stage, they might not be the routes that the public actually need or want to use. Defining them as rights of way would require the landowner to upkeep them as rights of way, even if they weren't in use. We've seen this problem on the rest of Yateley Common.</p> <p>Our proposal is to allow "desire" lines to form over the first year or two, and mow seasonally to 'encourage' those desire lines to develop into informal paths. This will then naturally allow surrounding areas to develop as habitats.</p> <p>Furthermore, we've already had indications from Natural England and Hampshire CC that they would be interested in using areas of the Replacement Land for other purposes, such as habitat creation, and we're open to discussing those, we wouldn't want defined PRoW to interfere with those aspirations.</p> <p>We don't see any advantage to the public in having defined rights of way at this stage.</p> <p>RQ commented that he understands this approach but it would be good to talk more about establishing footpaths – CG & RQ agreed that they would come back to it.</p> <p>Philip Todd explained that Eversley Parish Council shares the bridleway which runs along the Welsh Drive. He asked CG if the Airport should be trying to release other parcels of land other than just south of the runway.</p> <p>CG explained where the Welsh Drive ran through the airport land for the members of the public. He said that on average 2-3 groups a year ask to walk the Welsh Drive. The team at the airport are very happy to accommodate this by providing an escort across but unfortunately the Welsh Drive ends up at the BCA fences, so they then have to scramble over earth mounds to re-route to get around the fences onto the disused runways area. The airport has had conversations with HCC about providing an alternative dedicated route to the Welsh Drive around the active airport to the disused area so avoiding both the airport, and the BCA fences. BAL is waiting for HCC to report back on their discussions with BCA.</p> 	

CG then explained that if the application was put in to deregister other parts of the airport in various parcels this would be very “patchy” and he wanted to keep it simple in order to be able to build in sensible areas and keep the airport sustainable.

PT responded by saying that if the Welsh Drive was opened up more people would walk it. CG said that he couldn’t disagree with this point and did want to find a solution. He did re-emphasise that if members of the public do want to walk it, the airport always accommodates the request. He is just frustrated that they can’t walk the whole route due to the BCA fences which block it.

3. [Adrian Collett asked for clarification on slide 13 which showed the boundaries of Cottage Farm as there appeared to be some gaps in the border lines.](#)

CG explained that there are no gaps – it was just that the drawing wasn’t quite lined up on the borders. The only gaps were for the HCC small parcel of land as explained earlier and then small pockets of land surrounding 3 different masts on the land. One of these areas has planning permission for a future mast and the other two already have masts on them.

4. [Mary Ferris asked what plans does the airport have after the 15 year management plan of the Cottage Farm area.](#)

CG said that the intention is certainly to continue managing the area after the 15 years is up, as there is an obligation anyway as a landowner to do this, and it is what the airport would want to do. The airport is definitely committed in the long term to continue to manage the land. It is the airport’s intention to fund this management plan with the income that is received for the rental of the masts there.

Mary asked if we would outsource the land to the RSPB perhaps. Chris agreed that outsourcing was certainly the way to go with the management plan as others have much more expertise than us in this area.

5. [A member of the public asked if Cottage Farm would still be used as an equestrian centre and if there would be any parking to access Cottage Farm as it is quite a distance into the Common.](#)

CG explained that there is a tenant already in Cottage Farm and we are expecting them to stay and perhaps buy the property once the land exchange all goes through. The tenants have a lot less horses (less than 10) than the previous owners and if the exchange is successful, they will be left with sufficient grazing land for these horses.

As Cottage Farm is a private property, no parking will be available there. Cobbetts Lane is a bridleway beyond Leafy Oak Farm, so only vehicles accessing Cottage Farm or Follyfoot Farm should be using this section. The general policy of HCS who manage the rest of Yateley Common is not to encourage increases in footfall, in order to protect habitats. This replacement land will alleviate pinch points on the common and spread people out more by giving them access to more common land.

6. What will happen to the land in the future if the airport land was sold?

CG said BAL can't ever offer any guarantees on this, nobody can foresee what challenges or changes might happen. What do believe the future of Blackbushe as an Airport will be secure based on the following:

- We have a committed owner who has other similar businesses within this industry. This is viewed as a generational asset, not as a business to be grown and sold on.
- The airport as it is has planning permission for use for aviation purposes. Any change of this use would be subject to planning approval by local councils.
- We anticipate within the planning stage for the proposed developments, that the Local Planning Authority will likewise ensure the hangars and other structures are likewise restricted to aviation use.
- Within the Hart Local Plan and Yateley Neighbourhood Plan there are specific policies which support the development of Blackbushe Airport as an aerodrome and oppose other uses.
- Blackbushe Airport is surrounded by SSSI and SPA land, and so any change of use of the land from aviation to other purposes would be extremely difficult to achieve.
- We firmly believe the best way to protect Blackbushe Airport as an airport is to allow its development.

7. A member of the public (David Pulman, ex NATS) asked to state that Blackbushe acts as a buffer to Farnborough traffic. It means that Farnborough aircraft are kept away from the Blackbushe area, but if Blackbushe was to close there would certainly be more jets flying over the local area.

8. Has BAL had any indication of whether planning permission would be given for any future development?

CG stated that some informal contact with Hart District Council had been had and they seem generally supportive in principle, but would require more information before issuing any formal position or decision. The intention is that Phase 1A would be delivered through permitted development with Phase 1B being the subject of a full planning application, but a lot of discussions need to be had. Operational airport buildings can be built through the permitted development route – Fair Oaks have just been successful with this for a new hangar.

9. How is Blackbushe going to enhance the land at Cottage Farm to make it more like common land.

It is expected that initially some species will naturally migrate to the land, given it won't be used for grazing horses anymore, and just left for a while. We will regularly monitor it and help it along where necessary. There will be an annual review process to monitor its progress.

	<p>10. A suggestion from one member of the public was a wild flower meadow in that area.</p> <p>CG said that he would be taking the advice of the experts and take their steer as to how the land should be integrated.</p> <p>11. David Ashworth commented that he liked the idea of the integration of the replacement land from a health and safety point of view in that area as the path narrows right down close to the A30 and when walking dogs it is very dangerous and it gets rid of that pinch point.</p> <p>12. Is the management plan included improving the hedgerows surrounding the land?</p> <p>CG knows that in some areas the hedgerows are very dense and he would be taking advice on this aspect as well and certainly strive to make improvements.</p>	
6	<p>THE VISION (slides 28-47)</p> <p>The challenges are two-fold – commercial and the aging facilities.(slides 30-31)</p> <p>The airport receives very little income from a single engine light piston plane – typically £15 for a landing fee. The problem is that the business is currently very weather dependent. If the weather is poor, very little income is received. We have to make the business more sustainable by building hangars to house planes which will give a regular monthly rental income.</p> <p>The future objectives are to build a hangar and maintenance centre, a large café/restaurant/ event space and upgrade the fire, tower and admin facilities. We want to make the areas more accessible with disabled access to the tower and other areas, which is important to the disabled flying school on site (Aerobility) and in opening up opportunities for disabled employees. Slide 33 shows what it would look like – the fire crew will have three bays for their vehicles (they already have three fire trucks but we'd like to also house the tractor and other equipment in the bays to make them more secure).</p> <p>95% of Blackbushe's current movements are light GA (General Aviation) which is small light piston aircraft. A maintenance facility would be a great asset to have at the airport as it would save many planes having to fly to other facilities for servicing, which would in fact reduce movements. A helicopter facility would be an ideal business to have at the airfield due to its proximity to London and subsequent demand.</p> <p>The aim is to have a café and restaurant and event space available to all. The restaurant would open into the evening and serve gastro type pub meals with table service. The event space could be used for meetings, parties, weddings, and would very much be a building for the local community.</p> <p>CG went through the various phases of the build (slides 38 – 46). Phase 1A would be via permitted development and happen first – it would be an easy way to bring in much</p>	

	<p>needed revenue very quickly by providing hangars further down the airfield. Phase 1B would be via full planning as it would be the flagship hangar and new terminal building, café, tower and fire station. At this stage we would relocate the entrance to the airport by moving it west, closer to BCA and widen the A30 to provide a proper right turn access. Currently the junction is really dangerous and there are on average about 12 accidents a year as cars crash into the back of cars stopped to turn right. Some of the airport land would be used to widen the highway and the airport would pay for this improvement.</p> <p>The car park would still be available for people to park their cars and walk onto the common from there.</p> <p>Phase 2 (3-10 years) would be demand led, but the vision would be to create a flying school hub and set up a museum in the current Terminal Building with the Blackbushe Heritage Trust at the start of this phase, then potentially more hangarage.</p> <p>The creation of a new taxiway helps to explain the unusual triangular shape to the proposal of release land as the new hangars will need manoeuvring space in front of them.</p> <p>Chris then played the Vision video.</p>	
7	<p>Q & A's on The Vision</p> <p>CG had received a question from RQ prior to the meeting so addressed this question first:</p> <p>13. Are there any current restrictions on the number of aircraft movements at Blackbushe? I note that the current proposals do not aim to increase the number of aircraft movements at Blackbushe, and would like the management to consider whether a cap might be appropriate to reassure residents that there is no intention to increase aircraft traffic and noise?</p> <p>CG - The use of Blackbushe is covered by an agreement dating back to 1980. It includes provisions for noise abatement areas, circuit procedures, times of day, and limitations on maintenance engine running. There is not currently a movement cap.</p> <p>We anticipate that as part of the planning process, it might be appropriate to revisit the agreement to ensure it is appropriate for the modern day. A movement cap might not be the most appropriate way to regulate Blackbushe.</p> <p>As we've seen at Farnborough, when they hit their movement cap, they prioritise the heavier aircraft over lighter ones, because they bring in more revenue. A simple movement cap at Blackbushe could therefore encourage similar.</p> <p>A more appropriate approach might be to better regulate the approach and departure routes so as to avoid population areas. If you take Oxford as an example, their executive aviation is around 10% of their total, and the bulk of their movements are flight training. They have an upper limit of 160,000 movements per year which ensures flight training can thrive (they've not hit this limit since 1999). But they use other measures to regulate aircraft such as using noise certificate values or aircraft weights.</p>	

14. How will the Airport management ensure that future development of the Airport is consistent with Hart District Council's target of making the District Carbon neutral by 2040? In particular, will the management be aiming to reduce the use of fossil fuels at the airport, and maximise use of renewable energy sources such as solar panels?

CG response - Carbon neutrality is something we have begun to look at within the last 6 months. We understand it's firstly important to establish a baseline. For energy the airport consumes, such as electricity, oil, gas, and vehicle fuels, we've got data back to 2018 and measures we've already taken have reduced fossil fuels by over 30%, and electricity usage by 10%. These have included moving appliances and heating to electric, installing more efficient equipment etc.

We've added electric vehicle charging bays, as well as charging for electric aircraft, and hope within the development we will attract tenants who are either operating or designing new fuel-efficient or alternative fuel type aircraft.

The terminal will have a solar panel installation this year, and we plan that all the proposed buildings will have solar (and wind if appropriate).

With regards to aircraft fuels, we recognise we are a very small part of the aviation industry and we're unlikely to be a trail blazer with respect to alternative fuels. But we want to ensure we can support and accept them as they develop.

Just for understanding scale Blackbushe takes 10 truck loads per year of Jet fuel, compared to Farnborough's 4 per day. We have invested money on cleaner fuel – UL 91 and there has been an increase gradually over the last couple of years with aircraft using this.

RQ was keen to keep the dialogue on this subject which Chris agreed would be on the agenda going forward.

15. PC had noticed on the CGI video that not all buildings had solar panels showing on them. Is this the case.

CG reassured the audience that all the buildings would have but within the video, the designers had only fully rendered the Terminal, Flagship Hangar, and other buildings around the entrance. We hope to cover most of the building roofs with solar, with some gaps on roofs to allow light in.

16. AC asked about the commitment of the owners to the airport.

CG said that the owners were very committed to developing the airport, but if the exchange land isn't successful then the business is not sustainable.

17. He then asked if the land was exchanged wouldn't there be a risk of the land being used for something other than an airport such as industrial use?

CG said that he understood the concerns, but there would be certain caveats he was sure in the use of the land just for aviation use rather than anything else. He was sure that restrictions would be put in within planning.. See the answer to the Q&A for the land exchange (No 6) above.

Ultimately the airport has planning for use as an airport, and BAL expects that as part of the planning, HDC will place restrictions on new buildings tying them to aviation use. If, in many decades, the airport were to change ownership, or a change of use be pursued, the common land stock has not been depleted, with 35.3 acres added at Cottage Farm. Any area of the airport not covered by this application will still retain Common Land status.

18. RQ wanted to remind everyone that there are already several planning policies in place within the Hart Local Plan and the Yateley Neighbourhood Plan which should protect the land from development other than as an airfield. In addition, the land is surrounded by SSSI (a site of special Scientific Interest) and Special Protection Area (SPA) which already gives it protection.

19. AC asked what is the relationship like between Farnborough and Blackbushe? Does the excess from Farnborough come to Blackbushe?

CG explained that a small element from 2022's Farnborough weekend restrictions came to Blackbushe. This was when Farnborough only allowed in aircraft over a certain weight at weekends to maximise their income and keep their movements within their allowance. In 2022 Blackbushe did gain about 50 landings from this restriction but the number was very small. This didn't repeat itself in 2023.

CG explained that if Farnborough's movement cap increases it just increases the level of traffic in the area making it more difficult for the Blackbushe light aircraft to transit the controlled airspace to the south. The market for jets at Blackbushe is small jets and piston engines with very little overlap with Farnborough's market. It is limited due the size of the runway which cannot be lengthened. Helicopters would be a preferred asset to Blackbushe and we would love to get this market back after we lost the hangar to BCA when the land was sold.

20. TD asked Chris if there would be available employment for highly skilled workers if the vision came to fruition.

CG could foresee that there would be a requirement for around 35 people at the airport and if an engineering business was to base itself there, there would probably be around 20-30 people added, some in technical roles, during Phase 1, so it's not a massive amount like an office block, but is more than what we have at the moment.

21. Question from the audience – Does Blackbushe want to get some short distance take-off and landing (STOL) aircraft.

CG responded that more modern aircraft are focussing on STOL capabilities, which may make Blackbushe more appealing. The runway at Blackbushe is very limiting and not going to change in length. It is unlikely that we see a significant increase in business jets, but helicopters or new Electric VTOL aircraft may be more suited, given capacity in the London area is constrained.

22. Question from the audience – Is there enough money to complete this project? Is there a danger of the investors pulling out or running out of money part way through?

The Shareholders are very invested in Blackbushe already and the vision hasn't really changed from 7 years ago when they bought the land and business. The aim would be to get phase 1 completed and some income flowing from that. There may be opportunities at that point to fund further buildings through mortgaging and bank loans, but the financials have been projected for the next ten years. There certainly won't be any half-finished buildings.

23. Question from the audience – It would be useful to have the Vision video graphic show what the view might look like from the A30 towards the airport.

CG agreed that he would speak to the graphics people and ask them to look at this.

24. Stuart Elborn asked if there would be much disruption to the surrounding infrastructure when we start to build.

CG answered that there wouldn't be much difference during the first three years while we build further down the airport. There will be some when it comes to widening the A30 for a right hand turn.

25. Question from the audience – would air pollution increase with the development?

CG said that he didn't expect movements to increase too much more from where they are now. Rotary aircraft don't tend to fly over densely populated areas. It is interesting to look at a heat map of the movements over Blackbushe, The circuit can be very clearly seen, and then there are some other much fainter lines. If Blackbushe was not there other planes from Farnborough for instance would have more freedom to cross over the area. Blackbushe acts as a blocker to some aircraft.

26. A question from the audience – Will Blackbushe be keeping the current poly hangars that are there already.

Yes we will keep them for now, at least until other buildings are in place.

27. Question from the audience – how much car parking will there be as there doesn't appear to be much in the vision video?

We have mapped out 100 spaces down by the permitted development hangars. Our current car park has 180 spaces and this will increase to 250 for the main public car park as time goes on. There will be further car parking allocated for the hangars.

	<p>28. Does Blackbushe have a plan for an instrument approach landing?</p> <p>There was a plan for a GPS approach sent to the CAA prior to Brexit, but after we left the EU, the UK has lost access to EGNOS (Europe's satellite based navigation system) so it is at a stand still at the moment. If EGNOS gets reinstated then we would revisit getting a GPS approach at Blackbushe. We cannot have an ILS (instrument landing system) at Blackbushe as we can't put anything on Yateley Common to make this work.</p> <p>29. Who would pay for the A30 right turn into the airport?</p> <p>Blackbushe would and we would use some of the land owned by Blackbushe to allow for the slight widening of the A30 to accommodate the protected right turn lane.</p> <p>30. Another question from the audience – I notice that the fuelling area is not part of the land exchange area. Are you planning to move the fuelling area?</p> <p>It may be moved, but for now it will be left where it is for the foreseeable future. If newer fuel types become available on the market, we will probably put these elsewhere.</p> <p>31. Would there be lights on the apron?</p> <p>There already are and yes there would be. This hasn't been designed yet.</p> <p>32. Would there be fencing?</p> <p>We would like to secure the boundary of the airport with the A30, with similar fencing to what we have near the Apron and Terminal building between the airport land and common land.</p> <p>33. Will wild animals be able to get through the fencing if it blocks the land from the A30?</p> <p>We will need to look at that and take some advice, but we certainly don't see any deer on the airport currently – just rabbits.</p> <p>34. Will there still be access from the common to the car park and café?</p> <p>Definitely yes as we value the walkers and cyclists that visit the café but also want to continue allowing cars to park there to access the common as parking is in short supply.</p> <p>That was the end of the questions.</p>	
8	<p>Chris finished off the meeting with the reminders about the consultation process and where to respond to the consultation. The details can be found on the Blackbushe website at www.blackbusheairport.co.uk/consultation</p> <p>Or by email to commonlandcasework@planninginspectorate.gov.uk, copying in consultation@blackbusheairport.co.uk if you want to.</p>	

	<p>Mike Bagshaw closed the meeting by thanking Chris and the team and acknowledging that the consultation process has very much improved since Chris took over as manager of the airport.</p>	
9	<p>Other questions raised at the Public Consultation Meeting on Wednesday 31st January 2024</p> <p>35. Jules Crossley (Rushmoor BC) – explained that she represents various environmental groups in the area and has been reassured by what she has heard on the land exchange. She did have a question on the amount of business jet traffic and whether BAL envisage this increasing?</p> <p>Chris explained that we don't have any business jets currently based at Blackbushe. We do have some local people who travel in them, which means the jet sometimes has to fly to Blackbushe to pick up these passengers. Some jets are hangered elsewhere, eg: Gloucester and fly here to pick up the owner. If we had hangars that may stop this kind of movement. We do hope to gain some other private jet movements. It is not however the bread and butter of our business, as only 5% of the movements at Blackbushe is executive travel, and we don't expect this % share to change substantially.</p> <p>36. Is there a limit on movements at Blackbushe?</p> <p>This has been covered in Question 1 from the earlier meeting (see above)</p> <p>37. Does a Touch and Go count as one movement?</p> <p>Yes it does at Blackbushe and it always has so we can compare like for like when we look back at numbers and statistics.</p> <p>38. Two members of the audience said that they had not received letters from Blackbushe Airport about the process as Registered Commoners.</p> <p>Chris asked them to let Clare know their addresses before they leave the meeting and he would check whether they are on the list of houses BAL received from the authorities and correspond with the people who had asked. He explained that the registered was very old, hand written and names crossed through where houses no longer had commoners rights due to perhaps flats replacing houses, or new housing developments.</p> <p>Update post meeting:</p> <p>We have cross-checked the register for one of the properties, it is not listed, and the owner of that property is now looking at their own records to understand what rights, if any, might apply to their property.</p> <p>The second property, it was identified the ownership has changed recently, and Land Registry data has not updated yet. The notification was sent to the listed owner, and signed for by them, so we assume it was caught by a postal redirect.</p>	

39. Why has BAL leased the disused runway area to the RSPB given the danger of birds to aircraft?

Chris explained that when higher risk movements are due to land/ take off the fire crew always do runway inspections and bird runs to clear any birds from the runway. The risk comes from large flocks of birds, particularly when migrating. Habitats for small birds which do not swarm, and are located to the north of the airport, aren't particularly risky to aircraft or the birds.

40. Peter Hall asked whether Chris would be taking a more severe approach with pilots when they cross into the noise abatement area?

Chris explained that BAL had received 59 noise complaints last year, around half of which had been received from Peter Hall. In comparison Farnborough receive 6,000 a year. Whenever we receive a complaint we investigate and will speak to the pilot to educate them. Sometimes we don't actually receive a complaint but if we see something that isn't right we will always address it with the pilot. It should be noted that BAL is a flying school airport and mistakes will happen where the pilots will sometimes diverge into the noise abatement area but we do our best to control this.

There was a question on air pollution but this has already been covered in question 13 in the previous meeting.

41. Peter Hall stated that some of the aircraft fly as low as 30 ft over the top of the local shops in Tudor Drive.

Chris disagreed that this would have happened. The planes fly at 500 ft plus until they are on final approach, when obviously they need to come lower.

Mike Bagshaw commented that he is a flight examiner and if this ever happened the pilot would be prosecuted.

42. How has the land been measured? Have the inner fences in Cottage Farm been used, rather than the outer ones so creating a gap of what will be managed and what won't?

Chris assured the audience that BAL would manage the whole site right to the point where it overlaps with the common. There would be no gaps at all. BAL has taken the lower measurement number of 35.3 acres for the land exchange purposes, but the true area may be closer to 35.48 acres.

43. Is the land exchange all just a smokescreen to allow the expansion of the business with the aim of increasing the commercial wealth of the owner?

Chris disagreed that it was a smokescreen, but agreed that BAL needed to expand the business to make it sustainable. Currently 10% of the income of the business comes from rent. The rest is all weather dependent, including the café, which is restricted in size in the poor weather. Building hangars would give valuable rental monies to the business.

44. Will a copy of the slides would be available on the website?

Chris confirmed that they would be.

45. What will the financial viability of the airport be, if the land exchange and building didn't go ahead?

Chris explained that when the new management team had come on board in 2016 the airport was making a £300k loss per year. In 2022 BAL broke even. The investors have invested £10m already and are truly invested in the business. However without hangars the business is really struggling to be sustainable.

46. A gentleman said that he was very happy with the land swap idea and could see the sense in it. He bought his house 40 years ago and actually likes the noise of the aircraft but is not so keen when helicopters come and go so frequently, as they are much noisier.

Chris agreed that the small training helicopters are noisier, but the executive helicopters are a quick in or out and not so noisy. We can also control their routing well.

47. If the plan goes ahead would the footprint of the airport stay the same?

Chris confirmed that there are certainly no plans to expand the footprint of the airport.

VISION Questions

48. Will there be an increase of jet traffic once the buildings go up?

Chris explained that jet movements are currently 5% of the BAL movements as there are many restrictions on jets coming into Blackbushe, due to a short runway. There are different rules for jets to come in commercially and privately. The restrictions are less when a plane comes in privately and isn't a charter. We have quite a few PC12s (propellor planes) and PC24s come in on a commercial basis and a few mustangs, but most others can't use it on a commercial basis. The future target market for BAL is more towards executive helicopters. There are currently training helicopters who come from White Waltham. The good thing about helicopters is that we can prescribe the best approaches avoiding built up areas. Chris went through the movement details as in Question 1 above. In addition he explained that when the hangar was lost to BCA when the land and business were sold, BAL lost about 5-6000 helicopter movements and £1 million in potential revenue. A member of the audience challenged Chris on the figures by suggesting that in the last 10 years the growth of movements had been 46% as the average annual growth had been 4.3%. However Chris explained that movements were actually back to the levels they were prior to financial crash to 2007.

49. Do the owners have enough money to complete their vision?

This is explained in Question 22 above. The first phase will cost about £20-£25 million.

50. There was a question on solar panels and energy sources which has already been covered in Question 14 above.

	<p>51. Are there any plans to change the opening hours of the Airport?</p> <p>Chris explained that the core hours of the airport are 7am – 6pm with potential extensions until 10pm. He didn't see that changing.</p> <p>52. Will there be any customs at Blackbushe?</p> <p>Chris explained that we already have a Certificate of Agreement where flights are pre-screened and Border Force send staff to the airport to meet certain flights, in particular where non-British nationals are flying in. He expects this to continue.</p> <p>53. How much was Cottage Farm bought for and there would be a future change of use?</p> <p>It was bought for £2.4m and there are tenants currently in-situ who have expressed an interest in buying Cottage Farm when/if the land exchange goes through. They will be left with about 4 acres of land, and their intention is to continue using the stables for their own horses and some friends', so smaller than it was before, but still using it for horses. They do want it to be a domestic home going forward.</p> <p>54. How confident is the management that the land exchange would be successful?</p> <p>Chris said that he hoped they would be successful and was reasonably confident that it would happen.</p>	
10	<p>Other questions raised at the Yateley Society Meeting on Thurs 1st February 2024</p> <p>55. Alex Worrall asked about the registration of the Common Land and how this came about.</p> <p>Chris explained that all the common land in England was officially registered in the 1960s. Before that date it was still common land but just had not been officially registered as such.</p> <p>56. If the Blackbushe land is successfully deregistered can BAL do whatever it wants with the land?</p> <p>Chris explained that as Blackbushe Airport sits on common land it cannot officially build on it, but as it owns the land it can drive vehicles on it. If some of the land is deregistered then BAL would be able to go through the proper planning process to erect buildings. Currently BAL has put up poly hangars and portacabins, which are cheap to do, and if asked to take down, the cost invested would not be that big. Erecting proper hangars and buildings is much more of an investment, so BAL needs to go through this process.</p> <p>The new land at Cottage Farm is owned by Cottage Farm Ltd, and it can be exchanged for common land, but Cottage Farm Ltd still own it and has a duty of care to look after it, hence the management plan. Similarly that is true of the disused runway area.</p>	

<p>57. Is there a compromise to be reached where the land does not get deregistered from the common land?</p> <p>No unfortunately not – the Planning Inspector will either say Yes or No.</p> <p>58. There was a general concern about the possible alternative use of the airport land if it is deregistered which is covered in question 17 above.</p> <p>59. Di Gardner asked that if BAL failed in its' attempt to exchange the land and decided to close the airport, what effect would that have on Farnborough traffic?</p> <p>This is covered in question 7 & 25 above. Currently very few jets fly over Yateley as shown by the CAA data of every route flown. The circuit at Blackbushe shows up a very bright gold ring. Blackbushe certainly acts as a buffer to Farnborough traffic as the jets have to avoid the Blackbushe airspace.</p> <p>60. Will traffic increase if Blackbushe is successful in deregistering the common land and expanding the business?</p> <p>This is covered in a number of answers above. Currently BAL's main form of revenue is related to movements. If we could switch the focus to getting more rental this would be a much better solution for all.</p> <p>61. Who will manage the Cottage Farm management plan.</p> <p>BAL will oversee but we will take on subcontractors to do the work.</p> <p>62. Will noise increase over Yateley?</p> <p>Chris said that he couldn't imagine much of a change from the current levels. If more executive helicopters come in, which we hope they will, then their general approach route is from the South, so does not typically affect Yateley.</p> <p>63. Are you sure you will be able to secure a right hand turn into the Airport?</p> <p>Blackbushe will be liaising with Hampshire Highways on this matter. The preference would be a safe right hand filter and not a roundabout on the A30 as the cost difference is very large.</p> <p>64. The airport already has some structures built on the common land, so why do you have to go through this deregistration process? Why can't you just build more structures?</p> <p>We could go through permitted development to get the hangars built down the end of the airport (phase 1a) but there is a very large investment in building proper hangars with concrete, heating, etc... so we want to be sure that there will be no objection in the future and we're told to take them down as it would be on common land.</p>	
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	<p>65. How do cars get to the car parking behind the hangars at the end of the airport?</p> <p>There will be an access road the other side of the bushes parallel to the A30. We will be taking advice on headlights causing issues on the A30 and will ensure appropriate screening is put in place to avoid problems.</p> <p>66. You mentioned paving areas of the airport, do you mean paving slabs?</p> <p>Taxiways and aprons will be concrete or tarmac, but certainly not paving slabs as too many issues with that!</p>	
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