

COVENTRY AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 16th May 2023 at 1600 hours.

Present:	Mr Peter Burns MBE (PB)	Chairman
	Mr Ron Walker (RW)	Based operator Midland Air Training and Airpark Flight Centre and vice-chairman of the CACC.
	Cllr Roger Horsfall (RH)	Baginton Parish Council
	Mr John Astle (JA)	Stoneleigh & Ashow and Bubbenhall Parish Council
	Mr Alan Yates (AY)	Campaign to Protect Rural England
	Cllr Ram Lakha (RL)	Coventry City Council

In Attendance from Coventry Airport:

Mr Richard Pace (RP)	Coventry Airport Oversight Director
Mr Andy Hixon (AH)	Coventry Airport, Operations Accountable Manager
Mr Steve Lindon (SL)	Senior AFISO
Mrs Tracy Sweeney (TS)	Quality System Manager (Scribe)

In Attendance from Rigby Real Estate:

Mr James Walters (JW)	Rigby Group
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Absent/ Apologies:

Mr Peter Jones (PJ)	Chairman Coventry Airport Tenants and Users Association (CATUA)
Larry Coltman (LC)	Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
Mike Murray (MM)	Rigby Group

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1. Welcome and Introductions:

The meeting was declared open at 16:00 hours by the Chairman.

2. Apologies:

Peter Jones (PJ) – CATUA

3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest:

There were no declarations of conflict of interest raised.

4. Minutes of meeting on 18th October 2022:

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted.

5. Matters Arising:

PB: Financial Status of the airport?

RP: All figures are published on Company's house; no specific financials will be discussed at this meeting. The airport is operating at a loss, in part due to a decrease in property revenue which could be due to the uncertainty of the gigafactory and its future.

6. Airport Update:

JW: There has been further dialogue with potential investors, which is an ongoing process. We will continue to promote the opportunity to potential investors in the UK and internationally, and, at present, there is no clear date as to when any discussions may conclude. Until that point, the airport will continue to operate as it does currently.

RW: Could Coventry City Council (CCC) revoke the change of use?

JW: That is a question for CCC, as opposed to Rigby Group. Any change of use from what is permitted in the current outline planning permission would have to involve a new planning application process.

7. Any Other Business:

RW: Significant increase in landing fees which was not consulted on prior to publishing.

RP: Fees and charges were communicated prior to implementation. The decision was made on the fact there had not been an increase for quite some time. An analysis of surrounding airfields was carried out and our fees and charges were brought in line with our competitors. The aim of the business is to be self-sufficient, and not running at a loss.

RW: My main issue is the cost of Touch and Go's which could end up being £80 for an hour. This could impact the business/ airport with fewer movements due to the higher costs.

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RP: Fees are set at a reasonable level when compared to Wellesbourne. We have had no complaints or feedback for fees being too high. Having said that if movements did drop then they would obviously be revisited as and when.

RW: The threat of the gigafactory prevents tenants/ businesses coming to the airport.

RP: It is evident, this is a project with an uncertain timeframe. My job is to keep the airport operationally stable and running. The staff are paramount to that operation and run the airport effectively. The FY23 Movements were 32,502 which is back to the levels of 2018 (7-day operations). We accommodated night flying with the team being flexible. If there are any issues with staff or tenants, then this needs to be communicated to me. We have a monthly meeting with the team who are fully involved.

PB: We haven't heard from the Tenants and Users Committee.

RW: Unsure why the Tenants and Users Committee has dissolved. May be a conversation for PJ.

AY: What happens to the airport if Plan A (Gigafactory) doesn't work out and the airport isn't sustainable?

RP: My priority is to continue to operate the airport and develop it if given the opportunity.

JW: We are continuing to pursue the opportunity for a gigafactory on the site. If that doesn't happen, any alternative use for the site would require a new planning application and we would have to go through a new planning process. The existing planning consent relates to a battery manufacturing facility and associated uses only.

AY: Andy Street reported that TATA Group rejected the site (Coventry Airport) as it was unsuitable for a gigafactory?

JW: We are confident that the site meets the requirements of the vast majority of battery manufacturers. We reviewed the parameters of other gigafactories globally as part of the planning process, and this was incorporated into our planning application.

RW: Ad-hoc short notice closure caused problems for movements and was disruptive and inconvenient.

RP: As soon as the Chancellor's visit was finally confirmed the planned closure was communicated as soon as security reasons permitted. It was also a safety issue as having people in the tower whilst operational would cause a distraction to the staff. We tried to keep the closure window as time limited as possible, the actual need was short, but an exact time was unknown hence the reason for the 1.5-hour closure window.

AY: How do the public get to know about the meeting or minutes as they are not on the website, which is not accessible at the minute?

AH: There is an update being carried out on the website at present, they will be on there when it is fully operational again.

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8. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 14th November at 4pm. An invite will be issued with confirmation date.

The meeting was closed by the chairman at 16:45

Thank you for your attendance.