

Save Manston Airport association are writing to you as our members are increasingly unhappy as to how long it is taking to re-write the Decision Letter on the Manston Airport DCO.

We have all had to respond to a quite ridiculous number of consultation-rounds on the Manston Airport DCO – I have them archived under a dozen different date headings – surely by now the necessary answers have been obtained ? This looks like sustained incompetence of the part of those asking the questions, as well as an apparent inability to read the representations. Even those opposed to Manston Airport feel this way – see reference [1], by a leading opponent in Ramsgate, Cllr Anne-Marie Nixey.

We have over the last week written to 5 relevant Kentish Members of Parliament :

North Thanet : Sir Roger Gale MP;

South Thanet : Craig Mackinlay MP;

Canterbury & District : Rosie Duffield MP;

Dover & Deal : Mrs Natalie Elphicke MP; and we have just written to :

Folkestone & Hythe MP : Damian Collins MP.

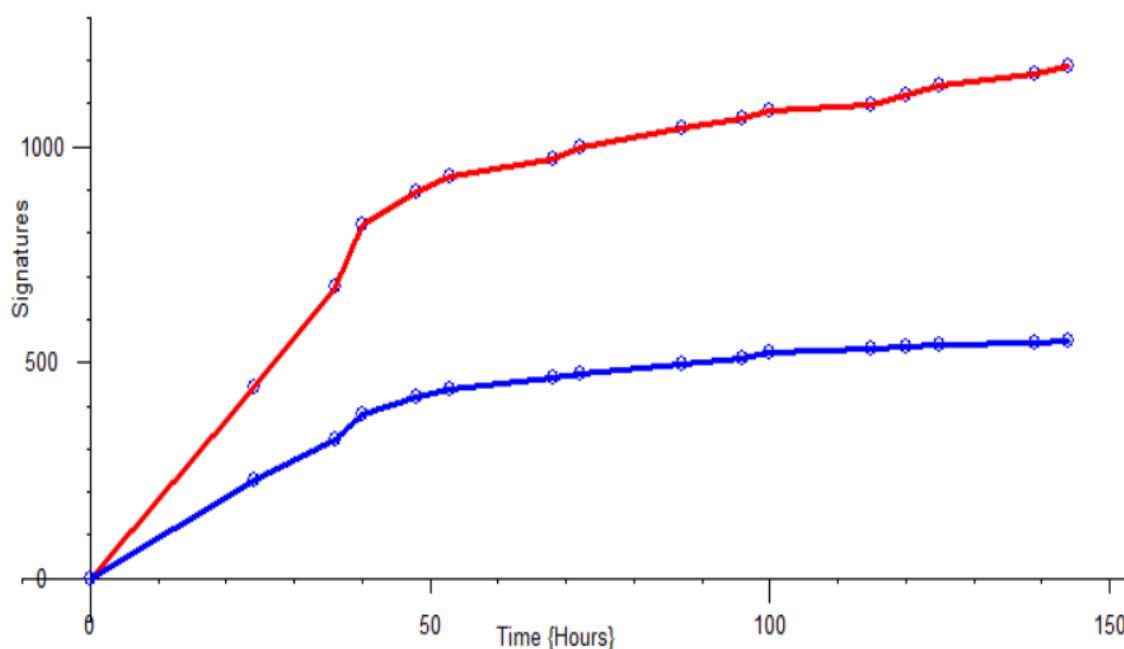
We have asked them :

Could you please contact the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, and add your voice to ours, to ask him to please reach a decision on the Development Consent Order (DCO) soon, to please re-open Manston Airport for Aviation ?

To validate the signatures of our members signing this letter (which are likely only to be a fraction of our total membership), we are asking people in their constituencies to sign the below letter as a 38 degrees petition.

The total signatures on these letters rapidly reached 1000 within a few days, as shown by this graph. Initially the totals go up fairly quickly, as currently on-line SMAa people responded ; then, we are very pleased to note, that the signature totals, after a week, still appear to be growing approximately linearly with time. We believe these are new people learning about Manton Airport and then joining SMAa.

Red : Total of all 5 sets of Signatures; Blue : Sir Roger Gale.



The Petition text :

On the 21st July 2014 pro-Manston Airport groups, accompanied by Sir Roger Gale, MP for North Thanet, took a petition with 26,498 signatures to 10 Downing St., to try and prevent the closure of Manston Airport

After 8 years we are still fighting to get Manston Airport re-opened for Aviation.

There is now a Development Consent Order (DCO) process in place, and we are waiting for the Secretary of State for Transport, in the Department for Transport, to make a decision.

We have been campaigning to help push through the Development Consent Order (DCO) to re-open Manston Airport.

SMAa and its members have submitted many 10s and even 100s of megabytes of documentation and evidence to the DCO process, as to why Manston Airport should be re-opened, in support of RiverOak Strategic Partners (RSP), who now own Manston Airport.

The DCO process was put in place to provide certainty to all - particularly investors - that the process would proceed in a timely manner, and has a defined timetable. This was closely adhered to though the examination process, and was supposed to conclude on the 12th January 2020, with a DCO decision by the Secretary of State for Transport in the Department for Transport (DfT).

2 years and one month later we are still awaiting this decision. This delay is at the expense of jobs in Thanet and East Kent, at our ability to travel easily, and makes a mockery of the strict DCO timetable. We believe the Manston investors are still standing firm with us, but please, DfT, do not try their patience any longer. With the difficulties posed by Covid, local jobs are more essential than ever. The fraction of the Thanet workforce that is out of work is double than that of say even the next constituency Canterbury. Thanet is desperately in need of "Levelling Up", and re-opening Manston Airport is a way of doing that at no cost to the taxpayer.

Nationally and internationally air-cargo transport is booming, with more cargo planes being built, or converted from passenger planes. The South-East of England is short of airports with good cargo facilities - cargo stands and warehouses next to them. Manston Airport has a very suitable huge runway – using it is consistent with Government policy of "Making Best Use". Manston will be purpose built from the ground up as a green low-carbon cargo airport to bring international cargo right into the Kent and London, where it is needed, rather than have the extra pollution of flying it up to the Midlands, and then trucking it back south again.

It is indeed vital to get the wording of the Secretary of State's decision letter precise and water-tight, but please can we have a decision soon ?

Why is this important?

Re-opening Manston Airport can be a major booster for the people in the South-East, Kent and Thanet, and will facilitate relief flights to aid the people of the Ukraine.

RiverOak Strategic Partners (RSP) want to invest £300 million into the infrastructure in the area, and create thousands of excellently paid jobs. They will start with hundreds of construction jobs.

At the same time they are already working with training and education providers, to make sure that the local people are fully up to speed, and able to apply for these jobs.

All at no cost to the taxpayer.

Update

A Manston Airport hangar is being used to prepare medical goods for the people in the Ukraine. Initial deliveries will be by road, but discussions are proceeding at government level to facilitate Humanitarian flights, both goods outwards, and possibly people inwards, though the latter will require Air Traffic Control to be in place.

Not having the Development Consent Order (DCO) already in place for Manston is adding to delays.

We are asking people to :

“Please sign whichever is relevant to you, to add your name to this plea” :

North Thanet : Sir Roger Gale MP :

South Thanet : Craig Mackinlay MP :

Canterbury & District : Rosie Duffield MP :

Dover & Deal : Mrs Natalie Elphicke MP :

Folkestone and Hythe MP : Damian Collins :

Kind regards,

From the SMAa Committee on behalf of the 3,700 members

Dr Beau Webber (Chairman)

Liam Coyle (Vice-Chairman & Chief Moderator)

David Stevens (Vice-Chairman)

Margaret Sole (Treasurer)

Gregory Nocentini (Treasurer)

Angela Stevens (Secretary)

Ex-officio members:

Bryan Girdler

Gary Dumigan

References :

1)

Submission by Cllr Anne-Marie Nixey

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“Yet here we are being asked to explain again. I first started writing submissions in early 2019 as to why we are opposed to the venture and what evidence do we have regards need”.

“I look forward to hearing the outcome of this long drawn out saga once and for all”.

Cllr Anne-Marie Nixey. Chair of Ramsgate Town Council. Admin for NNF.