

## THE NEED FOR MANSTON

I am the manager of TG Aviation, a pilot and I live in Thanet, I therefore write in all these capacities.

When Manston Airport was closed TG Aviation was all but destroyed. Without access to the runway we could no longer carry out flying training and aircraft hire, aircraft could not fly in or out of our engineering facility and aircraft could no longer base in our hangar or park with us. Nearly everything we had worked so hard to build over 32 years was taken away.

Thank you for allowing a short recording to be played at the hearing on the NEED for Manston. I very much wanted to attend the public hearing to show my support for RSP and express my views on why Manston is NEEDED. However, in a desperate attempt to continue operating TG Aviation, a business that we as a family have put over 32 years of our lives into building, we moved the flying training to Lydd. (2 ½ hours travelling per day and over 100 miles away as apposed to 10 minutes travelling time and 5 miles). I now work 7 days a week only taking time off when there is no flying booked or the weather prevents us from flying. The week of the hearings the weather improved and I could not afford to turn down flying especially after the stormy weather we have experienced over the previous two weeks. At Manston when there was no flying we could rely on income from aircraft parking, hangarage and engineering to carry us through but now all that is gone and we are the ones paying others for parking, hangarage and engineering.

The CAA have recently announced that the IMC (Instrument Meteorological Conditions) Rating is to be continued. In brief this allows pilots with this rating to fly in cloud and make approaches in cloud to airfields in the UK. However, in order to train for this rating you NEED to be able to undertake instrument approaches in to airfields for training and for test. Biggin Hill no longer permit instrument training for general aviation, Shoreham had to suspend their instrument approaches due to a lack of controllers, so that leaves only Southend and Lydd in the south east of England accepting instrument training for general aviation pilots.

We had two students from Biggin Hill undertaking their IMC Rating with us in February and some days Lydd was fully booked for instrument approaches. With Shoreham no longer able to offer instrument approaches, the commercial school there now uses Lydd as do schools from Redhill, Headcorn and Biggin Hill to name but a few. The IMC Rating is widely regarded by those in general aviation as a means to improving flying skills and allowing safe approaches to airfields when conditions are poor. Manston is NEEDED to provide extra training slots and an additional diversion airfield with a hard runway and an instrument approach in the south east.

A lot of what is undertaken in the airlines has filtered down over the years into general aviation and we widely teach the use of TEM – Threat and Error Management. Aviation forecasts, especially for somewhere like Lydd which is surrounded by sea, can change suddenly so to have an IMC Rating helps to manage the Treat of the weather changing and the error of controlled decent into terrain.

There is also an increasing concern in aviation that the automation of aircraft is resulting in pilots becoming systems operators rather than what we would call “stick and rudder” pilots, which mean that when the automation fails they do not recognise quickly enough what is happening to the aircraft. If we continue to allow airfields to close there will no longer be places to train for these skills. We desperately NEED another airfield in the south east of

England with a hard runway that can allow flying training to be undertaken throughout the year and where instrument approaches can be flown both for training and as a means to get back on the ground safely in poor weather.

A spokesman for the former owners of Discovery Park and present owners of Manston once promoted Discovery Park using the availability of an Airport close to hand being an advantage. In my opinion that still applies today, if we are going to attract business to Thanet and the surrounding area we NEED an international airport capable of accepting business jets and the like with good road and rail connections to the rest of the Country. Manston is the only airport that can fulfil those criteria.

On Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March operation stack was in place on the M20 due to, I understand, a work to rule by the French authorities. Lorries were parked back from Dover to Folkestone and again from Eurotunnel to past junction 11 for Canterbury. The previous week they were being held further back along the M20 on a closed section due to disruption to services caused by storms affecting sailings from Dover. Our road network is becoming increasingly over stretched so we must look to the future. We NEED to bring more freight in via air to avoid delays at the sea ports and reduce the traffic on our roads. Manston NEEDS to reopen to provide connectivity to the rest of the Country. Regional airports in the future will be NEEDED to play a bigger and bigger part in keeping this Country moving but not if we allow them to be closed and houses built on them.

On the subject of noise pollution and damage to the education of those pupils at schools near to or under the flight path, one of my daughters went [REDACTED] which is under the flight path. Far from affecting her education she is now a maths teacher at a local Grammar School.

Talking with a number of teachers what I hear is that education is suffering from a lack of funding and availability of good teachers. This applies equally to the NHS and Doctors, nurses and other professionals because Thanet is run down and not attractive. Infrastructure is overstretched as are the hospitals, doctor's surgeries and dentists because we are building houses without meeting the needs of those living in them. Thanet NEEDS the airport back with educational facilities and well paid jobs that will attract professionals back to the area.

We must not forget that modern day commercial aircraft are much quieter than they were say 20 years ago. A lot of 707s went out of commission when they could no longer fly in UK airspace without being modified with a "hush kit". With the airport closed there is still aircraft noise from airliners descending over Thanet into the major London Airports but because they are so quiet they go unnoticed.

I have a far greater fear for the health, life expectancy and education of my family and those living in Thanet if it becomes one large housing estate with constant queuing traffic and the pollution that will be produced than I do if Manston becomes an airport again.

Whilst many people will have moved to the area after the airport closed, if they and their solicitors had done their homework they would have known that there was a strong campaign to reopen the airport and a Company – RSP wanting to acquire it for that purpose. I moved here 32 years ago because Thanet had an airport, why should I be the one forced to move away because every bit of available land including the airport and green belt is being put forward for housing!