

Political Spin

On the 14th June 2019 Councillor Stuart Piper wrote to PINS purporting to be “I should like to set the record straight regarding the composition of the letter and the manner in which the meeting was hastily arranged in order to produce this unbalanced opinion”

His main complaint seems to be that of a “man wronged” and accusing the newly elected Ramsgate Town Parish Council of “a disgraceful stunt by people who should know better and who have brought shame on the good name of Ramsgate Town Council”

I have attached the letter as appendix 1

Far from being a disgraceful stunt the newly elected Councillors were seeking to right the disgraceful behaviour of the previous administration

History

In May 2015 Ramsgate Town Council became the 1st Parish Council to be run by UKIP (the United Kingdom Independence Party) which decided that they needed to do more to support the reopening of Manston Airport. They held a large majority within the Council and set out to ensure that any publicity created by RTC would be positive for the Airport’s reopening and Riveroak in particular.

Whilst this was occurring Thanet District Council under the stewardship of Chris Wells was renegotiating with Tony Freudmann as to whether TDC would be able to Compulsory Purchase the airfield for the second time. The 1st time in late 2014 failed under a Labour administration because TDC were unhappy about the financial guarantees offered by Riveroak (sound familiar Ed)

It became apparent that history was to repeat itself and those same guarantees were being fudged by Riveroak and with regret Chris Wells decided that it was unsafe for Thanet Council to continue causing half of the TDC UKIP councillors to openly revolt (many were also Ramsgate Town Councillors including Stuart Piper, George Rusecki, and others no longer councillors)

Some actively touted for further investors to replace Riveroak contrary to the Councillor Code of conduct appendix 2 & 3.

Then of course Riveroak announced they were applying for a NSIP with Compulsory powers.

During this DCO process these UKIP councillors have actively set out to undermine the process by actively campaigning for Riveroak again in contravention of the Councillor Code.

They then deserted the UKIP party and became the Thanet Independent Councillors (13 from 29 Ukip councillors defected) thereby handing control of Thanet Council to the Tory Party.

During the NSIP consultations the majority controlling Ramsgate Town Council controlled the workings of the Council allowing no Town meeting for residents to express their concerns over the Cargo Hub, muted the Ramsgate Town Council’s submission to Pins (editor’s comment: Some called what they did censorship)

This despite RSP’s own consultation papers saying that Ramsgate would suffer “significant adverse impacts” in Ramsgate, Pegwell and Manston (fig 1) and “significant adverse effects have been identified in the communities of Ramsgate, Manston, Wade and West Stourmouth” (fig 2).

It beggars belief that the Town Council failed in their duty to hold resident’s meetings outside of the consultations by Riveroak to place before the public in Ramsgate a Town of 40K people many of whom were never informed about the consultations by Riveroak.

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- 12.7.67 The change in noise level at the communities described above in the long term, the magnitude of impact resulting from the Proposed Development has been estimated at baseline monitoring and observation locations and presented in **Table 12.29**. This baseline was presented earlier in this Chapter in **Table 12.2** and **Table 12.3**. The magnitude of impact has been estimated using the long-term change criteria presented in **Table 12.8**.
- 12.7.68 At many of the communities described above the predicted change in daytime and night-time noise is negligible.
- 12.7.69 During the daytime:
- ▶ Moderate adverse impacts are predicted in **Ramsgate**;
 - ▶ A moderate adverse impact is predicted at Pegwell Bay; and
 - ▶ Minor adverse impacts are predicted in Manston.
- 12.7.70 Considering that the impact is permanent and that a large number of dwellings within the communities are subject to minor to moderate adverse impacts, significant adverse effects have been identified at the communities of Ramsgate, Pegwell Bay and Manston as a result of the Proposed Development. The effect would be characterised as a perceived change in quality of life

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Fig 1

- for occupants of buildings in these communities or a perceived change in the acoustic character of shared open spaces within these communities during the daytime.
- 12.7.71 During the night-time:
- ▶ Moderate adverse impacts are predicted in Ramsgate;
 - ▶ Minor adverse impacts are predicted in Manston;
 - ▶ A minor adverse impact is predicted in Wade; and
 - ▶ A minor adverse impact is predicted in West Stourmouth;
- 12.7.72 Considering that the impact is permanent and that a large number of dwellings within the communities are subject to minor to moderate adverse impacts, significant adverse effects have been identified at the communities of Ramsgate, Manston, Wade and West Stourmouth as a result of the Proposed Development. The effect would be characterised as a perceived change in quality of life for occupants of buildings in these communities or a perceived change in the acoustic character of shared open spaces within these communities during the night-time.

Fig 2

Stuart Piper's letter decrypted

"I am compelled to write to you as a matter of urgency regarding the recently publicised letter from Ramsgate Town Council to yourselves"

Stuart Piper would like it understood that he doesn't approve of RTC's actions and wants his fellow supporters to know he did his best

"The Local newspapers are carrying a story explaining the nature of the letter"

The local online newspaper "Isle of Thanet News" received a press release from the Town Clerk and ran a story accordingly

"I should like to set the record straight regarding the composition of the letter and the manner in which the meeting was hastily arranged in order to produce this unbalanced opinion"

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The newly elected Ramsgate Town Council called a town meeting to which all the councillors were invited along with as many residents as possible (at least 150 people attended) to gather the views of the residents about the Cargo Hub which Stuart Piper had failed to do in the previous 2 years of the DCO process.

'There is a local newspaper article today that says RTC is unanimously against Manston Airport being returned to aviation. Here are some facts... The meeting was called at very short notice and coincided with a Police community safety meeting which had been in our diaries for months. Those calling the meeting knew of the clash. ONLY Labour Cllrs turned up and took a unanimous vote to produce this letter. RTC had already submitted a letter to the Inspectorate at an earlier stage in the process. The views of Cllr S. Piper, L.Piper, G Rusiecki and Barbara Young were known by the town clerk and the council chairman and they seem to have been ignored. Before submission for publication, this letter, described as representing the people of Ramsgate through their elected representatives, was only reviewed by the Chairman who is a Labour cllr and the other committee Chairs, also all Labour.

Stuart knew very well that even if he had taken his two TIC colleagues with him to the Town Meeting he would have been outvoted by the now Labour majority on the Town Council. He was aware that there are further Police Community meetings in his diary and of course all 3 need not have attended one meeting, they could have attended both by dividing their number. (Editor's comment Who was planning a stunt I wonder)

"Sirs I respectfully request that you treat the Council letter with some scepticism because it certainly does not represent the views of the people of Ramsgate who are hopeful that a return to aviation will bring jobs and training opportunities to this impoverished seaside area and allow the economy to grow and therefore Thanet to prosper"

Finally the point of Cllr Piper's reason for his submission as he seeks to undermine the Democratic Decision of the majority of Ramsgate Councillors. The views of the residents who actually count in Ramsgate are those that elected 12 of 16 Councillors who actively campaigned against a Cargo Hub thereby showing that the majority in Ramsgate do NOT want RiverOak's Cargo Hub.

The meeting at the Oddfellows Club was to register the views of those attending as to what they wanted. At least 95% of those attending made it plain they were against the Cargo Hub mainly because of Noise and Pollution. Views that had been ignored by the previous administration of Ramsgate Council of which Stuart Piper was part and parcel.

Conclusion

Councillor Stuart Piper who has conspired with his colleagues, first within UKIP and then latterly as a TIC after defecting, is now finally finding out what a true democrat will do, to ensure even at this late stage, to fully publicise the true nature of the threat to the town of Ramsgate and the consequences of imposing a 24/7/365 Cargo Hub on the "sacrificial" people living under the Flight path

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Appendix 1

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR020002/TR020002-004361-AS%20-%20Stuart%20Piper%20-%20Letter%20from%20Ramsgate%20Town%20Council.pdf>

Appendix 2

George Rusiecki
Thanet District Council
PO Box 9 Cecil Street
Margate Kent CT9 1XY
25th October 2017

Dear Cllr Rusiecki

Re: Manston Airport

This is to confirm my company's interest in the purchase of Manston Airport and its subsequent use for aviation and aviation-related operations only.

As you are aware, I envisage demolishing most of the current airport buildings and have commissioned and received plans from 3DReid for the construction of new hanger facilities at Manston.


It is worth noting that 3DReid won an international design competition to create 'Europe's premier Business Aviation facility' for TAG Aviation at Farborough and acted as Architect and Lead Consultant for the stand-alone terminal development at King Khaled International Airport in Saudi Arabia. It was 3DReid that masterminded the extension to the Paul Andrey terminal at Abu Dhabi International Airport and designed the new terminal at Gibraltar Airport.

3DReid was also responsible for the masterplan of the new international business aviation airport in Sao Paulo, the first of its kind in Brazil.

Let me add that I am in discussions with equipment suppliers about incorporating the latest radar and associated technology to provide a thoroughly modern airport that meets a wide range of corporate, tourism and pilot training needs.

I have made a bid with a substantial offer to the current owners of the site which has been rejected. I am now looking at other options to acquire the site. I look forward to a resumption of our discussions with a view to restoring aviation at Manston Airport at the earliest possible opportunity.
Yours sincerely

John Keogh Chairman

 Exciets Aviation Group

John Keogh was convicted of Fraud

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Appendix 3

George,

As discussed a brief update on the interested parties I am talking to, as well as my thoughts having spoken to many interested parties.

Current state

The "US based logistics investment group" still shows an interest in the facility combined with the port. They are watching developments very closely and have also completed their own due diligence combined with recommendations for the execution of this process. My experience with this organization shows that if there is a lack of potential they delete and move onto the next opportunity (after all there are enough available globally), but this particular project has kept their interest for over a year now.

The "Indian investment bank" continues to also monitor developments, though they are confused by the mixed signals being currently sent, both politically and commercially. Conflicting reports about MP's supporting only one outcome with a named investor combined with a Transport Minister saying the place will be a glorified lorry park for an indefinite period assists in creating this confusion.

The "Eastern European investor" is planning to commit to an expeditionary visit to find out more. As he is a very good friend and respected colleague I need to ensure that the potential is secured and that he will not be at risk of losing his money.

Risk

The continuing uncertain political landscape is creating a situation whereas the particular people I am speaking to are not confident in moving ahead currently, they do though appreciate that this is a dynamic situation. The "one show" stance openly adopted by the MP's is particularly damaging to their confidence, as they are essentially saying that only one group will be accepted. Taking into account that all of the organizations I am speaking to are indeed non-UK, they must be excused for being at least slightly concerned at their potential for achieving commercial success and a return on their investment. This in conjunction with the confused state of the Brexit negotiations makes it extremely difficult for a level of confidence in the Political establishment to be achieved.

Expectations

Investment groups expect at least a defined playing field on which they can make their decisions to either invest or walk away, one must admit that there are so many unknown factors attached currently it is factually impossible for a decision to proceed to be made.

Confidence must be achieved by creating a landscape of where defined facts are apparent. A decision to assign the Manston site as an Aviation only site (taking into account that we are speaking to Aviation/Logistics based investors) would be a very good first step.

Once that is achieved a basis for development of discussions and swift advancement of the process can be achieved.

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Final comments

Councillors, it is time to stop sitting on your hands and become pro-active, or the current owners will sweep through with their plans and you will go down in history as those who surrendered the regions last potential revenue creation opportunity to external developers.

Thanet District Council has a duty to its electorate to create employment opportunities, both for current and future generations, and for that to happen the relevant environment must be created and this will not be achieved by building housing on a potential Industrial/ Operational site.

You need to create an environment where inward investment is achieved instead of just hoping that someone takes pity and throws you an opportunity.

You have restricted the potential use for the Airport in your past feasibility studies to that of a regional passenger airport, whereas the facility has much more potential than purely that. The "Marshalls" principle engaged at Cambridge Airport where a wide range of Engineering activities are completed has not been explored, that alone would bring with it requirement for skilled employment as well as operational activities, bringing both revenue and capital to the region. I have already identified potential users of such a facility and once the Aviation use only designation is secured can resume these discussions.

Recently I was asked "Dale, if this was your money and you had the decision to make, what would you do right now "

Taking into account that if the Councillors were to allocate the site the status of Aviation use only with the potential positive affect with regards to the purchase price, or failing that I potentially risked losing money completely if mixed use was allocated, I was unable to give a definite answer.

I am personally aware of several other interested parties looking at the site for Aviation activities, and am also aware that several have approached the Council directly, the question must be asked as to why they are not proceeding with their interest, is the environment really so hostile that they decide not to move forward?

Many of you were elected on a promise, it is now time to commit to that promise and take the necessary action to allocate the Manston Airport site for aviation use only and get it operational again!!