

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Manston Airport](#)  
**Subject:** For the attention of Manston Airport Case Team  
**Date:** 18 June 2021 12:27:29

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For the attention of Manston Airport Case Team:

I write to express my strong support for the reopening of Manston Airport as a 'carbon neutral' air cargo hub by River Oak Strategic Partners.

I have lived very close to the airport for many years and was quite accustomed to seeing planes fly over. It was never an issue, in fact like many I thought of it as a positive, part of the character and charm of this beautiful area. The airport had been here for almost a century prior to closure. Most people knew someone who worked there, or in one of the wonderful museums, or at the popular flying school founded by former Red Arrow Ted Girdler and his family. The Arrows were frequent visitors during the display season. Most Thanet people were proud of Manston and its history.

Contrary to what your office may have heard, there has never been an issue with night flights, which were always exceedingly rare anyway, and will always remain so, despite long standing attempts by a tiny minority to turn this into an emotive issue locally. Those campaigns have always seemed to many of us who actually live here to be generated by a small group of individuals promoting a FEAR of night flights, perhaps for political purposes. Night flights are if you like 'fake news'.

What is indisputable is the level of local support for the airport and enthusiasm for its renewal, as evidenced many times both by opinion polls and the ups and downs of Thanet politics. Indeed one minor political party was able to exploit this support during a local election by promising to reopen the airport; when it became clear they would not follow through on that promise their support collapsed virtually overnight. What that episode proves in my view is that, far from this being a party political issue, there is in fact a cross-party consensus amongst the local electorate in favour of Manston reopening. It is quite simply what a majority of people in Thanet wish to see happen to this large area at the heart of their 'island'.

I have followed the situation closely since the airport was closed in 2014/15. As many suspected and feared at the time, the purchase by the Gloag organisation turned out to be little more than an asset stripping exercise. The new 'owners' sacked the staff, evicted tenants and operators, and sold off everything that wasn't fixed to the ground. Having extracted as much value as they could for their £1 stake, for that was what they paid to take control, the so-called developers then predictably moved on, leaving a largely abandoned site, and nothing but unemployment and disillusionment for the people of Thanet.

By contrast Riveroak arrived like a breath of fresh air, with a bold, well financed, optimistic and 'green' vision for the airport which has fired the imaginations of many who live here. The Riveroak team have engaged honestly and enthusiastically with the community in a way which the previous 'owners' never even attempted. They have patiently and diligently laid out their vision at local events. Support for their plan continues to grow. Pro-airport community groups remain strong and committed, and this is no doubt reflected in your inbox.

I do urge the planning inspectorate to look favourably at Riveroak's application, which, amongst its numerous positives, comprehensively addresses both local and international concerns regarding noise and the environment. The plan is detailed, costed and well

funded, and is exactly what is needed to re-invigorate the economy and stimulate new employment in what is still in some districts a very deprived area. The abundance of available surrounding land also provides excellent opportunities for new green industries and for logistics operators to locate somewhere which offers space to grow, good transport links, and via the reopened airport, a global trading connection.

Many thanks for your time,

J Maidman

