

**Caroline Tayler, representing myself.**

I would like to underline the plight of the Ashdown Forest and the many rural businesses that would be harmed by this application.

The Ashdown Forest is a mix of protected lowland heath and woodland habitats. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area and a Special Area of Conservation, managed in accordance with the Ashdown Forest Act by a dedicated team, who have also made a written representation opposing the application .

Gatwick expansion is a threat to the Forest and surrounding areas - more aircraft noise, more road traffic and more pollution. It already has too much noise from arriving aircraft - often overhead every two minutes.

People in the villages around the Forest, are often disturbed by Gatwick arrivals. The low background noise and an expectation of tranquility, makes each aircraft very intrusive. It is on high ground of around 600ft above sea level, so they seem lower here than over surrounding areas.

More airport bound road traffic through here would be harmful too. The heathland is a low nitrogen habitat which supports rare species that depend on this special environment. More traffic will increase the unwanted nitrogen deposition on the heathland. There seems to have been inadequate research or concern by the applicant about the impact of Gatwick expansion on the Forest and its rare species.

The Forest is an area of great beauty, enjoyed by around 1.4m visitors every year, who go there for outdoor exercise, tranquility and open space. It is also the home of Winnie the Pooh, a much loved childhood hero. AA Milne lived on the Forest. But it is all now threatened by Gatwick.

The applicant makes much of a questionable economic benefit, but

appears only to consider airport related businesses and not the many diverse rural businesses that could be harmed. These are the ones that rely on tranquility and attractive scenery as their selling points.

Farmers have diversified to create campsites, outdoor activities and other tourist sites in order to survive. There are hotels, wedding venues, B&Bs, heritage sites, fishing syndicates, film locations, country pubs, riding schools...the list is endless. These are all businesses that could be damaged by more aircraft noise and road traffic.

A second runway would make Gatwick almost as big as Heathrow is today. This might favour airport related businesses, but could ruin many rural enterprises by removing their main selling points. Few would choose to spend their holidays next door to Heathrow, so why then would customers pay to spend leisure time in rural areas badly affected by an expanded Gatwick?

Complaining about noise to Gatwick Airport is a fairly pointless exercise.

At a time when we are trying to reduce use of fossil fuels, the prospect of Gatwick doubling in size, and the harm that this could bring to the sanctuary of homes, the countryside and to some livelihoods is truly heartbreaking.