

NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD USERS GROUP (NWAUG) NEWSLETTER . MARCH 2005.

Dear Supporter,

We promised to keep you informed about the progress of the Campaign and this newsletter is to bring you up to date with recent developments. As you can imagine, with the Consultation exercise on RSS 14 nearing its 16 March deadline, we have been rather busy during the last 3 months! Below is a summary of the main events that have occurred.

PUBLIC MEETING HELD BY THE EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL (EFDC).

The EFDC held a Public Meeting last month to inform local residents and interested parties about RSS 14 and its implications for the area (and North Weald Airfield). The meeting was held at the Civic Offices and, because of the numbers that arrived, had to be held in two sessions. A good start. Prior to the meeting the NWAUG and the local Basset Community Action Group (with whom we work closely) held a demonstration outside the building, complete with banners and placards. At the meeting many of you made your views known and these were not lost on the EFDC. Regrettably, the Leader announced that he had no plan B if North Weald Airfield was not to be used for the proposed housing (see later). The Users Group would like to thank all of you that attended this meeting (approx. 400 members of the public arrived).

MEETING WITH THE LEADER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE EFDC.

The Users Group met with the Leader and Chairman of the EFDC at the Airfield prior to a Full Council EFDC meeting to finalise their response to RSS 14. The meeting was extremely useful and they left promising to consider adding a paragraph to their response specifically about the North Weald Airfield, and its potential. They added this at the forthcoming Full Council Meeting. We were also briefed that they were now actively looking for a Plan B. The Leader and the Chairman admitted at the meeting that they had perhaps underestimated the potential of the Airfield and the amount of local and national support that it had. It was agreed that the Users Group would liaise closely with the EFDC in the future, and this is now ongoing.

EFDC FULL CCOUNCIL MEETING

Following another demonstration (!) the EFDC held this meeting and discussed their own response to RSS 14. Our paragraph was added and there were many supportive and sometimes emotional speeches relating to the Airfield! Of all the speakers (about 10) there was only one against. (The previous Leader). The current Leader referred to his visit to the Airfield and promised further Council consideration for its future. We are liaising with him on this.

RESPONSES TO RSS 14.

As you know we have been gathering together as many responses to RSS 14 as possible, by the closing date of 16 March. To this end we invited supporters to North Weald on 6 March, by air or by road. With the magnificent support Airfield Operations, Fire Services, Marshalls and the Squadron (have I forgotten anyone?!), we were able to host no less than 120 visiting aircraft and their crews, plus visitors by road. The exercise was an overwhelming success and we managed to accumulate about 500 responses. Two briefings were also held.

On 15 March the NWAUG personally delivered all the responses to the East of England Regional Assembly. The previous few days were spent collating, stapling and enveloping a total of approx. 2800 replies in all. (Another 100 arrived the morning we left!) The look on the girl's face when they were delivered was a picture. Also, to find ourselves sitting in a restaurant an hour later, next to the Chief Planner and overhear him talking about the 14 boxes was rather rewarding!

In addition to these 2800 responses must be added your individual replies by email or letter, the exact number of which is not known, but possibly a further 500.

Part of the 2800 responses consisted of 4 volumes of comments collected from registrations on the database which was also presented to the EFDC chambers.

THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

The EERA will now spend a few months considering the responses and deciding who should be invited to the forthcoming Examination in Public. We will of course keep you informed of progress.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Dan, Dave, Gordon, Greg, John, Martin and Trevor, the team at the North Weald Airfield Users Group.