

## **Buckland Parish Council response to the DCO application by Gatwick Airport Limited**

### **Background**

Buckland is a small village in Mole Valley of c.250 houses situated along either side of the A25 between Reigate and Dorking. It is Green Belt and an area of outstanding natural beauty, boasting indigenous wildlife, flora, and fauna. It is 14 miles from Gatwick Airport.

While local people accept the benefits of having an airport in this area, any further increase to the current levels of traffic, both in the air and on the surface, are not acceptable to this village.

### **Surface transport**

The A25 is already a busy road as an artery between east and west. The M25 is situated a short distance from Buckland above the village on the North Downs. In times of motorway problems/closures the A25 is used as a substitute route which increases traffic through the village to a very high level. An increase in traffic would not be practical or sustainable. The A25 is frequently slow due to traffic volume. Many motorists will be aware of frequent holdups/delays/accidents on the M25 and will take short cuts through the rural areas. The infrastructure in this area and current state of the roads cannot sustain further increases in traffic. Buckland villagers also suffer from road traffic noise especially at night, at what is believed to have a detrimental effect on health and welfare.

Gatwick night flights have been steadily increasing since 2014, and while diminished during the pandemic, they are now back at 2019 levels. It is understood that a further increase of 70% is proposed by GAL. This also applies to freight flights which predominate. All this extra activity drives additional traffic on our local roads during otherwise quiet period.

The North Downs railway runs through the north side of the A25 through Buckland with connections to Gatwick. Currently there are frequent hold ups at the railway crossing on the B2032 Station road and further railway crossing closures would have an extreme effect on local road traffic. Additionally, any increase in rail traffic would be detrimental in terms of noise and the effect on the environment.

### **Air traffic**

Buckland experiences aircraft noise/pollution from flight departures from both Gatwick and Heathrow and from helicopter and light aircraft traffic flying along an east/west over Buckland. The potential proposed Airspace changes for the south east also threaten the Buckland area.

Aircraft departing Heathrow currently overfly Buckland below 7,000 feet. While people may be able to insulate their houses from some of the noise effects, it is impossible to apply this notion to the enjoyment of their gardens during the daylight hours and requires windows to be shut whatever the overnight temperature.

Any night flights are particularly intrusive in this otherwise quiet area. The debilitating effect of disturbed sleep on health and welfare is well documented.

Any increase in air traffic over this area would have detrimental effects on the air quality and CO2 emissions.

## **Buckland Parish Council response to the DCO application by Gatwick Airport Limited continued.**

### **Flooding**

Buckland, while not directly affected as much as Brockham, can experience some flooding and the River Mole is already subject to discharges without further pressure from a busier Gatwick. Serious flooding locally can also increase the level of road traffic diverting through the village.

### **Environment and Climate**

Buckland Parish council endeavours to encourage the village to adopt 'green' policies to avert the effects of climate change. Any further pollution would endanger the policies and the wildlife.

This area as stated is one of outstanding natural beauty, and a further expansion of the airport encouraging road and air traffic will increase CO2 emissions and pollution to an unacceptable environmental level. This would also apply to the construction period of the airport facilities when increased traffic would be passing through the area.

### **Economics**

Buckland Parish Council questions the validity of the Gatwick Airport Limited economic forecasts which appear to overstate the economic benefits and understate or omit to consider significant economic, social and environmental costs to the area.

### **Summary**

Buckland Parish Council strongly opposes the expansion plans of GAL to expand the airport through commercial use of the emergence northern runway.

Buckland Parish Council is prepared to attend a hearing to support and substantiate the statements made as required.

**Buckland Parish Councillor Cox**

**October 2023**