

HACAN ANNUAL REPORT 2017

This review of 2017 is the first of its kind we have published despite being around since the 1970s, one of the oldest and best supported airport community campaign groups in Europe.

THANK YOU!

We want to start by thanking you for your support. It is invaluable. Each year we try to reflect your concerns in our campaigning work. 2017 saw success in getting a number of important noise measures adopted by the Government (see box, right). We have also played a prominent role in the work Heathrow is doing to improve operational matters - such as steeper ascents and descents - which should improve the quality of our lives. We will press for more ambitious measures to be looked at in 2018, in particular to reduce the increasing concentration of aircraft. We met with key politicians. We continued to maintain a decent media profile. And we represented you on a number of national and international bodies. During the year HACAN South East was set up to reflect the very specific concerns of people in that part of London. And our sister organisation, HACAN East, received a grant from LUSH which enabled us to employ a Community Campaigner. Of course, we continue to oppose a third runway. A decision will be made in 2018. If it becomes clear it is going to be built, we will press for the best possible deal for all our members.



A year when patience paid off...

Many of the measures HACAN has campaigned for over decades began to see the light of day in 2017.

1. New metrics to be used to measure noise annoyance.

Out goes the much-criticised 57 LAeq metric (where noise averages out at 57 decibels over a 16 hour day) as the point where aircraft noise starts to seriously disturb people. In comes 54 LAeq and an acknowledgement that serious disturbance can begin at 51 LAeq. In geographical terms 57 didn't even include Fulham and Putney; 54 goes as far as Clapham and Vauxhall; 51 takes us to around Peckham. It still doesn't capture everybody annoyed by the planes and, in particular - because it is an annual average - it doesn't cover places like Ealing or Teddington that only get planes for about 30% of the year but when they do get them they are very annoying! But this is an historic change which HACAN has been campaigning for for over 20 years ago!

2. Respite enshrined in Government policy

People in West London value their half day's break from the noise. Communities elsewhere want something similar. In 2017, for the first time, Government firmly endorsed the concept of respite where people want it - something that gives hope to so many people. HACAN has often been a lone voice in advocating respite and will continue to push for real changes on the ground in the coming years.

3. Communities to be told about flight path changes.

We've had many, many complaints over the years from distressed people complaining about a change to flight paths. Often these are relatively minor changes to the way air traffic control guides the planes but they can have a big impact for people on the ground. Now communities will need to be informed about such changes.

4. An independent noise authority to be set up in April 2018.

HACAN has played a big role in promoting this, holding seminars, convening meetings with business and industry and exploring what happens in other countries.

5. Reducing noise, rather than tackling CO2 emissions, to be the priority between 4,000 and 7,000 ft (It is already the priority below 4,000 ft).

There is still much to be done to cut noise suffered by local communities but the measures introduced in 2017 are important stepping stones in the right direction.



A RECORD OF STRONG OPPOSITION

HACAN has a strong record in opposing a third runway stretching back over a dozen years. In 2017 we:

- Spoke at public meetings and organised events
- Lobbied politicians and assisted local groups
- Responded to public consultations
- Have been the first port-of-call for the media

But if the third runway – the Government’s preferred option – is given the go-ahead, we will fight for the best deal for our members.

We have prepared a list of tough conditions which we will launch and lobby for in 2018. These include a longer night-time ban, guaranteed respite periods and world-class mitigation measures.

UNDER THE EXISTING FLIGHT PATHS

A 3rd runway may grab the headlines but much of HACAN’s work is to give a voice to people under the existing flight paths.

HACAN is a leading member of the Heathrow Consultative Committee, sits on the Heathrow Community Noise Forum and is the only community representative on Heathrow’s Strategic Noise Forum.

We were invited by Anderson Acoustics on to the steering group overseeing the ground-breaking respite report they are producing for Heathrow.

We represent local London communities on ANEG, the high-level noise advisory group set up by the Department for Transport. We meet the CAA on a regular basis. Our chair sits on the European Commission’s Noise Expert Group.

In 2018 we will be publishing a major report outlining practical ways in which the night flight ban could be extended.

We supported Heathrow’s trial of steeper descents and back the CAA’s research into the impact of steeper ascents. We have contributed to Heathrow’s forthcoming Noise Action Plan. We will continue to push the industry hard to accelerate the introduction of operational practices which will reduce the noise for communities under the flight paths.

“I don’t want to get into the politics of what is right for the UK or not, I just want my pain to go away. The feeling of helplessness, anxiety and feeling trapped are now what I feel when I lay in bed at night”.

HACAN SOUTH EAST SET UP

Towards the end of the year HACAN South East was set up (picture left). It will focus particularly on the area between Clapham and Eltham. Of course HACAN has had members in many of these areas for many years but the new group will try to ensure that the concerns of the area are highlighted during 2018 when Heathrow will be carrying out key consultations. HACAN South East will be publishing a report early in 2018 outlining the impact of aircraft noise on the area.

In Summer 2017 HACAN published well-received videos, commissioned from a professional filmmaker, where people told their stories of what it was like to live under the flight path:
<http://map.hacan.org.uk/>

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