

GLASGOW PRESTWICK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
216th QUARTERLY MEETING HELD ON 1st Dec. 2023,

Present

Richard Searle	Chair
Bob Smith	Vice-Chair (Co-opted)
James Riach	Treasurer (Prestwick Community Council)
George Smith	Co-opted Member
William Brown	Monkton Community Council
Wilson Barrie.	Ayrshire Chamber
Bob Logan	General Aviation
John McGhee	East Ayrshire Council
Jim McCall	Co-opted Cargo

In Attendance

Juan Merrill	CFO, GPA
--------------	----------

Apologies

Nigel Wallace	Secretary to GPACC
William McAlpine	Passenger Representative
Cllr Tony Gurney	North Ayrshire Council

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed those present.

2. Apologies

There were three apologies for absence and the Chair made particular reference to the Secretary's absence due to a covid infection. He added the Secretary had particularly hoped to attend this meeting because he wishes to announce his intention to retire from his role after 20 years service. The Chair suggested a short sub-meeting should be held at the end of this formal meeting for members to discuss the implications of the Secretary's decision and this was agreed.

3. Minutes of the 215th Meeting held on 1st Sept 2023

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as read.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Recognising some matters were on the agenda for later, there were no matters arising.

5. Chief Executive's Report

Juan Merrill on behalf of the CEO provided the following update:

- The airport recently announced financial results for the year to 31st March 2023 showing a profit of £2.1m against a profit of £1.9m for the previous year. Full details and supporting information are available on the GPA website.
- [REDACTED] Asked whether next summer's Ryanair schedule has been confirmed JM advised it has not but in the context of the [REDACTED] agreement this is not yet a cause for concern.
- The newly completed Cold Store facility seen during the cargo area tour as part of the September meeting has received its first customer.
- During the last quarter the Royal Canadian Air Force celebrated an 80 year connection with Prestwick.
- The airport has recently agreed a training programme for students at Ayr College
- The Ayrshow held just after the last quarterly meeting was a great success and plans are now being developed for next year and it is likely the airport will have more involvement, for example static aircraft displays.
- The airport and many airport staff will be assisting the Wish Upon A Star charity which is arranging a special flight for children with life threatening illnesses.
- Work has continued on Spaceport plans. A number of GPACC members expressed doubts whether work on this project is proceeding sufficiently fast to succeed. Juan Merrill said the airport is proceeding with its application for an operators licence but acknowledged there are issues outside the airports control that may cause further delay.
- **Noise complaints:** At a recent UKACC meeting, see below, the Chair had met a senior DfT official who mentioned he had recently received a letter from Allan Dorans MP on behalf of a local constituent complaining about Ryanair Circuit and Bumps. Juan Merrill responded the airport has not yet received details from Allan Dorans and therefore cannot comment on this specific case. However the airport has only received 38 noise complaints from just 20 people in the last 12 months. This is a far lower number in both absolute and relative terms for almost any UK airport. The DfT official had acknowledged this in his conversation with the Chair.
- **PRM issues:** At the UKACC meeting PRM issues were discussed at some length. One of the conclusions was the need for some airports to improve staff training particularly how to deal with less obvious issues such as people with hearing loss or confusion due to dementia or jet lag, and more generally how to reduce stress levels. It was apparent some airports currently have more comprehensive training schemes than others. Juan Merrill was able to add that 150 Prestwick staff, approaching 50%, already receive comprehensive PRM training.

6. Prestwick Flying Club's new hanger

This topic was raised by Bob Logan under AOCB but was addressed ahead of the Chair's report on the UKACC meeting. Bob explained a personal involvement before proceeding to explain difficulties encountered by the Flying Club in its desire to build a new hanger or hangers. Juan Merrill agreed to investigate whether the airport is in a position to help.

7. The UKACC meeting

The Chair reported his attendance at the recent UKACC meeting

- Hosted by Heathrow, last year Birmingham
- 20 airports represented by 25 people. Last year 16 by about 20 people
- 3 each from the DfT and CAA.
- First session began with discussion of issues raised in advance by individual ACCs. This quickly turned into a long discussion on various PRM issues and the main issue to emerge was the need to ensure pre-booked passenger names are on wheelchairs delivered to arriving aircraft
- Lack of time led the Chairman to recommend other issues be discussed in coffee breaks. This included the windfarm issue raised by Prestwick which it appears is not yet an issue being faced by other UKACC members.
- CAA presentation on various topics including progress towards a 2050 Vision was disappointing.
- DfT presentation re "Generation Aviation" was better. Basically how to build an aviation workforce fit for the future. This involves skills programmes, STEM programmes, Outreach, etc. All things that Prestwick is already doing.
- Presentation by Heathrow airport was full of interesting facts, figures, and forecasts but mostly of relevance only to larger airports. Of more general interest the average age of passengers is expected to continue to rise with more leisure but less business travel.
- A long CAA presentation referred to many issues and consultations, including a new best practice guidance for ACCs promised many months ago but still to be published. Privately most ACCs were in agreement "too many consultations, not enough results, and too much virtue signalling"
- The final session was members only (i.e. DfT and CAA were not present). Discussions covered Working Group and Secretariat completed work in last year which was well received even though some ACCs were identified as needing to improve on issues like community involvement, notification of meetings, public access to meetings, and publication of minutes. Prestwick came out relatively well except minutes have not been published since Dec 2022.

- The composition of the Working Group going forward was confirmed (a few changes) and their work plans for 2024 were agreed.
- Final topic was UKACC finances which were described as “on thin ice”. It was agreed income must be increased and various options to achieve higher income were discussed. The idea of a flat rate for all airports would triple fees for smaller airports like Prestwick but the Working Group who are tasked with making a decision were left in no doubt this would likely result in the loss of some existing members and stop new members joining. A more likely outcome is an increase of perhaps £100 extra each year for the next 3 to 5 years.
- While not discussed in plenary sessions an interesting coffee break discussion about how to attract new members for individual ACCs identified that the Consumers Association (Which) are not currently willing to circulate by postcode to seek new ACC members. Quite a number of airports have ACC members recruited this way including Richard Searle and Dr William McAlpine at Prestwick. Donald Grant, Vice Chair of Glasgow ACC, is a Which Trustee and is lobbying to get this decision reversed.

8. Any Other Competent Business

No issues were raised other than 6 above.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is planned for Friday 1st March 2024 at 2.00 pm.

Provisional dates for other 2024 meetings were circulated and will be added to the GPACC section of the airport website

----- XXXXXX -----

Additional sub-group meeting

After conclusion of the formal meeting members were asked to stay a short while to discuss the issue of finding a new Secretary.

At the beginning of this sub-meeting Jim Riach asked we also consider finding a new Treasurer. Jim said he is happy to see the completion of the current year financial report but has reached an age he would like to step back and do so while still able to assist a smooth handover to a new Treasurer. Asked if he will continue to represent Prestwick Community Council he responded if the PCC wish him to do so he certainly will.

There was valuable discussion about both imminent vacancies and the Chair and Vice-Chair will progress both issues with a view to making firm proposals at or before the March meeting.

Richard.searle5@btinternet.com
Or nigelswallace@hotmail.com