

Minutes of the meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) held on 30 April 2026

Present:	
Tom Crowley	Chair
Angie Hills	ABTA
Cllr Alan Jones	Burstow Parish Council
Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Malcolm Fillmore	Rusper Parish Council
Cllr Nigel Emery	Horsham District Council
Cllr Chris Phillips	Mid Sussex District Council
Hugh McConnellogue	Airline Operators Committee
Ed Winter	Environmental and Amenity Groups
Igor Bartkiv	London Chamber of Commerce
Jonathan Drew	Noise Management Oversight Board Chair
Cllr Lisa Scott	Charlwood Parish Council
Cllr Mike George	Horley Town Council
Cllr Nick Hilton	Crawley Borough Council
Cllr Spencer Dixon	Kent County Council
Gareth Thomas	Passenger Advisory Group

Also in attendance:	
Pierre-Hugues Schmit	Chief Executive Officer, GAL
Sam Fulton	Director of Communications and External Affairs, GAL
Andy Sinclair	Head of Noise and Airspace Strategy
Amy Geoghegan	External Engagement Lead, GAL
Monique Smart	GATCOM Secretariat

1. Apologies and Welcomes

1.1 Apologies were received from: Cllr Peter Osborne (Kent County Council), Fran Downton (Tourism SouthEast), Cllr Nicholas White (Tandridge District Council), Cllr Helyn Clack (Surrey County Council), Brett North (Gatwick Diamond), Cllr Richard Biggs (Reigate and Banstead Borough Council), Robin Clarke (NATS), Samantha Williams (Passenger Advisory Group), Cllr Garry Wall (West Sussex County Council), Cllr Bob Bowdler (East Sussex County Council), Graham Lake (GATCOM Technical Advisor).

2. Minutes of The Last Meeting

2.1 Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of GATCOM held on 12 February 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair.

3. GATCOM Steering Group – Chairman’s Report

3.1 The Chair of GATCOM introduced his report (copies attached to the signed minutes) of the last Steering Group Meeting that took place on 19 March.

3.2 The Chair highlighted that Steering Group had a discussion around the Route 4 Airspace Change consultation and agreed that the consultation materials and events that GAL had run during the period had been very informative and well received. Steering Group were particularly pleased with the information shared via GALs social media channels.

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3.3 Steering Group acknowledged the diverse views from residents affected by Route 4 and that would be dependent on their location with respect to the proposed options. For that reason, it was agreed that GATCOM should not support a particular option or have a view on how options should be prioritised. Both these points were included in the GATCOM consultation response which was circulated to all members via email and then submitted to GAL last week. The response has been added to the GATCOM website and is also linked in the Steering Group report in the agenda pack today.

3.4 Steering Group also had the opportunity to review the draft Noise Action Plan Annual Progress Report. As stated in the report this had previously also been reviewed by NaTMAG. Steering Group had no further comments and recommended that GATCOM approve the report for publication.

3.5 GATCOM approved the Noise Action Plan Annual Progress Report (as attached at appendix A in the agenda pack)

3.6 The Chair also highlighted that Steering Group was Alison Addy's last GATCOM meeting before she left GAL for pastures new. GATCOM members joined the Chair in thanking Alison for all the support she had provided to GATCOM over the years and wishing her well for the future. It was confirmed that some rescoping was taking place within the team and recruitment would be taking place soon.

4. Passenger Advisory Group

4.1 The Vice Chair of PAG, Gareth Thomas, introduced the report (copies attached to the signed minutes) of the last PAG meeting and activities during the last quarter.

4.2 Gareth reported that the recent round of PAG Working Groups had been well supported and there were no major issues to make GATCOM aware of. The Car Parks review visit mentioned in the report had been rescheduled to next month.

4.3 One of the areas that PAG works closely with GAL is Customer Services and Gareth highlighted that complaints are down, and compliments are up. He stated that GAL Customer Services team now share live data across departments to action and improve the passenger journey and this is proving successful, particularly around the area of Security.

4.4 Following on from The Chairs announcement that Alison Addy had left GAL, Gareth highlighted that Maureen Spence from GAL had also recently retired. Maureen had worked and supported PAG for a number of years and on behalf of all PAG members, Gareth wished her a happy retirement.

4.5 Lastly it was mentioned that the new EU Entry/Exit System (EES) was now in place. This new electronic system replaces the physical stamping of passports at passport control when arriving in and departing from the participating European countries. It has been reported that some travellers had experienced long queues at some European airports. ABTA and Airlines UK have been working closely to ensure that information is available and that Airlines work closely with European airports and

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governments to ensure a smooth process for passengers. Information can be found on [ABTAs website](#).

4.6 GATCOM noted the work of PAG and its engagement with GAL as the 'critical friend' and supports its role as advocate on behalf of passengers.

5 Chief Executive Officer's Report

5.1 GATCOM received a report from Pierre-Hugues Schmit, Chief Executive Officer, GAL on activity at the airport over the past quarter (copy attached to the signed minutes). The key points highlighted by Pierre-Hugues were:

- London Gatwick delivered a strong financial performance in 2025 with revenue at £1,132.1m (+0.2%), passenger numbers of 42.8m (down 1.1%), with strong long-haul growth of 3.3%, while short-haul numbers were impacted by temporary issues related to aircraft availability (-1.9%).
- Particularly strong year-on-year growth in markets to Sub-Saharan Africa (22%), the Far East and South Asia (24%), and Middle East and Central Asia (17%).
- The business' [Annual Financial Statements](#) for 2025 was published 11 March 2026.
- Gatwick now has over 60 Airlines with passengers able to chose from more than 230 destinations.
- New airlines include Jet2, AirAsia X, Condor, Air Arabia, Air France, Eurowings, Pegasus, Animawings and Beijing Capital Airlines.
- Gatwick is now London's highest ranked airport, based on passenger feedback for 2025 (Airport Service Quality results).
- A new Skyfix counter is in the terminal to facilitate and assist passengers.
- A new way of managing aircraft movements on the ground has been introduced, moving from one Air Traffic ground controller to two. This change is designed to make the airfield smoother, even safer and more resilient.
- The situation in the Middle East is being closely monitored. This has obviously resulted in some disruption across global aviation with some flights to and through the region being cancelled or rerouted due to airspace closures and safety restrictions. GALs focus is on working with airlines to support passengers. Emirates Airlines reduced from 4 to now 2 flights per day but other airlines have seen an increase in load factors - such as Singapore Airlines.
- The outcome of the legal Judicial Review for the Northern Runway DCO is expected soon.
- The [2025 Decade of Change Performance Summary](#) was published on 11 March, providing an overview of GALs sustainability activity and performance. The report celebrates key achievements, reflect on the impact of initiatives implemented across the business including the move from gas to heat source pumps, electric fleet on airfield and electric buses that will be in action soon.
- In February GAL sponsored the University of Sussex's Hack Sussex Society's Hackathon, working with around 170 students on an IT Innovation Challenge set by London Gatwick.
- London Gatwick was headline sponsor of the Gatwick Diamond Business Awards in March 2026. Two Gatwick colleagues were also finalists; one in the Apprentice of the Year category, and the other in the Employee of the Year category.

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5.2 Questions from members as a result of the CEO report, and the responses given, included the following:

- Malcolm Fillmore, member for Rusper Parish Council, praised the STEM Centre as a venue and was impressed with its main use to bring schools into Gatwick. He had also recently visited the Gatwick Aviation Museum and asked if GAL would consider closer working with them, particularly around school visits. Pierre-Hugues agreed to look into this.
- Alan Jones, Burstow Parish Council, asked how the Middle East situation was affecting figures this year. Pierre-Hugues stated that it was too soon to predict numbers for 2026. Passenger numbers have been fluid so far and although there has been a reduction in flights to the area this has largely been offset by additional flights via alternative routes.
- Mike George, Horley Town Council, asked what the current situation was regarding jet fuel supply. Pierre-Hugues stated that currently all airlines are reporting availability for the standard 2-month horizon that is planned. Markets have reorganised and the Department for Transport and Department for Energy are sharing a certain level of confidence.
- Ana Christie, Sussex Chamber of Commerce, reported that as a result of the issues, importing and exporting has gone down 20% and the impact is being felt across the whole region and supply chain.

6 Member's Questions

6.1 No written member questions were received.

7 Gatwick Airport Surface Access Strategy update.

7.1 GATCOM welcomed Hannah Godfrey, GALs Senior Surface Access Manager, who provided a [presentation](#) and update on GALs progress in delivering its Surface Access Strategy targets.

7.2 The presentation included updates on recent achievements and milestones as well as new initiatives such as a staff car sharing scheme, staff travel website for rail discounts, improved workplace cycling facilities, and a staff travel guide and incentive scheme.

7.3 GAL have been successful in gaining £100,000 to help develop the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This will involve public engagement and anyone with an interest should get in touch with Hannah.

7.4 In addition, Hannah updated GATCOM on bus route enhancement including a new bus service from Gatwick to Eastbourne that launches from 9 May. This has been jointly funded by East and West Sussex County Councils as well as GAL. Flixbus also continue to expand their network with low-cost tickets.

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7.5 A new overnight train service is being trialled by from 5 June to 11 September on Saturdays and Mondays and would hopefully be beneficial to those arriving or departing in the early hours of the morning. An enhanced partnership with GTR will also result in in-terminal rail ticket sales and marketing and promotion including a new TV advert coming very soon.

7.6 Lastly Hannah emphasised that London Gatwick cannot achieve a mode shift alone. They have strong partnerships with the operators, government and local authorities and are keen to continue these partnerships to help achieve targets, drive forward the passenger experience and give passengers and staff the options to choose sustainable travel.

7.7 Questions from members as a result of the presentation, and the responses given, included the following:

- Lisa Scott, Charlwood Parish Council, welcomed the active travel grant and asked if cycle access to the North Terminal could be included. Hannah confirmed this area is a priority for inclusion in the LCWIP development. In addition, Lisa asked when the hydrogen buses would be back in use, which Hannah responded stating they were due back in the next month or so.
- When asked how Gatwick are progressing towards the 54% of passengers arriving at the airport by public transport, Hannah said that historically this figure has come from a CAA survey. That provisional data for 2025 is currently being reviewed, as well as Gatwick looking at other metrics that could be used alongside the CAA data.
- Nigel Emery, Horsham District Council, welcomed the changes to the 400 bus service made in 2025 and asked if similar improvements are being considered for bus services in the Arun/Adur area. Hannah stated that although there is no imminent service improvements planned, it is on the list for future discussion.
- Connectivity for Kent was raised as an issue and Hannah confirmed this was a priority for GAL working with the rail providers and Kent County Council.
- It was also mentioned that the Surrey Connect bus service is well used but due to funding it cannot cross the border into West Sussex. Hannah said she was keen to look at this more.

8 Airspace Update

8.1 Andy Sinclair, Head of Noise and Airspace Strategy provided the following updates in relation to airspace and noise.

Route 4 Airspace Change consultation

8.2 Andy explained that Route 4 is one of nine departure flight procedures from Gatwick, and the consultation has been about the reintroduction of satellite-based navigation to Route 4. Andy explained that all the other main runway departure routes have satellite navigation. A 14-week consultation was launched on 20 January and closed on 28 April. The consultation is part of a 7-stage detailed process set out by the CAA. The consultation is stage 3 of the process.

8.3 The consultation was promoted by local media, targeted social media and direct post to residents likely to be affected by the options. A number of in person event and

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webinars took place; in addition, hard copies of consultation documents were posted at local libraries. A dedicated phone line, email and free post address were provided.

8.4 Some positive feedback and challenging input was received during the consultation period, and an incredibly high number of responses have been received. Andy thanked everyone who had taken part. GAL will now take time to review all the feedback and responses. A consultation response document will be produced and submitted to the CAA before being published on the CAA airspace change portal.

Noise Action Plan Annual Progress Report

8.5 Following GATCOM's approval of the Noise Action Plan Annual Progress Report, Andy provided a brief explanation. He explained that it is a statutory requirement for Gatwick Airport to have a Noise Action Plan and that every 5 years it needs to be refreshed. NaTMAG provides the scrutiny function and reviews, on a rolling basis, 3 of the 42 actions at each quarterly meeting. As well as reviewing in detail the Annual Progress Report, which updates on how all 42 actions are being progressed, NaTMAG also undertake a deep dive review of the NAP halfway through its life cycle and that is due later this year.

8.6 The 2025 Annual Progress Report has now been reviewed by NaTMAG and GATCOM Steering Group and is now approved by GATCOM.

9 Noise Management Board

9.1 The Chair referred members to the NMB update report (copies attached to the signed minutes). Jonathan Drew, NMB Oversight Board Chair, introduced the report that summarised the work of the Noise Management Board since the last GATCOM meeting. Jonathan highlighted the following:

- The Low Noise Arrival Metric Briefing was very well attended and a great example of how a wide variety of stakeholders can successfully come together. Jonathan paid particular thanks to the Airlines involved. He also highlighted that the Gatwick CEO, Pierre- Hugues Schmit, attended the whole workshop and Jonathan thanked him for engaging with industry, councillor and residents.
- The Community Noise Metrics project has now commenced. This project expands on a previous project and has focused on identifying ways to improve noise information for communities.
- Since the last GATCOM and NMB meetings further talks have taken place with Gatwick about how to promote the Community Assembly and how better to communicate the successes of the NMB. It was suggested a social media presence would be beneficial and Jonathan was pleased that Gatwick, as sponsors of the NMB, have agreed to tweet about the NMB Community Assembly in the next few months. The GATCOM Secretariat will let members know when this is happening so that it can be shared.

10 Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG)

10.1 Mike George, GATCOM's lead member for noise, introduced the report (copies attached to the signed minutes) that summarised the key messages and

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recommendations arising from recent NaTMAG meetings. Mike highlighted the following:

- Of the 34 airlines included in the Airline Noise Performance Table, 26 have improved and shows the benefits of the partnership working of the Gatwick Airspace Office and airlines.
- Mike was pleased to report that the Airspace Office is working with the relevant Local Authority to investigate further the high number of complaints being submitted by one individual.
- As detailed in section 4.2 of the report, Gatwick have introduced a new night flight protocol that places a restriction preventing unscheduled aircraft from landing before 06:00 and instead the aircraft join a holding pattern at a higher altitude until after 06:00. NaTMAG will wait to see the outcome of this new protocol.

11 Date of Next Meeting of GATCOM and its Sub-Groups

11.1 GATCOM noted the next meetings of GATCOM, and its sub-groups and as follows:

Passenger Advisory Group – Thursday 4 June 2026

GATCOM Steering Group - Thursday 25 June 2026

GATCOM – Thursday 16 July 2026 at 2.00pm. This meeting will be virtual via MS Teams.

The meeting concluded at 3.45pm