



Manston Airport - purchased by Anne Gloag

Ann Gloag, the owner of Stagecoach, bought the site from the previous owners, the New Zealand company Infratil, as a functioning airport (with a promise to keep it as a functional airport for at least two years) and announced its closure four months later in May 2014.

Articles also appeared in the national media promoting the idea of Manston Airport as a Garden City. However, the Garden City proposals were later shelved or put on the back burner and the land remains an Airport for planning purposes. Mrs Gloag is on record as saying that she wanted the Garden City to be a legacy for her surviving children.

She then sold it to two business men, Musgrave and Cartner. In reality she sold 80% of the airport to them, having lent them the money to do it by way of a charge (deferred loan, repayable when they make a profit) so really she still owns the whole thing.

Since that time there have been several versions of the proposals by Messrs Musgrave and Cartner as to what they want done with the site. Amongst these ideas is to change the name of this iconic Airport to Stone Hill Park. None of them make much sense but we can get an idea of how things at Manston would proceed by looking at how their previous attempts at regeneration have gone (Wynyard Park in Co Durham and Discovery Park in Sandwich)

- In both those locations they initially start out with grand plans for mixed use (there was going to be a new hospital at Wynyard Park) and then the plans unravel and they eventually start selling off plots for housing - never social housing.
- The latest proposal at Wynyard Park is for an exclusive gated community, including the opportunity for self-build. (http://wynyardpark.com/news/wynyard_news.html)
- On the Stockton on Tees planning portal there are currently applications in for 640 dwellings; this on a site still calling itself Wynyard Business Park. A look through the planning histories for some of the plots show that considerably more houses have been proposed in the past. Apparently the owners would rather sell to the rich than to "ordinary" people.

The housing that they have proposed for the Manston Airport site is what they call "aspirational"; wait for this to change into an "exclusive gated community with the opportunity for self-build".

There is no profit in building social housing / starter homes so unless the government subsidises the building it is unlikely to happen. It is clear that the leaflets and brochures that come through the door are a smokescreen.

2,500 properties at an average of £400,000. Total sales revenue of £1,000,000,000 (1 billion pounds) over twenty years. This is a conservative estimate of how much they stand to make without contributing very much to the local economy.

One final thought on 2,500 houses on the airport site. Using Southern Water's own figures for water consumption this would require an extra water supply of nearly 15,000 tonnes per week; equivalent to a standard football pitch flooded to a depth of 7 feet every week. In an area already designated as water stressed.

Manston Airport - revitalised by Riveroak

Riveroak are now working with a Government Agency to create a Development Consent Order (DCO); a process designed to fast track projects considered to be of strategic national importance. The decision on the DCO is made by the Secretary of State for Transport. RiverOak have engaged internationally recognised professionals in the fields of airport master planning, environmental impact, valuation, financial accountancy and audit to progress this work.

The DCO for a cargo airport requires a level of investment to support a minimum of 10,000 cargo movements per year.

- A “movement” is either a take off or a landing, so that means 5000 flights in and out every year.
- RiverOak have said that their plans do not require night flights so, assuming a 16 hour working day at the airport this equates to less than one flight per hour.
- It is worth remembering that this requirement is the ABILITY of the airport to handle this level of traffic; it is not a statement that the airport must achieve these figures, merely that it can achieve them.

In recent press releases RiverOak have stated that their plans include:

- a major international centre for air freight
- a reliever for the major airports of London
- an extensive aircraft recycling and engineering facility
- a base for at least one passenger carrier
- a flight training school
- a fixed base operation for executive travel

We also learnt at the SMA Annual General Meeting at the end of January 2016 that at least 31 airlines are interested in working out of Manston and have asked to be “first in”.

This level of investment alone would be a real "shot in the arm" financially for Thanet. As the DCO progresses we shall learn more about these plans – the provision of a detailed business plan is part of the process.

One last point. Now that RiverOak have chosen the DCO route there is NO RISK TO THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL OR THEIR COUNCIL TAX PAYERS. TDC's involvement is limited to the production of an Impact Assessment; the Secretary of State for Transport progresses the necessary Compulsory Purchase Orders if the DCO is approved. RiverOak have to prove to the Planning Inspectorate that they have the money to fulfil their plans; if they can't do this then the DCO does not proceed. However in this case they are dealing with people who understand finance on this scale and who are willing and able to call in the necessary legal and financial expertise to assist them. Experts talking to experts – a breath of fresh air.

If you would like more information please see

<http://www.savemanstonairport.org.uk/>

If you would like to join the Save Manston Airport group (you can always mute the chatter if you want) please contact us on our Facebook page

www.facebook.com/groups/savemanstonairport/) or email us at savemanstonairport@groups.facebook.com

(Emails sent to this address will appear as posts in the group.)