



Medway Progress

Update from **Bob Marshall-Andrews** – Member of Parliament for Medway

January 2003
STOP PRESS
SPECIAL AIRPORT EDITION

Airport Fight Goes On

The New Year brings uncertainty to Medway as the Government continues to consider its decision on the future of air transport in general and any proposals for an airport at Cliffe in particular.

With this uncertainty comes increasing hope that Secretary of State for Transport Alistair Darling and his colleagues will make the right choice not to proceed at Cliffe given the overwhelmingly convincing argument we have made and will continue to make in 2003.

In the recent debate in the House of Commons I told the Government – **“The massive destruction of our environment and our communities in the South East on a false economic premise is an unacceptable price to pay.”**

I have met with Alistair Darling to stress yet again the environmental, economic and communal damage that would be inflicted on our precious ‘green lung’ on the Peninsula if Cliffe were the option chosen.

I continue to press our case on many fronts which includes mustering support from the many MPs who, like me, question the need for such an increased airport capacity in the first place. I have discussed the welfare of the millions of birds which need the estuary with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and other green groups and have attended meetings and marches locally.



Meeting protestors in Rochester

Last, but not least, I have listened and spoken with many concerned residents whose lives will be devastated should an airport be built, including those who have visited my regular surgeries. I have been heartened by the robust response across the whole of Medway and the determination to protect our historic communities and unique environmental heritage. **This unity on a non party political basis is essential to our ultimate success.**

What Happens Next?

The parliamentary process can be slow and complicated. Alistair Darling will consider the vast amount of information submitted to him in connection with his consultation document published last July.

In light of Medway Council’s successful Judicial Review court ruling the Government is now obliged to consider expansion of Gatwick Airport as part of its review on the future of air transport. In welcoming the



A recent trip to Cliffe Marshes

ruling, and the Government’s decision not to appeal, I am aware that the broadening of the review will lengthen the Government’s timetable on giving its view on ruling Cliffe in or out. I will press for an interim report to the House of Commons so that those affected can monitor progress.

I feel strongly that a decision of this magnitude should be taken at Cabinet level, particularly taking into account representations from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs namely Secretary of State Margaret Beckett and Environment Minister Michael Meacher.

My best efforts to persuade this Government to make the right decision will continue throughout the extended consultation period and beyond. I will also be working hard to achieve a sensible timetable on the decision making process so that long-term blight is avoided.

Welcome

Welcome to this special airport update which outlines the latest state of play on this proposal for Cliffe which has massive implications for the Medway constituency.

As usual should you wish to contact me about the airport proposals or any other issue details of how to get in touch are overleaf.

My best wishes,

Bob Marshall-Andrews QC MP

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Speaking recently in the House of Commons

"I can tell the Chamber that my constituents are a sturdy lot. In history, no constituents have given more for their country than those who have lived in the area of Chatham, its dockyards and industries. They are not shy of making sacrifices in the national interest, but they will not tolerate the destruction of their lives and their much-loved environment on the basis of a false theology."

What you have to say

Here are just a few heart-felt comments from the massive postbag of letters and e-mails I and my staff have and still are dealing with at my Rochester office. **I have delivered all of your letters (over 1400) personally to 10 Downing Street.**

"The emotional effect that this is having on people doesn't seem to have been taken on board by the Government. To leave us blighted until well into 2003 is wrong and we now have to put our lives on hold until then."

By e-mail – Mr and Mrs JF, Allhallows

"Please stop the abominable idea of an airport at Cliffe."

JB, Allhallows

"You can't get the wildlife back – once it's gone, it's gone."

Mrs JC, Rochester

"The South East is full, especially North Kent and we live here and are entitled to some open space and fresh air."

Mr and Mrs M, Frindsbury.

2003

Bob Marshall-Andrews QC MP

Working for you in **Strood, Rochester, Chatham and Medway's villages**

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PUBLIC HOLIDAYS
 MEDWAY COUNCIL ELECTIONS



Useful Phone Numbers

Medway Council	prefix with 01634
Main switchboard	306000
24 hr helpline	304400
Customer services	333333
Leisure services	332320
Housing issues	333500
Housing benefit	333752
Council tax	333752
Social services	334466
Child's info service	335566
School admissions	331135
NHS Direct	0845 4647
Medway Hospital	01634 830000
Registering with a GP	01634 382748
Out-of-hours dental help	01634 819191
Out-of-hours social services	0845 762677
Police (Medway)	01634 827055
Fire Brigade – Safety	01634 283550
Gas Emergency	0800 111 999
Electrical Emergency	0800 783 8866
Water Emergency	0845 278 0845
Floodline	0845 988 1188
Environmental Emergency	0800 80 70 60

Can I Help?

Around every two weeks I hold a surgery locally to offer help and advice to constituents on a wide range of issues.

These include:

Benefit claims, including housing and incapacity issues, Pensions and/or associated payments, Child Support Agency, Planning issues, Medical/treatment problems, Crime/Law and Order, Environmental Damage, Obtaining visas.

Don't worry if your problem does not fit into one or more of the above categories. Just ask for a surgery form and give me brief details.

Here's how to get in touch:

- **BY TELEPHONE** – 01634 814687
- **BY POST** – Bob Marshall-Andrews QC MP, Moat House, 1 Castle Hill, Rochester, Kent ME1 1QQ
- **BY EMAIL** – marshallandrewsr@parliament.uk
- **BY FAX** – 01634 831294