

MEOLUTS (Medium Earth Orbit Local User Terminals) for HM Coastguard

Six MEOLUTS domes have appeared on Solent Airport Daedalus. Each dome is 3.56 meters high, 4 metres in diameter and base 5 metres square. The domes are located equi-distant from a centrally positioned 'Geo antenna'. This antenna is a 5m dish located on a 1.5m high pedestal. A small equipment cabin and generator are also required and is located adjacent to the Geo antenna. This might seem quite large array but behind the perimeter wire fairly centrally located near the middle of the airfield it will not seem that out of place. The system is a receiver system (MEOSAR) Medium-Earth Orbit satellites that accurately picks up the distress signals in near real time to improve the coverage and detection of maritime emergency distress beacons. This will allow the faster dispatch of Search and Rescue services by the MCA and more accurate location to reliably ignore the over 90% of erroneous signals that come from out of date beacons discarded to a rubbish dump or fired off inland. To operate effectively the proposed MEOLUTS need a clear view of the horizon down to a 5-degree elevation, particularly in a westerly orientation. As such it is important that there is no development, or the likelihood of development, in close proximity to the installation; yet another assurance for the future of the airfield. A further factor for the location is the easy connection to the MCA network via existing MCA hangar located on the airfield. Unfortunately the proposed IFA2 interconnector building is just far enough away not to interfere with the required 5 degree angle to the horizon.



This Photoview is of a MEOLUTS installation in the southern hemisphere.

Not so much an EZ fit is the proposal for a 25mtr high **Air Traffic Control Radar** to be installed on the airfield not too far from the new entrance although its exact site has still to be announced having moved slightly several times in an effort to satisfy all the requirements. While not an unusual addition to an airfield it is not an intergrated part of the National Air Traffic's radar network but a spare installation to back up their existing system and as a training facility. The LRA has sought assurance that the emissions from the radar will not put neighbours at risk, particularly as some homes are unusually close. We have been assured that none of the residents of Lee will be 'irradiated' and have been offered to witness exposure verification tests when the radar is up and running. We hope radio and television will also remain unaffected, it is fortunate there are less interaction problems with modern digital equipment but those with remaining analogue devices, mostly radios, could suffer some interference.

The Interconnector IFA2. Despite all the objections and Fareham Borough Councils' breaching of planning protocols the National Grid's IFA2 interconnector development has started on the North East corner of the Airfield, an area formerly part of the Strategic Gap. In consequence of ignoring the proper procedures the Chief Planner (England) sent a letter of censure to Fareham and the Civil Servants on the government side but this appears the full extent of any measure of censure. This interconnector is the only one of its type to be situated near a residential area, in a strategic gap and with yet to be defined impacts on the safety of the airfield and local resident's health.

Initial works have started on preparing the site and planting of the screening trees, celebrated in a ceremonial tree planting by the leader of Fareham Borough Council and the National Grid IFA2 Project Leader on the 28th February 2018.

Equally frustrating is the fact that National Government fails to grasp the questionability of building a power inverter facility that has a very uncertain power source as many French nuclear power stations are being shut down at end of their safe life. It is quite understandable why National Grid are happy to ignore this fact as much of the interconnector cost will be spread over all our power bills at the same time as handsomely increasing their business portfolio and profits.

Unsurprising with approval behind them the latest illustration of the building is a projected view in 15 years' time when all the screening trees have grown. Equally; while seeking planning approval NG were keen to describe how they would minimise the impact of construction, now the plan shows Newgate Lane as the prime construction traffic route. The LRA will attend the "Interconnector Community Liaison meetings" in order to try and minimise the risks and disruption to Lee Residents; let us know of any issue you would wish us to raise at these community meetings.

You may have heard of a proposal for some American style Hanger Homes to be built near the Airfield Control Tower. Surprisingly Gosport Borough Council approved the plan in a curious split vote and against the recommendation of their professional planners. Fareham, however, the landowner, is unlikely to sell the land as there are some serious safety and operational concerns which are likely to affect the viability of the airfield if they are ever built where currently proposed.