

25th January, 1960

Sir David Robertson, M.P.,  
House of Commons,  
Westminster,  
LONDON, S.W.1

Dear Sir David,

Thank you for your letter of 22nd inst. with letter of 20th inst. from Lord Carrington which I return herewith. I regret the delay in writing to you following the Meeting here on 14th inst. but I purposely put off writing until the new flying circuit arranged between my Council and the Commanding Officer R.N.A.S. had been put into operation so that I could report on results. Today is the first day of flying and the new circuit and I think there is a considerable improvement. The planes fly from the target area out over the sea, thence inland by Loch Fleet and back to the target area over Dornoch Firth at fairly high altitude. The C.O. of R.N.A.S. Lossiemouth explained to my Council that there were no alternative practice ranges on the South Coast of the Moray Firth as that area was already fully taken up with air lanes for one purpose or another. The C.O. would not admit that Dornoch had been "bussed" by R.N.A.S., pilots and my insistence that illegal flying had taken place over the Burgh has made me very unpopular with R.N.A.S. but I haven't lost any sleep over it as yet!

I have had a letter from Mr Peter Pettie of East Dalziel Farm, Dalcross about his campaign with the R.A.F. over low flying at East Dalziel. He is seeking co-operation in his campaign but I have informed him that my Council have agreed to a tryout of the new flying circuit here and until it has been tested nothing further can be done at the moment. From his letter I gather that Mr. Pettie is being forced to carry on a single handed battle and this contrasts clearly with the case here in which we have had your entire support. My Council owes the present progress entirely to your good offices.

I hope that you are feeling very fit again and with kindest regards.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.)

W.C. Wright,

Town Clerk.

14th January 1960

PRESENT

Rev. W. Macleod, Provost; Junior Bailie J.A. Wickham;  
Hon. Treasurer W.A. Urquhart; Councillors J.G. Macdonald  
and J. Gunn.

ALSO PRESENT

Captain Fell, Officer Commanding Royal Naval Air  
Station, Lossiemouth and two officers.

ABSENT

Senior Bailie Miss J.I.C. Chisholm, Dean of Guild H.  
Clunie, Councillors D. Mackenzie and A. MacLean.

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk.

JET AIRCRAFT NOISE

Provost MacLeod welcomed Captain Fell and his party and explained that the noise of jet aircraft based on the Royal Naval Air Station at Lossiemouth and flying over or near Dornoch had caused a very considerable nuisance during the latter part of the summer and the whole of the autumn last year. It was pointed out that Dornoch had a considerable Tourist industry and excessive noise from aircraft would be extremely detrimental to the Burgh. Captain Fell explained that the range near Tain was the only one fulfilling all the requirements of a jet aircraft practice range. Investigation over a range of 150 miles from Lossiemouth had failed to discover any alternative site. He suggested that a modified flying circuit would reduce the nuisance and a demonstration would be given after the Meeting. The Clerk stated that after a Press Report of the Town Council's objections to the nuisance from aircraft noise, aircraft from R.N.A.S. Lossiemouth had flown over the Burgh at much less than the minimum altitude of 2000 feet. Captain Fell denied that this was deliberate. A suggestion that the coast between Lossiemouth and Spey Bay could be used as a target area was met by the explanation that the whole south Moray Firth area was taken up by air traffic lanes and the existence of another type of practice range at Nether Dallochy, Spey Bay precluded the use of the Lossiemouth to Spey Bay coast. It was agreed to give a trial to flights over a new circuit which would involve travelling from the target area near Tain above the sea to Loch Fleet thence westwards and then south to the Dornoch Firth.

Provost MacLeod thanked Captain Fell and party for attending at Dornoch, and the Council members adjourned to the Links to observe demonstration flights by jet aircraft over the and proposed new circuits. The demonstration flight over the new circuit revealed a considerable diminution in noise. It was agreed that the Town Council would report to Captain Fell in due course on the reaction to the noise from aircraft using the new circuit.