

Are you entitled to compensation from Stansted Airport?

Between 1999 and 2007 Stansted Airport carried out building works in order to increase capacity. It was always understood that those works would give rise to an entitlement to compensation for those people who suffered increased disturbance from aircraft noise, smells and vibration. For many years though the airport never quite finished those works and claimed that this meant that they could avoid having to pay compensation.

In 2015 however the Lands Tribunal indicated that the airport could not get out of its responsibilities in this way and Manchester Airports Group (who own Stansted) were forced to issue a guide as to the claims process. In order to limit the scale of their liability though, they indicated that claims were only likely to be successful if the property concerned fell within a 57 decibel noise contour line. The 57 decibel contour line almost reaches the windmill in Thaxted but all of the centre of the village is outside it. Thaxted residents were in the main therefore put off from submitting a claim. The airport also stated that it was unlikely that they would entertain claims received after 31st July 2018. The validity of both of these requirements is very much open to debate and it is worth pointing out that Thaxted residents did receive compensation at the time of the last round of payments in the early 1990s.

What is more certain though is that you do need to have owned your property since before 2008.

Notwithstanding the fact that a lot of claims have been lodged (most relating to properties within the 57 decibel contour but some outside it) the airport are now resisting all claims for compensation but are instead offering to some people discretionary payments. Whilst the parish council can offer you no advice on this matter, if you have owned your property since before 2008 and have not submitted a claim, you may wish to consider doing so. A more detailed explanatory note together with a copy of the airport's Guide and an outline of the information that is required in relation to your property are available at the Community Information Centre. You may also wish to take your own surveying or legal advice. Land Partners (www.landpartners.co.uk) have been advising a number of Thaxted residents but in addition an action group (scactiongroup@gmail.com) has been set up to fight the case. Initially the intention of the action group is to obtain comprehensive legal advice, the cost to be spread amongst as many claimants as possible. If you wish to be a part of this initiative it is anticipated that individual contributions will be between £100 and £200 per claimant and you should contact the group by way of the e-mail address above. We understand that there is now a degree of urgency in relation to this matter so if you are considering taking this further your early attention might be advisable.