

Dear Ringshall PC,

My family and I moved in to our new address in Ringshall in February. We were aware of the nearby airfield and expected the Apaches flying over. We were told by the previous owners, backed up by various local people, that night flying was about 1 night in a fortnight, and to begin with, although we were very surprised at how low and frequently they flew directly over our property, were getting used to it.

After the 3 weeks stoppage over Easter there followed a level of flying that was absolutely horrendous and unacceptable, basically flying all day and until 2am 5 days a week for 6 weeks. During this time we were trapped in our own homes, with low-flying at pretty much a constant level, trying to work from home, unable to sleep and frankly enduring a degree of disruption that is way beyond acceptable.

During this time we began speaking to neighbours who were also unhappy at the massive increase in activity, some of whom work in agriculture with very early mornings and found the nighttime disruption extremely difficult. In one case we know of people began reinforcing their windows and doors, and in others people experienced mental health problems exacerbated by the sleep deprivation. It is not accurate to say 'the local people don't mind'. Some of them certainly do, and are worn down by it.

We contacted our Parish, District and County Councillors, who were sympathetic but unable to act. We contacted our MP who contacted the MoD on our behalf who said the increased levels were due to lockdown meaning they couldn't go further than a few miles beyond the airbase, and they were catching up on flying hours, and we heard local rumours that they had also been joined by other forces who were being trained from other airbases.

We support the military, respect their expertise and understand their need to train. However people should be reasonable on both sides and we see no willingness on the part of the MoD to take in to account the needs of their local neighbours. I have worked on projects involving military and civilian co-operation in the past (fishermen and submarine activity in Scotland) and am surprised at the poor/non-existent communication with the base here.

I would like to ask the PC if you are interested in pursuing the following :

1. To establish a line of communication with the airbase for local residents.
2. To ask that the airbase make more of an effort to act in such a way as to minimise disruption to neighbours, in particular, to stop hovering directly over residential properties, to do the majority of after-dark flying during the winter months, and to make a greater effort to vary their routes so no one area bears the brunt of their activity.
3. To ask that the airbase let us know what is a normal schedule and what is exceptional, in particular, so that we know about night flying in advance.

I have proposed this to the local MP who was going to raise it at the base during her summer tour but wanted to inquire of the PC whether you were willing in principle to be part of this.

Thanks for your time,  
Kind regards,