

Campaigners' anger at delay on flightpath talks

by Wendy Brading

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VILLAGERS living in the peaceful Dedham Vale face years of continued disruption from planes after a public consultation into changing flightpaths was delayed again.

The National Air Traffic Service (Nats) has announced it will not hold a new consultation until September at the earliest.

That means it would be unlikely that any routes would be changed before 2012.

The delays have been frustrating for the Dedham Vale Society, which has campaigned persistently for flightpaths to be moved.

The current route of aircraft coming in from Europe goes straight over the Dedham Vale which, the society said, was destroying the tranquility of the area of outstanding natural beauty.

In December 2005, the Dedham Vale Society took Nats and the Civil Aviation Authority to the High Court in a David and Goliath-style case.

After four days of legal dispute, the judge, Mr Justice Newman, came out on the side of the society.

Nats agreed to review the situation and a public consultation was held



■ **Protest – the Dedham Vale area of outstanding natural beauty has become an area of outstanding unnatural noise, say campaigners for a flightpath change.**

Picture: ADRIAN RUSHTON (79069-4)

between February and June 2008.

In February last year, it said it would conduct a new consultation on revised proposals. A second consultation was due to be started last July, but Nats said more work was still needed and any further consultation would be put back "until at least September".

Society president Robert Erith said: "It looks like we are in for another summer of noise. This is something we will

continue to have discourse about with the relevant authorities."

Kevin Briscoe, a press officer for Nats, said the issue was "extraordinarily complicated".

He said: "Feedback to the consultation was wide and varied. Some people wanted routes to go over towns, some wanted them to go over countryside.

"We have a duty to look at these ideas and decide whether there is something

different we could do.

"Anything you do to change one route has a knock-on effect for others.

"It takes a long time to work out what would be the best on each maintaining safety and the environment."

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