

Farage: Manston airport could have prevented Virgin flight Gatwick chaos

By [TomBarnes](#) | Posted: December 30, 2014



Ukip leader Nigel Farage said lessons have been learned from the chaos caused by the emergency landing of a Virgin flight at Gatwick

UKIP leader Nigel Farage says disruption could have been avoided if a Virgin Atlantic plane with landing gear problems had been diverted to Manston airport rather than Gatwick.

Virgin flight VS43, carrying 447 passengers and 15 crew, left Gatwick for Las Vegas at 11.44am yesterday (Monday), but was forced to turn around due to the technical difficulties.

The aircraft landed safely at around 4pm after hours circling Southern England. However, Gatwick's runway remained closed until 7.03pm, delaying dozens of flights.

Parliamentary candidate for South Thanet Mr Farage took to Facebook, suggesting less disruption would have been caused if flights had been rerouted to Manston airport.

[Post](#) by [Nigel Farage MEP](#).

He said: "I'm glad that the Virgin plane VS43 landed safely today. And there are lessons to be learned here too.

"If, for instance, Manston Airport in Thanet were reopened, it could have served as somewhere for the plane to land safely to save from disruption to Gatwick.

"Or perhaps diverted planes from Gatwick could have landed in Manston. Either way, here we have a useful piece of national infrastructure which is being left to rot. It must change."

Manston airport was closed in May by Transport tycoon Ann Gloag. Ms Gloag then sold a majority stake in the company to Discovery Park bosses Chris Musgrave and Trevor Cartner

The businessmen have proposed a £1billion mixed-use redevelopment of the site, but have ruled out retaining any aviation facilities as part of their plans.

Meanwhile, Conservative North Thanet MP Sir Roger Gale said the incident proved the need for Manston to be reinstated as a major diversion field in the South East.

Sir Roger said: "In the case of the Virgin Boeing 747 the pilot averted a potential disaster but the need for a significant diversion facility in the South East, away from major hub airports, is crystal clear and we need to get on with this before it is too late"

Read more: <http://www.thanetgazette.co.uk/Farage-Manston-airport-prevented-Virgin-flight/story-25782313-detail/story.html#ixzz3NTGxgmEc>