

THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AIRPORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

DEREK PROVAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF AGS AIRPORTS LTD

*answers questions from
The Airport Operator*

Features

CORNWALL AIRPORT
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government support to survive*

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LIFE UNDER LOCKDOWN
For the Aoa Team



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OPERATOR

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KAREN DEE

Introduction to The Airport Operator



The four months that have passed since our 2020 Annual Dinner and the last edition of The Airport Operator have been the most extraordinary in our history.

As we look back on the devastating impact of COVID-19 on our country, our first thoughts are for the thousands of people who have lost their loved ones in the most tragic of circumstances. Now, as we dare to look ahead, we can see an economy and an aviation sector scarred as never before, with thousands having lost their jobs or fearing that they may do so.

In the face of the worst drop-off in traffic levels the industry has ever seen, UK airports are on their knees and our members have told us that up to 20,000 airport jobs are now at risk. It is against that background that we have told the Government that it needs to recognise the immense crisis facing the country's airport communities and take action to support UK aviation and protect livelihoods.

Most urgently we had called on the Government to review and repeal its highly damaging and unnecessary blanket quarantine policy and replace it with a measured approach proportionate to the risk present in destination countries. The adoption of that approach for English airports is a welcome step forward and will enable passengers in England to book a summer holiday with confidence.

But it should be just a first step. With regional airports in particular looking ahead to a bleak winter, the Government should guarantee to support UK airports with their employment costs beyond October. We have also urged the Government to offer relief from Business Rates payments for this year, to suspend Air Passenger Duty for at least six months and to fund the Civil Aviation

Authority for the current charging period. As you can read elsewhere in this edition, such a comprehensive support package would have the full support of the Labour opposition.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 lockdown, we have worked hard at the AOA to make sure that politicians and officials have a proper understanding of the scale of the challenges for UK airports and the implications for jobs and for the economy. We have had more frequent contact with Government than ever before and, as Chief Executive, I have been greatly heartened by the wholehearted support that I and the team have had from our Chair, our Board members and from airports across the country.

For this edition of the magazine we talked to airport chief executives from all corners of the United Kingdom. While the specific challenges they face may vary, you will see a common theme emerging from all of these interviews – a clear-eyed understanding that times have never been so tough for our sector, combined with an unflinching determination to work towards a better future, however long that may take.

We have also been in regular touch with AOA members from the supply side of the aviation industry and I have been impressed by how diligently they have been working to develop innovative solutions for some of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis. You can read about some of these products and services in this edition, including those from six new members who have joined us over the last four months.

Finally, I would like to welcome a new colleague to the AOA team. Christopher Snelling has joined as Policy Director. Writing in this edition of the magazine, he offers us a timely reminder that, while our sector's immediate challenge is survival in the face of COVID-19, we must also continue to work hard on the environmental agenda, as no other issue offers such a significant long-term threat to our industry's business model. ■

Karen Dee, Chief Executive

SHADOW AVIATION MINISTER SAYS AVIATION NEEDS “A COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT PACKAGE” FROM THE GOVERNMENT

When Keir Starmer asked me to take on the Shadow Aviation Minister role earlier this year, I looked forward to getting into the details of the sector, where I would be able to pursue a platform which encourages sectoral growth alongside an ambitious programme to build a greener, more sustainable, and world-leading aviation future.

Since then, Aviation - much like the rest of our economy - has been crippled by the covid-19 pandemic. The impact of sustained travel restrictions and historically low demand will be felt across the sector for some time. There remains innumerable uncertainty about reliable testing, travel and quarantine restrictions, and continued Government financial support. While the silver bullet of a vaccine may be years away or indeed a mirage,

we still cannot predict the long-term effects on the sector. Though, we do know any recovery will be prolonged.

Several smaller airports including Teesside and Newquay have already shut their doors. There is an uneven playing field between small and large airports as staff wages and business rates make up a bigger proportion of costs for regional airports. Without further specific

support regional airports may never open again. A future UK aviation industry must properly prioritise these regional airports and routes.

With the collapse of Monarch and Flybe, followed by the profound pressure of lockdown, our regional connectivity has faced larger and deeper wounds. An independent UK will depend on secure regional connectivity if it is to improve opportunities for those nations and

Several smaller airports including Teesside and Newquay have already shut their doors.

regions left behind. With a regional focus, the aviation sector can look to growth again. If we are to insulate the industry from repeating mistakes that led to Thomas Cook's demise, the Government must introduce the recommendations of the Airline Insolvency Review.

Growing up and living next to Manchester Airport, and now representing the same constituency in Parliament, I have lived both the benefits and the drawbacks of having a major airport nearby. I am all too aware of the difficulties that airports often present to local residents. However, I have also seen the huge economic and social benefits airports offer to their community. If the industry falls off a cliff, tens of thousands of my constituents will be forced out of work and those families will suffer.

Aviation needs robust support from the Government with a comprehensive support package. Jobs must be protected with a clear commitment to workers' rights with UK companies and suppliers prioritised. This industry will need ongoing support where significant restrictions or conditions of travel are maintained. The Job Retention Scheme has been a lifeline which must be extended.

We must recognise and take pride in the achievements of the UK aviation sector, over 1.6 million people work in or are dependent on this industry. We should be proud of our industry's leadership in becoming the world's first aviation industry to commit to a net-zero roadmap.

The UK aerospace industry can continue to lead the world with improvements to engine efficiency



Mike Kane, Shadow Minister for Aviation and Labour MP for Wythenshawe and Sale East.

“Aviation needs robust support from the Government with a comprehensive support package. Jobs must be protected with a clear commitment to workers’ rights with UK companies and suppliers prioritised”.

and noise. We can become world-leaders in alternative propulsion, such as electric aircraft or green aviation fuels. We can improve operating techniques and modernise our airspace. With the right vision and support the UK aviation sector can become a cleaner, greener, world-leader.

This industry must rise to the challenges of climate change,

undoubtedly the greatest threat to our way of life in recent times, while also addressing an uncertain short-term future in a covid-19 world. I am confident we can, together, continue to build a bold and sustainable aviation sector. ■

Mike Kane is Shadow Minister for Aviation and Labour MP for Wythenshawe and Sale East.

BELFAST INTERNATIONAL BOSS CONCERNED THAT IMPACT OF COVID-19 WILL LAST WELL INTO 2023

Graham Keddie, Managing Director of Belfast International Airport, says that “business is going to be tough for the next few months and, probably, the next two and half years”.

He forecasts that the UK’s 10th largest airport will not see 2019 passenger levels again until 2023, with passenger numbers this year likely to be down by more than half from 6.28 million passengers last year to as little as 2.7 million passengers this year.

Belfast International was the only one of Northern Ireland’s three airports to remain open throughout the crisis for essential cargo, medical flights and emergency services and Keddie says that “burned a lot of cash”. His biggest worry in the short term is “over cash flow and having a viable business at the end of it”, which meant, he says, that the airport had “no choice” but to announce proposals for up to 45

redundancies. He is also concerned about how many airlines will survive the crisis intact and what view those that are left will take on the viability of routes into and out of the airport.

Just a few weeks’ ago his focus was more personal as he succumbed to the virus. Keddie guesses that he may have been infected when he attended the Scotland-France rugby match at Edinburgh’s Murrayfield stadium on 8 March. “It flattened me for almost three weeks”, he says, as his wife isolated him in his bedroom. Struggling to breathe and taking antibiotics, he felt he was “in hell. It just hammers you”. Weeks afterwards he says that he tires very easily and still feels “a bit rough”, especially after taking physical exercise. Keddie notes that

it was the first time he had taken time off sick for 15 years.

Asked how the crisis has changed his job, he says that he is “spending a considerable amount of time talking

Belfast International was the only one of Northern Ireland’s three airports to remain open throughout the crisis for essential cargo, medical flights and emergency services.



BELFAST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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*Graham Keddle, Managing
Director of Belfast
International Airport.*



to politicians about what assistance can be given to the local aviation sector". He praised the Northern Ireland Executive for extending business rates relief for the airport until the end of March 2021.

He was, however, excoriating about the UK Government's imposition from 8 June of a blanket quarantine on international travel, which he described as "ill-thought through, illogical and too late". He said that a quarantine might have made sense 12 weeks earlier but made no sense in June and was "economically damaging in the extreme". Keddle said he was "extremely disappointed" that the Government's decision to ease the quarantine restrictions from 10 July only applied for passengers arriving at English airports. He has urged the Northern Ireland Executive to urgently implement the same rules for those arriving into Belfast International Airport.

Belfast International reopened for domestic flights in mid-June and passengers have started to see for themselves the steps that the airport has taken to enhance safety. A new one-way system has been introduced to separate arriving and departing

passengers, non-passengers have been banned from the terminal building, social distancing is in force wherever possible and food and beverage outlets have been replaced for the time being by vending machines. Keddle says that passengers may find that their journey through the airport takes a little longer than in the past.

As flights resume, Keddle has also been working with George Best Belfast City Airport and City of Derry Airport to lobby the Northern Ireland Executive on new measures that they could take to support airports and boost the local economy, including a Northern Ireland marketing campaign to promote inbound tourism. Keddle would also like to see support for airport operational costs but doesn't sound too optimistic about that.

All three airports are also continuing their campaign to abolish Air Passenger Duty on short-haul flights. Keddle said that would be the most significant step that could be taken to give the airports a level playing field with airports in the Republic of Ireland, where there is no duty. He said that this remains an important

Belfast International reopened for domestic flights in mid-June and passengers have started to see for themselves the steps that the airport has taken to enhance safety.

factor in airline decisions about route viability, as it was in 2019 when Ryanair cited APD as a reason for reducing the number of its flights from Belfast International.

Looking ahead to the end of 2020, when the UK's transition period with the EU is due to end, Keddle expresses confidence that the impact on passenger flights between the UK and the EU will be minimal. However, he says that there still needs to be greater clarity about the impact on cargo, where there is continuing uncertainty about customs rules and declarations. ■

UNPRECEDENTED SCALE OF AOA CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT LEAVES MINISTERS IN NO DOUBT ABOUT THE HUGE CHALLENGES FACING UK AIRPORTS

AOA Chief Executive, Karen Dee, has spoken of the “phenomenal” scale of the Association’s online contacts with Ministers and officials during the COVID-19 crisis.

She said that the AOA had never had such frequent contact with Government and described its lobbying as successful in some areas and frustrating in others.

Dee praised the accessibility of Aviation Minister, Kelly Tolhurst, and said that the Department for Transport had done “a great job” in responding positively to the industry’s request for health guidelines in just four weeks. However, she was highly critical of the Government for having announced a blanket quarantine for arriving international visitors with no prior warning to or consultation

with the aviation sector.

“It made no sense” she said. “Nobody could understand what the evidence was for introducing it when they did. It is right that the Government seeks to protect public health, but they were not able to show that quarantine was the best way to do that. We were keen to move towards something that better reflected the risk to UK citizens. A blanket approach was just not sensible. It imposed too many economic costs. It had a major impact and I think the Government understands that now. We needed something more targeted and we have moved in the right direction

with the recent announcement from the Department for Transport about a risk-based approach and changes to Foreign Office advice about travelling abroad”.

With flights mostly grounded until recently, the top priority for UK airports has been to preserve cash. The Government’s job retention scheme had been “very helpful” and airports in Scotland and Northern Ireland had been helped by business rates relief. As aviation is one of the sectors whose recovery will be delayed, the AOA was also encouraged to see the Opposition parties making the case that Government should

recognise that it would need some further extended support.

Dee said that the AOA's work to inform Government and Parliament about the dramatic impact of COVID-19 on UK airports had been greatly assisted by the detailed and regular involvement over the last three months of its Chair, Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith, and Board members. Frequent contact with the Board had helped to ensure that she and the AOA team had a clear understanding of the impact of the crisis on members' businesses.

One innovation which she felt had worked particularly well was an AOA online briefing for a cross-party group of MPs with airports in or near their constituencies. The participation of Nick Barton (Chief Executive of Birmingham Airport), Andrew Bell (Chief Executive of Regional & City Airports) and Karen Smart (Managing Director of East Midlands Airport) had really brought home to the MPs the severity of the challenges facing airports across the country.

There had also been a lot of joint lobbying with the UK's airline trade associations – Airlines UK, BAR UK (the Board of Airline Representatives in the UK) and the UK office of IATA (the International Air Transport Association), as well with ADS, the

aerospace industry body, and ABTA, the UK travel trade association. Beyond the aviation sector the AOA had worked closely with the CBI and the British Chambers of Commerce, who had both helped to underline the key role that aviation plays in support of the UK economy.

A direct consequence of the AOA's partnership with the other aviation trade associations was the establishment at the end of May of the Future of Aviation Group of MPs, chaired by Henry Smith (Conservative, Crawley). The Vice Chairs of the Group, which has the support of 40 MPs, are Christine Jardine (Liberal Democrat, Edinburgh West), Catherine McKinnell (Labour, Newcastle North) and Gavin Robinson (DUP, Belfast East).

In a letter to Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, the Group referred to the "devastating impact" of the COVID-19 virus on the sector and expressed concern at "the lack of progress being made in providing wider support for the industry and in the development of a long-term roadmap that will enable the sector to recover as quickly as possible and play its vital role in our overall economic recovery". It concluded by calling for "urgent action now to safeguard jobs, the UK's international competitiveness as an aviation hub and, crucially, to ensure that our economy recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 as soon as it is safe and possible to do so".

While Dee said that COVID-19 had inevitably dominated the AOA's work with Government, lobbying

had continued on other issues. The AOA continues to emphasise the importance to the aviation sector of securing an agreement with the EU well before the end of the year on a Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement and a Civil Aviation Safety Agreement.

On climate change, which Dee said would certainly and rightly return to the top of the agenda, she welcomed the Department for Transport's establishment in June of a Jet Zero Council. The advisory body brings together Government, industry and environmental groups, to help reduce aviation's carbon emissions. She said that funding for sustainable aviation fuels would "help to pump-prime an entirely new industry, generating new jobs and economic growth, while reducing emissions from international aviation".

Dee said that she and the AOA team had realised very early on in the COVID-19 crisis how essential it would be to ensure that AOA members were quickly updated on fast-changing events and on the AOA's engagement with Government, Parliament and the media. The result had been the introduction of a daily COVID-19 update to keep members up-to-speed on developments that really matter to their businesses. She said that she had been very encouraged by members' really high engagement with the update and their positive feedback on it.

Praising the AOA team for the level of commitment that they have shown over the past three months, she said that they had all adapted remarkably well to the huge changes involved in working from home. Daily team video calls had helped them to pull together very effectively. Nevertheless, Dee said she is impatient for the time when it will once again be possible for her and her colleagues to return to the AOA's office in the heart of Westminster. Ultimately, she said, there is no substitute for the kind of informal collaboration that is most effectively achieved when people are working together in the same place. ■



"The AOA continues to emphasise the importance to the aviation sector of securing an agreement with the EU well before the end of the year".

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**HEATHROW CEO
SAYS UK SHOULD
TAKE THE LEAD TO
DEVELOP A COMMON
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD FOR
COVID-19 TESTING FOR
AIR PASSENGERS**

John Holland-Kaye writes for The Airport Operator



*John Holland-Kaye,
Chief Executive Officer of
Heathrow Airport Holdings
Limited.*



When the UK entered lockdown on March 23, it was the first time many people realised that COVID-19 had the potential to permanently impact everyday life. But for us at Heathrow we'd already been responding to the pandemic for a number of months.

And while we're now focusing on what will be required to open air travel back up again, it's crucial that we recognise why it is so important to get planes back in the sky – the benefits and value of which this crisis has so starkly brought to the fore.

Aviation is the lifeblood of global economies, facilitating trade and travel, unlocking supply chains for manufacturers and food suppliers, and stimulating tourism across the world.

By April, passenger numbers had reduced by 97% and at Heathrow, we

were welcoming the same number of passengers in the entire month that we would have welcomed in a day the year before. The economic effects of this drop in air travel are clear for all to see.

Despite this, Heathrow, like many UK airports, has continued to remain open throughout the pandemic to play its vital role in supporting the UK's fight against COVID-19.

We've seen tens of thousands of Britons pass through our terminals on their way home from around the globe via Government chartered repatriation flights. Flights from South America and South-East Asia for example, places that without air travel British citizens would have been unable to return from easily, if at all.

The lack of passenger flights

meant we also had capacity to welcome over ten times the normal cargo-only arrivals each week, carrying planeloads of vital Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and medical supplies to help equip NHS and other emergency services heroes.

By April, passenger numbers had reduced by 97% and at Heathrow, we were welcoming the same number of passengers in the entire month that we would have welcomed in a day the year before.

All of this was only made possible through the implementation of many different measures including hand sanitiser dispensers, the provision of face coverings, social distancing signage, perspex security screens, and new operating procedures.

For airports though, like many businesses, the impacts of this pandemic have been severe on our revenues even as our high fixed costs have remained.

This has meant we have had to make tough decisions to reduce our costs.

We – the aviation industry – now face a common challenge in rebuilding passenger confidence and unlocking travel routes to help restart the economies. It is a challenge that hundreds of thousands of people are reliant upon us succeeding in for their livelihoods.

Opening UK borders to low risk countries is a fantastic first step forward for the recovery, which will allow trade and tourism to restart on a limited basis. Now we need to build on this so that passengers from high risk “red” countries who don’t have the disease can fly without quarantine. This is important not just for reopening vital markets such as the US, but also in the event of a second wave in any currently low risk country.

While tests could be carried out at the border, this would create congestion, delay and risk to the passenger. A better alternative would be to test for COVID-19 before the flight, with the test being validated at check in. This is already being trialled in France and the Netherlands, with testing 72 hours before the flight, to allow for the time it takes to get results.

Once the concept is proven, we will need a Common International Standard so that, for example, a test carried out in Singapore or New York will be accepted by the UK and vice versa. Given the size of our aviation market, the UK government is well placed to take a lead in setting this

“The UK aviation industry has consistently demonstrated global leadership for all of its history. As we come out of this crisis, once again, UK airports and airlines will be at the forefront”.



Common International Standard, in particular, working with partners in the US and EU.

As the UK’s hub airport, we know that Heathrow’s situation is different to that faced by the many incredible city and regional airports across the nations. The size and scale of our operation provides an opportunity to quickly trial and test potential measures to help make the “new normal” for air travel possible. Innovations such as testing, ultraviolet cleaning robots, antiviral sealants, new touchless procedures and temperature screening.

We’re sharing the results from these trials with airports, industry and government. There is no competitive advantage to be gained by anyone in this process as it will be how passengers assess the travel industry’s response as a whole that will determine the success of our recovery.

Lastly, we are all looking for ways

to communicate to passengers that it is safe to fly. But as we are only a small part of the passenger journey, it may be more reassuring if we could find a common way to communicate that people are being kept safe, that can be used in public transport, hotels and restaurants, both here in the UK and internationally.

The World Travel and Tourism Council has made a good start with their Safe Travel badge but is not yet certified. Visit Britain’s “We’re good to go” is another great initiative in this space.

The UK aviation industry has consistently demonstrated global leadership for all of its history. As we come out of this crisis, once again, UK airports and airlines will be at the forefront. ■

John Holland-Kaye is Chief Executive Officer of Heathrow Airport Holdings Limited.



EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT THE BUSIEST IN THE UK - EVEN THOUGH ALL PASSENGER FLIGHTS WERE GROUNDED

East Midlands Airport has been the busiest airport in the country (and the tenth busiest in Europe) through the Covid-19 crisis thanks to its resilient air cargo operations.

Although all of the airport's scheduled passenger flights were cancelled, during March and April overall traffic levels were 15% higher than expected, with DHL and UPS increasing their dedicated cargo flights in and out of the airport. The increase in flights reflected both higher general demand for online goods and significant crisis-related demand for personal protective equipment, medicines and medical equipment.

The airport's Managing Director, Karen Smart, said that her operations team had done "a fantastic job" in keeping the airport open for freight operations that had been of vital importance to the country throughout the pandemic.

She emphasised, however, that the resumption of passenger operations would be essential for the airport's overall viability and profitability and it was on this that she and her management team were now focussed. The senior leadership team had a timely reminder of what the airport was missing during a meeting four weeks into the crisis when they saw two elderly ladies arrive at the terminal on their way to Spain – completely unaware that their flight had been cancelled.

Commenting on the Government's decision to announce a blanket two-week quarantine on all international passengers arriving from 8 June, Smart said it had had "a very significant impact on airline and consumer confidence". It had posed a particular threat to East Midlands Airport, which was heavily dependent on leisure passengers during the peak months of July and August. She said she was relieved that the Government had now recognised this and replaced it from 10 July with a risk-based approach limiting the quarantine requirement to passengers arriving from countries with continuing high infection rates.

Smart said that East Midlands Airport had made use of the Government's job retention scheme, with over 30% of its staff on furlough at any one

The operations team had done "a fantastic job" in keeping the airport open for freight operations that had been of vital importance to the country throughout the pandemic.

time. On the outlook for jobs in the future she said that the objective would be to retain jobs wherever possible, but the airport would have to be realistic and take account of the future profile of passenger demand.

Passenger numbers at East Midlands were just under 5 million last year, but Smart said that they would be considerably lower than that this year and her expectation was that they were likely to remain lower for two to three years. She said she hoped that the Government would recognise that regional airports could take a long time to recover and consider offering them additional help – for example, in relation to business rates.

Smart said that when passengers return to the airport their experience would be different to what it had been in the past, reflecting a series of safety-based operational changes. Every effort would be made to ensure social distancing wherever possible with one-way systems throughout the terminal. All passengers would be expected to wear face coverings. They would encounter Perspex Screens at key touch points and security teams wearing protective visors. Once airside they would find fewer food and beverage outlets open and their overall journey time through the airport might take a little longer than in the past.

While her overriding current focus has been on preparing for the return of passenger flights, Smart was keen to pay tribute to her airport's local community team who had set up a £50,000 Covid-19 Community Relief Fund. Engaging with its supply chain, the airport had bought at cost price

over 40,000 essential items that were in high demand by foodbanks and volunteers from across the airport has organised their distribution to 28 foodbanks throughout the East Midlands.

Meanwhile, Smart has continued her engagement with the region's economic development bodies, including two Local Enterprise Partnerships, the East Midlands Development Corporation and the board of Midlands Connect, which in June submitted to the Government a 25-year plan to "revolutionise" transport across East Midlands.

Currently public transport to East Midlands Airport is limited to buses and the East Midlands Parkway railway station a few miles away on the Midlands Mainline. The new Midlands Connect transport infrastructure programme includes an £820 million plan for a new railway station at the airport which would provide a direct rail link to Nottingham and Derby. While emphasising that any new station is a long way into the future, Smart says that it would be very welcome not just for the airport's passengers but also for the thousands of people who are still expected to find new jobs in and around the airport campus over the coming decades. ■

*Karen Smart,
Managing
Director,
of East
Midlands
Airport.*





*Nick Smith, Lead
Fund Manager of
AIPUT.*

COVID-19 CRISIS HAS UNDERLINED THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE UK'S AIRFREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE TO AVIATION'S ROLE AS "THE LIFEBLOOD OF UK PLC" SAYS LEADING FUND MANAGER

Heathrow Airport's role as the import hub for 40% by value of the UK's pharmaceutical imports has vividly illustrated aviation's key role in providing a lifeline for the country, according to the Fund Manager for AIPUT, the UK's only specialist airport-focused industrial fund for institutional investors.



Nick Smith, who leads the team at Aberdeen Standard Investments' Airport Industrial Property Unit Trust, said that 90% of tenants at its warehouses in and around Heathrow had remained open for business throughout the crisis and 30% of properties had been completely full.

After the initial shock Heathrow had been repurposed, with airlines adapting passenger aircraft for cargo use. Cargo-only flights had increased by 300% compared to last year. Many of AIPUT's customers had adapted the use of their warehouses. "Pain has developed innovation" said Smith.

AIPUT customer and commercial partner, Kuehne+Nagel (whose leading customer is GlaxoSmithKline), has just signed

a lease extension to 2030 for its Heathrow South Cargo Centre warehouse, underlining the site's pivotal role as a key facility for the movement and storage of pharmaceuticals and medical products.

Smith said Kuehne+Nagel had "responded magnificently in ramping up their business operations to help support the nation's health in the most challenging circumstances". He said the new agreement "secures the future of this nationally important air freight facility for years to come, making a major contribution towards ensuring that the UK's vital access to global healthcare supplies is maintained".

AIPUT's position as one of the leading landlords at Heathrow

Kuehne+Nagel had "responded magnificently in ramping up their business operations to help support the nation's health in the most challenging circumstances".

was reinforced in March when the fund secured a unanimous vote by the London Borough of Hounslow's Planning Committee in favour of planning permission for a new 115,000 sq ft air cargo warehouse at dnata City East. The



new facility will be operated by dnata in conjunction with the existing 250,000 sq ft warehouse. Together the two buildings, which will account for 10% of Heathrow's air freight capability, will handle all of Virgin Atlantic Cargo and Delta Cargo's air freight passing through the airport, doubling their capacity.

The new warehouse building, which should be open for business in a matter of months, will incorporate the latest carbon reduction techniques into its construction and operations, in line with AIPUT's Carbon Strategy (requiring the fund to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025). Using recycled and low carbon materials wherever possible, it will include solar PV panels, air-source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging as well as underground cables for battery storage.

Smith said the new building would strengthen dnata City East's status as the largest off-airport cargo handling operation at Heathrow. It would also "set the benchmark" for cleaner, more resilient and efficient warehouses and was a good example of AIPUT's commitment, as a responsible stakeholder,

The new warehouse building, which should be open for business in a matter of months, will incorporate the latest carbon reduction techniques into its construction and operations, in line with AIPUT's Carbon Strategy (requiring the fund to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025).

to play its part in reducing the carbon footprint in and around UK airports.

In addition to its significant Heathrow portfolio, AIPUT also has assets at Gatwick and Stansted airports. The total value of its property portfolio has grown from £140 million, when it was acquired in 2000 from the then British Airports Authority, to close to £700 million today. While AIPUT's focus to date has been on London, the world's largest metropolitan aviation market, it would also look for new opportunities at major regional airports like Manchester, East Midlands and Edinburgh to

grow its cargo warehouse product range and network.

Looking at prospects for the restart and recovery of UK aviation, Smith said it was "going to be a slow recovery for most airports", but he was confident that "the aviation industry will continue to be the lifeblood of UK PLC" because of the speed, security and predictability that it could provide to an island nation dependent on global trade. He urged the Government to help by working to secure an agreement this year on future trading relations with the European Union and said he was optimistic that "common sense will prevail". ■



*Derek Provan, Chief
Executive Officer of AGS
Airports Ltd.*



AIRPORTS BOSS WARNS 2,000 JOBS WOULD BE AT RISK IF SOUTHAMPTON'S RUNWAY EXTENSION PLANS ARE REJECTED

*Derek Provan, Chief Executive Officer
of AGS Airports Ltd, answers questions
from The Airport Operator*

You recently announced management changes at Southampton and Aberdeen. What was the thinking behind those changes and how do you see the group's structure developing in the future?

The changes have been a direct response to the market conditions we are all, as an industry, having to contend with. At the end of February, we were dealing with the sad demise of Flybe which brought into stark focus the fragility of the UK's domestic connectivity. Little did we know that 10 days later we would be confronted with what transpired to be a complete collapse in global passenger demand.

As a result, we have had to make changes to our group structure which has seen Steve Szalay move from Aberdeen to Southampton Airport to take up the role of Operations Director. Roger Hunt, who is the Chief HR and Development Director for AGS, has been appointed Interim Managing Director of Aberdeen International Airport. It's still unclear how the market will respond in the coming months, however, there will be a need for AGS to adapt and further centralise our business model.

Southampton was hit hard by the collapse of Flybe. How do you assess its future prospects?

As one of the UK's most important regional airports, Southampton has a bright future. With a catchment of over three million people all within 60 minutes of the airport, Southampton benefits from excellent surface access and a customer journey unrivalled by many UK airports. We're progressing our plans to extend the runway by 164 metres within our existing boundaries which will allow us to service larger aircraft and open the marketplace for the airport. I'm certain that Southampton will, over time, grow well beyond the passenger volumes it enjoyed before Flybe's demise.

Do you think that Southampton is likely to secure planning permission for a runway extension and how important is that?

The success of the airport and the region are intertwined. To achieve its potential, the Hampshire region needs efficient and effective transport infrastructure including strong air connectivity. Council leaders and officials all appreciate just how critical the airport is to the success of the wider regional economy and all have shared their support for the runway project. It is key this translates into approval. To be clear, if this project does not go ahead then over 2,000 jobs will be at risk.

What role is Aberdeen playing in supporting the offshore oil and gas industry through the Covid-19 crisis?

Like all of our airports, Aberdeen has remained open throughout the crisis to support lifeline services to the Highlands and Islands and the oil and gas industry. The helicopter services to and from the rigs have largely been operating as normal. As a result, there were times when Aberdeen was one of Europe's busiest airports in terms of air traffic movements. We spoke with both the Scottish Government and Oil & Gas UK at the outset of the pandemic to provide the assurances they needed that we would keep the airport open to support the jobs associated with the oil and gas industry, and in doing so, keep the lights on in the UK.

Domestic flights are starting to resume. What are the prospects for those at each of your three airports?

Our airports have always benefited from having strong domestic links and it has been encouraging to see a number of airlines, namely Loganair and Eastern, begin to reinstate those routes. On 15 June, Glasgow welcomed easyJet's first flight within the UK since lockdown

came into force. Glasgow's relationship with easyJet goes back almost 25 years when the airline's inaugural flight touched down at the airport on 10 November 1995, so it was fitting Glasgow was once again the destination for what was a symbolic moment for easyJet.

We recognise airlines will have to take a cautious approach to their restart plans but it's clear they are keen to restart domestic routes from our airports as soon as possible. Not only will these routes get the country moving again, they will get the economy moving.

What differences will passengers see at your airports as flights restart?

We've introduced a series of health measures to provide a safe environment for our staff and passengers. This means the customer journey through our airports is going to look and feel very different.

We are asking passengers to come prepared with their own facial coverings whilst all staff will be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE), including face masks. Protective screens have been installed in key areas, including the check-in and security halls, and passengers will be asked to observe safe, physical distancing wherever possible.

“We've introduced a series of health measures to provide a safe environment for our staff and passengers. This means the customer journey through our airports is going to look and feel very different”.

We've also enhanced our already thorough cleaning regimes with a specific focus on regular disinfecting of all hard surfaces. Passenger touchpoints, including security trays, are being treated with an antimicrobial product which kills germs and lasts for up to 30 days on surfaces. It has been tested to be more than 99.99% effective against COVID-19 and we've also installed hand sanitisers and self-cleaning stations for trolleys.

What did you think about quarantine and how do you assess the prospects for the return of international passenger traffic?

I said at the outset that a blanket quarantine policy would be ineffective, unworkable and highly damaging to our sector and the wider economy. Since it was put in place thousands of jobs within our aviation and tourism sectors have been lost and the fact the policy has not even been enforced means our recovery plans have been stifled unnecessarily. Now the UK Government has announced an easing of the quarantine restrictions in England. In Scotland we need clarity as soon as possible on when we can move to the targeted risk-based approach which will allow us to safely re-establish routes and prevent further jobs being put at risk. We cannot afford any further delay.

What were your passenger numbers before the Covid-19 crisis and when do you expect similar numbers might be seen again?

AGS Airports carried almost 14 million passengers in 2019 and, unfortunately, I believe it will take at least three years for us to build back to those levels.

What has your job and that of your colleagues been like over the past few months?

The word unprecedented has been



“The focus must now shift to how our industry can rebuild sustainably and return to a position of strength. We can't do this alone and it's incumbent on government to support aviation”.

used quite a lot in recent months and for good reason. Our industry is used to dealing with crises, be it volcanic ash clouds shutting down airspace or, in the case of Glasgow, terrorist attacks. Usually these events are short lived and there is experience within the business, or government for that matter, to deal with them. I don't think anyone within our industry could have foreseen an event that has been as prolonged or as devastating. It has been an extremely intense and stressful time for everyone at our airports and whilst we are by no means out of the woods, I do hope the worst is behind us.

Are there other points that you would like to make?

The focus must now shift to how our industry can rebuild sustainably and return to a position of strength. We can't do this alone and it's incumbent on government to support aviation. We need a clear plan from government setting out how we can safely re-establish our air connectivity and in doing so, drive our economic recovery. This should include a temporary six-month suspension of APD, completing the regional air connectivity review and supporting our commitment to decarbonising aviation. ■

COVID-19 CRISIS UNDERLINES THE BENEFITS OF ALL-IN- ONE CLOUD-BASED SOFTWARE TO MANAGE AIRPORT OPERATIONS

The COVID-19 lockdown has presented airports with unprecedented challenges, not least how to share information across different teams at a time when many airport staff have been working remotely.

At Eforsair we have long understood how cloud-based software promotes effective operational collaboration across multiple departments and gives airport operators all the resources that they need to manage operations for regulatory and compliance purposes - but feedback from our customers over the last few weeks has underlined just how vital this has become at a time when airport colleagues have been having less contact with each other than usual.

We know that most airports have continued to maintain their operations during the COVID-19 crisis, but with less direct contact,

both individually and between departments. With reduced flight operations, wildlife hazard management actions have increased as aerodromes became more attractive to birds and mammals. Maintenance schedules and inspections have continued. Shift workers and managers have communicated from a distance.

Customers already using our software have told us that they were less impacted in terms of organisation and sharing information across all departments than they would have been without it. Teams were already prepared for remote working and everybody was aware of what had to be done

and when it needed doing. Where personal shift handover briefings were not possible it had much less impact because all the information on the current status of the operation and work to be carried out was available on the Eforsair log.

When we first developed our system for airfield operational management, we were fortunate to be able to draw on our experience in training airfield operational teams at our base near Toulouse in France. Working with airfield engineers and maintenance teams helped us to identify both common and individual administrative needs to create a system that satisfies all

departments.

We realised that management teams and staff were spending far too many hours accessing, collating and communicating information. Generally speaking, information was being recorded somewhere near the point of the occurrence. That might have been in the head, on a piece of paper or perhaps even on a smartphone or tablet. Then it was being recorded later on a system that conformed to regulatory and airport standards. In short, it was cumbersome.

Although there are many common factors relating to operational management across the whole airfield, we found each department was working in isolation with different management systems. What was needed was an all-in-one software system that would satisfy all departments and provide everyone with all the tools that they needed in one place. The solution was to record from the location of the occurrence or event, as it happens, using smartphones or tablets with geo-location technology, and let the software do the rest to communicate, inform and give feedback.

With the system that our software engineers developed, data can be easily entered and retrieved from any device with one click in real time, providing instant alerts for critical operational incidents and anomalies. We have created a complete, reliable, traceable and secure digital logbook for airfield operations, fire services, security, emergency management, engineering and wildlife hazard management.

Our system makes it easy for airports to collate and provide information and reports to all relevant departments and organisations, process the information to take further action if required, communicate it to



Lionel Rolland,
Chief Executive
Officer of EforSA SAS.

“So, we know we have a great product, but we also know that airports across the world are in a state of uncertainty, budgets will be affected and cuts across the board will be made”.

the relevant stakeholders, use it for decision-making and make key performance indicators available in real time.

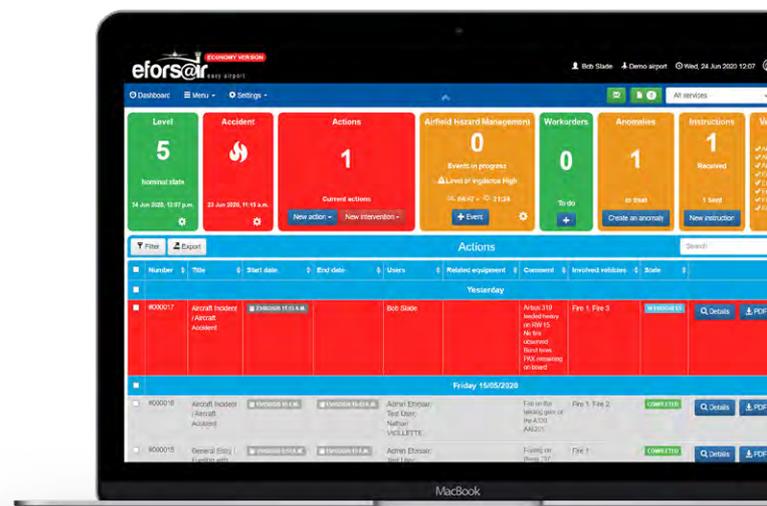
We knew we were heading in the right direction when we demonstrated it to an experienced airport management team and the team leader’s response was: “It’s opened our eyes for sure – and I’ve been in aviation some 40 years now”.

So, we know we have a great product, but we also know that airports across the world are in a state of uncertainty, budgets will be affected and cuts across the board will be made. That is why we have developed an economy version of our business software for fire, wildlife hazard management, engineering and security and are offering it free of charge. It is available for registration and deployment [here](#) and comes with

full operational guides.

When times get back to normal companies may consider upgrading to the business version, but it’s not a condition. It’s for an airport to keep and I believe it will prove to be a valuable asset that will improve operational communications and help to support airports during the crisis and the recovery process. ■

Lionel Rolland (lionel.rolland@eforsa.eu) is Chief Executive Officer of EforSA SAS.



SMALL REGIONAL AIRPORTS NEED GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO SURVIVE SAYS NEW BOSS OF CORNWALL AIRPORT NEWQUAY

The UK's small regional airports face a ten-month battle for survival and need urgent Government support according to Pete Downes, the new Managing Director of Cornwall Airport Newquay.

Downes' appointment as the new boss of an airport where seven out of ten passengers flew on routes operated by Flybe was announced on 24 February. Ten days later Flybe collapsed. Within a month the UK went into lockdown and the airport closed to passenger traffic.

It was, by any standards, a baptism of fire. Downes started work on 1 June and has been busy ever since controlling costs, preparing for the safe reopening of the airport for scheduled passenger flights on 4

July and talking to airlines about the possibility of taking over routes that had previously been operated by Flybe.

One of the points that he is keen to emphasise, as the airport prepared to welcome passengers for the first time since March, is that airports like his have already lost a huge proportion of this year's revenues. The blanket quarantine had already caused "irreparable damage" and airports were now bracing for "the most difficult winter that the aviation sector has ever

The blanket quarantine had already caused "irreparable damage" and airports were now bracing for "the most difficult winter that the aviation sector has ever experienced".



*Pete Downes, Managing
Director of Cornwall
Airport Newquay.*

“Airport revenues are just not there for us in the winter. That is the challenge. We have got to get through another ten months before things have a prospect of looking better”.

experienced”. He said: “Airport revenues are just not there for us in the winter. That is the challenge. We have got to get through another ten months before things have a prospect of looking better”.

What this means, he says, is that, if the Government is serious about the vital role that regional airports have to play in supporting their local economies, Ministers need to understand the unprecedented pressures that they are now facing and respond by delivering aviation industry-specific support quickly.

Downes recalls that the

Department for Transport had already acknowledged the importance of regional connectivity in January, before both the Flybe collapse and the virus-induced lockdown. If the need to do more to help regional airports, to support the levelling-up agenda and to deal with regional inequality across the UK had been accepted then, it was obvious, he said, that the need is significantly greater now. The Government needed to resume work on its regional connectivity review at the earliest possible opportunity and quickly deliver some concrete support.

One option would be to expand the existing number of Public Service Obligation (PSO) routes, where Government supports routes deemed vital for the economic development of the region they serve, providing financial support, if required, to ensure routes are maintained year-round. Cornwall Airport Newquay’s London link is one such route that had been operated by Flybe. From 24 July the route to Heathrow will be taken over by British Airways, initially operating three flights a week, increasing to five a week in August and daily from September.

Downes described the route as “the cornerstone of our recovery strategy”, praised British Airways as a “fantastic airline partner”, described Heathrow as the “London gateway that Cornwall deserves” and said he was very much looking forward to “working with the team at British Airways, alongside our stakeholder partners locally, to rebuild the historically strong demand on the route and make the service a success”.

Ryanair led the reopening of commercial flights at Cornwall Airport Newquay with its routes to Faro in Portugal and Alicante in Spain. Eastern Airways quickly followed with new routes to Teesside International Airport and Leeds-Bradford, but Loganair’s four domestic routes are not expected to operate until next year. London apart, Downes’ top priority is to find the right new partner for the Newquay-Manchester route, where, he says, there has already been “plenty of interest”.

The slow pace of recovery has left Downes facing some difficult choices about how to achieve a closer match between costs and revenues, resulting in an announcement of a consultation process with staff that is expected to lead to 36 redundancies across the passenger operation. Downes said the airport was working hard with its parent company, Corserv, which operates in a range of

sectors across Cornwall, to find redeployment opportunities and keep as many people as possible within the wider group.

He expects his airport's road to recovery to be long and hard. Last year 460,000 passengers passed through the airport, but the most recent forecast for this year is that the total will fall to around 125,000. Next year might see 250,000 to 300,000, but Downes talks of a three to five-year recovery timeframe and says it will be "years before we get back to where we were". One result of that is that the airport will face a significantly larger operating deficit than the £1 million it currently receives in subsidy from Cornwall Council, but Downes is optimistic that the long-term viability of the airport remains stronger than ever.

He said: "We have an incredibly diversified operation here on site that includes an Enterprise Zone, Spaceport Cornwall, Search and Rescue operations and the county's air ambulance, which flew close to 200 life-saving missions during the lockdown. The airport is also home to a thriving maintenance, repair and overhaul business, flight training, cargo and fixed-base operators, alongside a range of non-aviation activities. The Council have shown incredible commitment to the airport since taking over the site from the RAF over a decade ago, and all I can say is that they're doing everything possible to support our continued viability despite the significant wider challenges they face in terms of the overall COVID-19 response".

Reflecting on his career in airports to date, Downes, who was most recently Aviation Director at London City Airport, counts himself lucky to have been able to learn from London City CEO, Robert Sinclair, who had previously been CEO at Bristol Airport, where Downes also worked. Downes says that, while there are fewer aircraft movements at Newquay than at London City or Bristol, employees at all three



"Nothing that has happened has altered my view of the vital role our airport plays in connecting the region to the wider UK and beyond, and of the fact that our passenger demand is based on sound, sustainable principles".

airports, from passenger-facing staff to the Board, show a similar level of passion and enthusiasm for aviation.

What makes Newquay different, he says, is "the close-knit family feel that comes from a small operation", though, because of the lockdown, Downes has so far had only limited face-to-face contact with his team and with other stakeholders at Newquay. While there is no substitute for personal contact, he says he has been surprised by how much it had been possible to achieve through video conferencing, including, he noted, a recent and effective airport consultative forum with close to 40 different stakeholders.

That said, he is clearly keen to get back quickly to something like normal operations. Asked how he feels, he said "I am optimistic about the future, but it has been a pretty lonely time for smaller regional airports. People do feel they have been fighting a battle without a huge amount of wider support. It

has been a really tough time in terms of the decisions that people like myself have had to take around getting cost out of the operation, but at the same time talking to carriers about new routes and taking the steps that are needed to deliver a COVID-secure passenger experience. The pressures on Managing Directors have never been as tough as they are at the moment".

Despite everything, he concluded: "Nothing that has happened has altered my view of the vital role our airport plays in connecting the region to the wider UK and beyond, and of the fact that our passenger demand is based on sound, sustainable principles. It's been built around connecting people to a world-class tourism proposition and providing essential connectivity to places that are difficult to reach by any other means. In that sense the demand will prevail through this difficult time and I am humbled but also hugely motivated by the responsibility of steering the airport to those better days". ■

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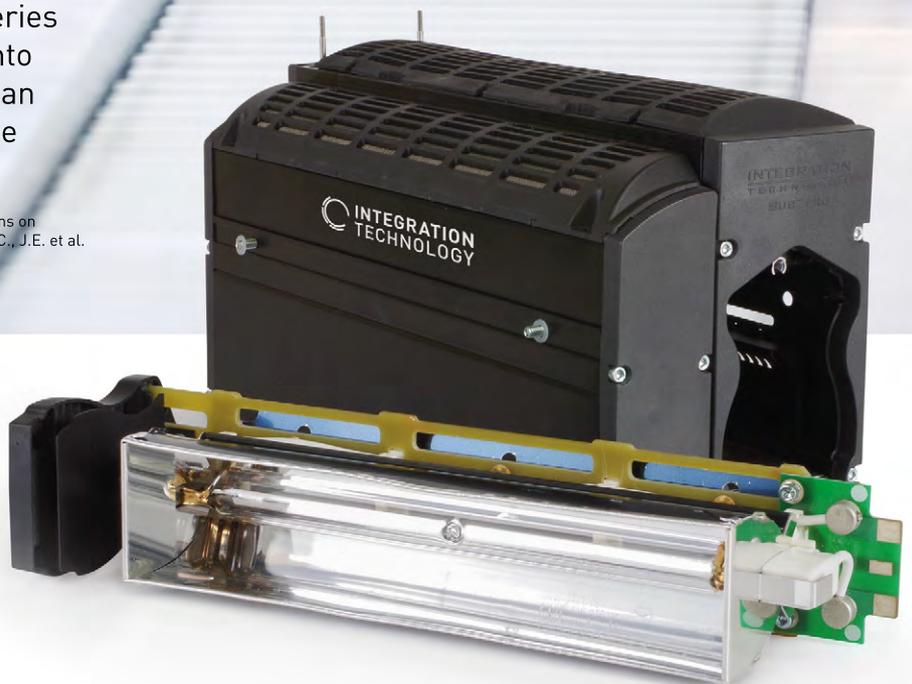
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*BMC Infectious Diseases 2018: 'Deposition of Respiratory Virus Pathogens on Frequently Touched Surfaces at Airports' Ikonen, N., Savolainen-Kopra, C., J.E. et al.

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AOA WARNS THAT “NO DEAL” WITH THE EU WOULD HIT AVIATION’S RECOVERY FROM THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The AOA has told MPs that failure to secure a Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement with the EU would “hamper the recovery of the aviation sector from the COVID-19 crisis”.

Giving evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on the Future Relationship with the EU, the AOA said that the Government should be seeking an outcome as close to the current arrangements as possible.

If attempts to secure an agreement fail contingency measures would be needed and the AOA is concerned that such measures might not be announced until close to the December 2020 deadline. A last-minute rush to secure no-deal contingency measures on mutual recognition and aviation access has happened twice before during the process to secure a withdrawal agreement. Its evidence concludes that “this would precipitate uncertainty, lead to conservative scheduling from airlines, and hamper the recovery of the aviation sector from the COVID-19 crisis in the UK and Europe”.

The AOA told the Committee that the COVID-19 crisis had “crippled the aviation sector” and it warned that “a further economic shock at the end of 2020, precipitated by the lack of an adequate future trading arrangement with the European Union, would be an additional hindrance in the long recovery predicted for the aviation industry”.

The UK Government published its draft proposals for a Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (CATA) and a Civil Aviation Safety Agreement at the end of May.

The AOA has welcomed the proposals in the CATA on ownership and control, code sharing and aircraft leasing, but has expressed disappointment that the Government has not been more ambitious on traffic rights, pointing to the EU-US Open Skies Agreement and the EU-Swiss air transport agreement as possible models for a UK-EU deal.

In addition to agreement on a CATA, the AOA is urging the

Government to secure a Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement to ensure continued close engagement in the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The AOA would like to see that based on the closest form of relationship possible between EASA and the UK’s Civil Aviation Authority.

The AOA believes that “there are also wider opportunities for the UK Government to invest and pump-prime the British aviation sector following the country’s departure from the EU. These could include:

- **state aid rules in relation to Public Service Obligation routes, leaving the UK more freedom to better connect its regions together and to the core**
- **the removal of the double Air Passenger Duty paid on both UK domestic outbound and return flights and**
- **a return of duty-free sales for passengers travelling to the EU”. ■**

The AOA believes that “there are also wider opportunities for the UK

Government to invest and pump-prime the British aviation sector following the country’s departure from the EU”.



ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDA IS THE GREATEST RISK FOR UK AIRPORTS – NEW AOA POLICY DIRECTOR

Newly appointed AOA Policy Director, Christopher Snelling, says that environmental issues pose a significant threat to the business model of UK airports.

Snelling, who joined the AOA team in May, said that the sector's immediate challenge was "survival in the face of COVID-19 and the restrictions it has brought". He said there was a huge quantity of work to do "to ensure that both government rules and public perception allow aviation in the UK to return as quickly and as fully as safety evidence allows". Snelling said that: "too often in many areas I have seen sensible policy steps overwhelmed by uninformed public views and politicians' fear of those views", adding that he hoped to be "a useful part of the team in pushing positive change through as quickly as possible".

Beyond COVID recovery, Snelling said that he wanted to get involved

in the environmental agenda, which he saw as "the greatest risk to airports as an industry – for example it is possible to conceive of a future UK government that may seek to achieve its carbon targets by telling airports to cut their flight numbers in half. No other issue offers such a significant threat to the business model of our industry".

Snelling said: "What we need to do is to be on the front foot and create positive options for government which enable airports and UK aviation in general to change. We need policy makers to see they can work with us and that clear paths exist on noise, air quality and carbon. The Sustainable Aviation group does excellent work in this area. I want to help support that work and to

bring out, with our members, the airport-specific implications of it. We need stakeholders to see the UK airport sector for what it is – a world-leading industry that wants to change and evolve to work with and fulfil the collective needs of society".

Before joining the AOA, Snelling was Head of UK Policy at the Freight Transport Association, where he worked for 14 years. Through his time there he led on policy issues across road, rail, sea and air, with special focuses on environmental, fiscal and infrastructure issues. Previously he had worked for almost 10 years in public affairs for the RAC and for a leading consultancy. He started his career as a researcher in the House of Commons in 1997. ■



*AOA Policy Director,
Christopher Snelling.*

A close-up photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a white t-shirt with some faint text on it and a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. The background is dark and out of focus. The text "LIFE UNDER LOCKDOWN FOR THE AOA TEAM" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif font in the lower half of the image.

LIFE UNDER LOCKDOWN FOR THE AOA TEAM

Christopher Snelling has been AOA Policy Director since May but has yet to meet any of his new work colleagues or any AOA members.

It has been the strangest of starts in a new job as Christopher has joined the rest of the team in working remotely. By a fortunate coincidence the team that he used to manage in his previous role at the Freight Transport Association (FTA) was remotely based, so he was already using many of the techniques with which people have become increasingly familiar – reviews via Teams, webinars for members and virtual collaboration on documents. It has also been helpful that AOA Chief Executive, Karen Dee, was his old boss when she was at the FTA.

Policy Manager, Rupinder Pamme, while still fairly new, had the advantage of almost two months getting to know her new colleagues before the lockdown. She described the transition to working from home while still trying to grapple with a new role as “interesting” but said she had been impressed by how everyone adjusted and really appreciative of how everyone with whom she dealt had been “generous with their time and patience”.

Similarly, Tania Roca, Operations, Safety & Commercial Director, said her experience had been one of “gratefulness” and felt that the distance imposed by lockdown had actually made her feel closer to the rest of the AOA team and the membership. She said that members had been “amazing” in unconditionally dedicating time, work and effort to sharing best practices and learnings.

For Jeff Bevan, Policy & Public Affair Manager, the most striking thing was how busy it had been. He said that: “Between lobbying the Government for further support for the sector, helping to co-ordinate the sector’s response to the crisis, and keeping AOA members informed of our actions and vital information, there’s been a lot to get through. It has made the days at home fly by, but I am looking forward to returning to the



Karen Dee said that working from home had been “a huge change” but stressed the value of daily catch-up video calls with the team, remarking that they had proved to be much more effective than conference calls by telephone.

office, whenever that may be”.

Finance Executive, Richard Atkin, said that working in finance meant that his role was quite easily adaptable to a working from home scenario. It had really helped having “a supportive boss and colleagues”, but the one thing that he had really missed had been face-to-face contact with AOA members. “There are always meetings taking place at our offices” he noted “and it is always nice to see members when they call in”.

Looking back after three months in lockdown, Patricia Page, Executive Assistant & Office Manager, said she had been surprised how quickly she had adapted to working from the office that she had created in her loft conversion. The experience had been made easier by new technology, good IT support and equipment and hard work from Chief Executive, Karen Dee, and the

AOA team. Nevertheless, she had missed the ability to “bounce off” her colleagues (as she usually did whilst in the office) and, of course, greeting the AOA members when they attended meetings. She is looking forward to “returning to Westminster, adapting to ‘the new norm’ and seeing the amazing team in person again”.

Karen Dee said that working from home had been “a huge change” but stressed the value of daily catch-up video calls with the team, remarking that they had proved to be much more effective than conference calls by telephone. That said, she was still keen to get everyone back in the office together as there was no real substitute for the frequent informal exchanges that took place there. Equally, she said, a big part of what a trade association does is to bring its members together and it had not been possible to do that properly. ■



AVIATION GROUP CHAIR URGES GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND AID TO THE SECTOR

As the MP for Gatwick Airport, I warned in January of the potential devastating impacts that the virus could have on our world class aviation industry. Sadly, these warnings went largely unanswered. As the virus hit, the devastating impacts became reality and continue to be felt by all of those connected to our aviation industry.

It is for that reason I set up The Future of Aviation Group to demonstrate the widespread political support for the sector and for the urgent need for the Government to take action to support our world class aviation sector.

As an island nation, aviation is vital to our economic and social future. It touches every aspect of our lives, from the freight transported by air to much needed pharmaceutical supplies and the millions of jobs which the industry creates and enables across the economy.

Aviation is not simply part of our transport mix; it is a major economic enabler. It will be central to restarting our economy as we move out of the lockdown and look to our economic recovery through Brexit and beyond.

The recent announcement on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is a clear example of the need for broader support for aviation. Whilst the Government must be applauded for the bold action that it took to protect jobs, it must also look again at the longevity of the scheme for those industries who are unlikely to rebound quickly from the devastating impacts of the virus.

With estimates suggesting that it may take a few years to get international travel figures back up to 2019 levels, and with disruption for our tourism industry expected to last well into next year, removing the protection afforded those employed by the industry and its supply chain too quickly will be devastating. The Government must look again at this and provide sector specific support for those industries that will take longer to bounce back to pre COVID levels.

I have also urged the Government to work with local government and airports as a priority to provide funding for business rates relief from Whitehall and not simply push the issue back to local authorities, many of whom are at forefront of

“As an island nation, aviation is vital to our economic and social future. It touches every aspect of our lives, from the freight transported by air to much needed pharmaceutical supplies and the millions of jobs which the industry creates and enables across the economy”.



Henry Smith, Conservative MP for Crawley and Chair of the Future of Aviation Group.

dealing with COVID-19.

The impacts of a failure to support aviation will not just be felt in the sector alone. They will reverberate across the economy. That is why it is vitally important that we all come together to push for a broad package of measures which support our vital aviation industry to play its full role in rebuilding our economy at local, regional and national level.

In just a few short weeks, we have been able to grow the group to over 70 MPs including former Transport

Secretary Chris Grayling MP, former Aviation Minister Paul Maynard MP and MPs from all parties. We will use this base to push on the issues that are holding back our airports from recovering, but also to ‘build back better’ and place our airports throughout the UK on a firm footing allowing them to play their vital role in rebuilding our local and national economies. ■

Henry Smith is the Conservative MP for Crawley and Chair of the Future of Aviation Group.

AIRPORT SANITISING: UVC – THE FUTURE NOW?

An ultraviolet device that can be used to sanitise sensitive air traffic control equipment and significantly increase passenger safety during transit through airports is available now from British developer and new AOA member Integration Technology Ltd.

The adoption of UV technology is growing within applications where the repeated use of alcohol or bleach based disinfectant solutions cause damage to sensitive equipment. In order to slow the spread of Coronavirus, sensitive Air Traffic Control radar screens, touch screens and headsets require a non-contact, non-solution based, sanitisation process.

Integration Technology's SubZero RS-170 UVC rapid sanitiser is a compact, lightweight unit designed for use on all surfaces in applications posing a high risk of public cross-contamination. It can be easily used by ATC operators themselves to sanitise their own personal working environment.

A 2016 study by the University of Nottingham and the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare into how pandemics might spread found that half of the communal trays at airport security screening lanes to be infected by respiratory viruses.

This outcome is unsurprising. Trays

are rarely washed; carry all manner of detritus from travellers' pockets including tissues; are non-porous; and are typically lifted with a wide palm surface area and strong grip.

Hand sanitiser and gloves do not prevent the transference of virus from the tray to personal belongings. Given they can be handled by several hundred people transiting and connecting every day, it is imperative that these trays are sanitised between one passenger putting down and the next picking up.

To combat this problem Integration Technology has developed a UVC sanitisation tunnel utilising the SubZero RS-170 technology that can easily be retro-fitted into the tray return line conveyor to provide a 99.9% virus inactivation rate on every tray pass.

The company is also now working with a major UK developer and manufacturer of baggage handling systems to scale up this tunnel for the sanitisation of aircraft hold baggage using their higher power

SubZero RS-280 UVC technology.

It is highly likely that in the future border controls could enforce international airports to sanitise baggage and cargo before it is loaded on to an aircraft, while raising passenger confidence in their bags being sanitised prior to collection from the arrivals hall carousel.

UVC specifically relates to ultraviolet light with wavelengths between 200 – 280 nanometres (nm). Light in the UVC wavelength can be used for disinfecting water, sterilizing surfaces, and destroying harmful micro-organisms in food products and in air.

The efficacy of UVC for the inactivation of viruses is well-documented in research texts including Wladyslaw Kowalski's 'The Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation Handbook', published by Springer in 2014.

Integration Technology has validated the output of the SubZero RS-170 against published



data for SARS-Cov1, which is the closest comparative virus to the Coronavirus, SARS-Cov2.

Microorganisms are either killed or inactivated by UVC light as a result of damage to nucleic acids in RNA and DNA which leaves them unable to perform cellular functions. When bacteria and viruses are exposed to short wavelength UV light, specifically UV in the UVC band, they are rendered incapable of reproducing and infecting.

“The spread of Coronavirus is accelerated by the fact that it can last on non-porous, plastic surfaces for several days,” says Simon Roberts, managing director at Oxfordshire-based Integration Technology.

“The problem at the security screening lanes is that you throw your wallet, keys, phone, watch and belt along with all your other carryon

“There is a clear role for technology in virus sanitisation and UVC is going to be playing a major part in it”.

possessions into a potentially contaminated tray. Gloves and hand sanitiser cannot eliminate this transfer path of the virus.

“We see clear potential in using UV technologies alongside conventional solutions like misting and deep cleaning not least because it offers a non-contact, non-solution, based sanitisation process alongside more traditional methods.”

The RS-170 offers high output 1700W input power with a high intensity reflector system. Four times more powerful than competing solutions, it significantly reduces the UV exposure time required to achieve the same results.

Easy to use and maintain, the 285 x 85 x 142mm, 3kg air-cooled unit offers rapid warm-up and cool-down, and comes with a quick-change lamp cassette for reduced downtime on site.

The unit forms part of a portfolio of portable UV sanitising and curing solutions now available for outright purchase via Integration Technology’s e-commerce facility at www.portable-uv.com

Says Simon Roberts: “Hand-held light enables manipulation to access difficult to reach areas that may be missed by fixed solutions. UV is

non-contact and allows widespread coverage so you get greater and faster overall decontamination.

Simon sums up: “We are really excited about becoming members of the AOA. All UVC is not the same; it’s a crowded marketplace offering all manner of lamps with considerably different price points that can be confusing for newcomers to this technology.

“As experts in ultra-violet light lamp systems, Integration Technology can guide and advise fellow AOA colleagues to make sure they get the right UVC system for their application.

“There is a clear role for technology in virus sanitisation and UVC is going to be playing a major part in it.” ■

Further information at <https://www.integrationtechnology.com/en/applications/uv-sterilization>

Video on the SubZero RS-170 ambulance sanitising at https://youtu.be/eRir_FK7yO

Further information from integration Technology Ltd www.integrationtechnology.com Tel 01869 233611 email sroberts@integrationtechnology.com

SIX NEW MEMBERS JOIN AOA

The AOA has welcomed into membership six new members with expertise in energy, insurance, software production and virus sanitisation and elimination.



ENGIE, who have joined as a Gold Member, is a global energy and services company, with an ambition to be a world leader in the zero-carbon transition, helping airports operate efficiently, safely and sustainably for the long term. It offers a unique combination of experience and expertise to design, build, operate and maintain the infrastructure and services required for today's low carbon airports.

With its range of integrated services, including energy efficiency, green generation and Smart Airport Solutions, ENGIE can help minimise exposure to climate change risks, raise profile and credibility and provide substance to policy decisions. It promises to deliver guaranteed savings, combined with improved efficiency and carbon reduction, enabling airports to achieve their sustainability goals and transition to a lower carbon future.



STARR INSURANCE COMPANIES, who have also joined as a Gold Member, is a leading insurance and investment organisation with a presence on six continents. Through its operating companies Starr provides commercial property, casualty insurance and health insurance products, as well as a range of speciality coverages.

Starr is a leader in insurance for the aviation and aerospace industries worldwide. Starr Consulting Services (SCS), a London-based unit within Starr, is uniquely positioned to serve the needs of aviation clients. SCS specialist teams in aviation hazard and risk management, wildlife risk management and aviation medicine, psychology and occupational health provide practical insurance solutions for aviation clients. SCS say their clients consider them an extension of their risk and safety departments and a business partner committed to their continued success.



EFORSAIR, based near Toulouse in France, is a software production company specialising in airside operational management and communication. The company's software engineers collaborated with airport clients to develop an all-in-one cloud-based software system that provides all the resources needed to manage airport operations for regulatory and compliance purposes. It provides a complete, reliable, traceable and secure digital logbook for airfield operations, fire services, hazard management, engineers and security. Data can be easily entered and retrieved from any device with one click in real time, with the system providing instant alerts for critical operational incidents and anomalies. The software enables total operational collaboration, with direct communications between all users, and is a decision-making tool for individuals, supervisors, managers and directors.



INSPIRED ENERGY, established in 2000, is now the UK's leading Independent Third-Party Intermediary working with commercial, industrial and public sector energy consumers - rated number one by leading UK energy market researchers, Cornwall Insight. The company describes its mission as being to optimise the value of every pound spent on utilities by its clients. Its 500 utility experts help on both the price and consumption sides of the cost equation. On the price side they provide assurance that clients have bought their energy professionally, accounted for it correctly and complied with their legal obligations. On the consumption side they support clients to optimise their energy usage through reducing their energy consumption, increasing their energy efficiency and delivering their Net Zero Carbon and environmental, social and corporate governance objectives.



INTEGRATION TECHNOLOGY, based in Oxfordshire, are experts in airport and baggage virus sanitisation. The company provides non-contact, solution-free 99.9% coronavirus inactivation for security screening plastic trays, baggage and sensitive equipment. Its SubZero RS170 Rapid Sanitiser can be used as a portable hand-held system for the sanitisation of sensitive equipment and all surfaces and areas with high risk of virus cross-contamination. The system can also be statically mounted and easily integrated into baggage handling systems and security screening line return conveyors to sanitise plastic trays between passengers. It promises high power, high speed sanitisation in less than eight seconds of total exposure.



URBAN AIR PURIFIER, whose main purpose is to provide good quality air and pure environments where people can breathe cleanly and safely, manufactures the top air purification devices currently available in the market. It also offers a new medium of communication, with a digital screen and updated information on the quality of the air, as well as advertising and other information. The company offers a wide range of devices that filter the 99.97% of particles in the air from 400 up to 12,000 cubic meters per hour, so any type of space can be free from contamination (NOx and PM2.5 particles) and virus. Its patented technology includes short-wave UV-C ultraviolet lamps to sterilise the air, creating safe and sustainable environments for both customers and employees. Designed and manufactured in Barcelona, all the components of the first certified air purifying device are from European sources and CE certified. The devices have already been installed in different hospitals in Spain, as well as in shopping malls, restaurants, fitness centres and offices.



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