

## Aviation and environment news - December

This second digest continues AEF's new service to provide a regular update on relevant aviation and environment news stories.

You can download a PDF copy [here](#).

### UK Airports and expansion

#### Bristol

At the start of November, Bristol Airport Action Network (BAAN) took to the High Court to challenge the legality of the Planning Inspectorate's decision to allow Bristol Airport to expand. North Somerset Council originally rejected the airport's plans to increase from 10 million annual passengers to 12 million, but, following an appeal, the decision was overturned by the Planning Inspectorate earlier this year.

Campaigner Stephen Clarke explains more about BAAN's legal challenge, which was granted permission to proceed in May, in his [article in Bristol 24/7](#). It was also covered in [The Guardian](#) and by [the BBC](#).

Local Green Councillor and co-leader of The Green Party Carla Denyer [called on the Prime Minister](#) to intervene.

The decision should be announced in the next few months.

<https://twitter.com/baancc/status/1591741976164147200>

#### Leeds Bradford

The Group for Action on Leeds Bradford Airport (GALBA) believes that the airport has operated [600 more night flights](#) than originally agreed over the summer season. Leeds City Council has begun an [investigation](#) into the allegations.

GALBA's judicial review against the Government's 'Jet Zero' strategy also continues. You can donate to support their legal challenge [here](#), and sign their petition calling for the Government to halt airport expansion plans [here](#).

#### Heathrow

Labour MP Fleur Anderson reports a [tenfold increase](#) in the number of complaints from constituents about Heathrow.

Meanwhile Virgin Atlantic, previously one of the biggest proponents of Heathrow expansion, [withdrew their support](#), though for economic rather than climate reasons.

You can read more about UK airport expansion plans on our [airports tracker webpage](#).

### **International news:**

One of the most prominent airport/environment stories over the last couple of months was France's decision to ban some short-haul domestic flights, which was approved by the EU this month. The ban covers domestic flights that could be completed by train in two and a half hours. You can read more about the decision, including the requirement for French lawmakers to review the ban after three years, [here](#).

Following a recent wave of activism against airline advertising across the globe, more than 100 demonstrators in Amsterdam were arrested in November for blocking private jets from taking off, as reported in [The Guardian](#). The Dutch government plans to cap annual flights for Schiphol airport at 11% below 2019 levels due to climate and air pollution concerns.

Research from The Economic and Social Research Institute found that most [young people in Ireland want to see non-essential domestic flights banned](#). However, young people's understanding of the climate impact of different behaviours was limited.

Meanwhile, [The Irish Examiner](#) reported a 'spectacular error' in the planning of the new runway at Dublin airport, which resulted in more houses than originally agreed needing soundproofing.

Some of the flight paths being operated are not those that were agreed to during the planning stage, with effects being felt by more [local residents](#).

A new EU deal on aviation's inclusion in the EU emissions trading system will see 'free allowances' phased out, meaning that airlines will need to pay for all their CO2 emissions on intra-EU flights. In an unprecedented move, it also includes a reporting requirement for non-CO2 effects. However, EU negotiators decided to continue to exclude long-haul flights from the scheme, as reported by campaign group [Transport and Environment](#).

In Brazil, more than 2000 wildlife strikes between animals and aircraft are reported every year, writes [Mongabay](#), and the total number could be much higher. Biodiversity impacts of aviation are often overlooked. You can find out more about the issue in the UK [here](#).

### **Reports:**

The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) published a major [study on the global application of a Frequent Flying Levy](#). It found that an FFL starting at \$9 for a person's second flight to \$177 for their twentieth could generate enough revenue to cover the cost of decarbonising the aviation sector globally. High-income countries would pay the most (67%),

while lower-income countries would contribute less. Since high-income countries have emitted about 70% of aviation CO2 over the past four decades, this suggests that the cost burden under an FFL would track historical emissions.

A [study](#) from T&E found that a kerosene tax in 2019 implemented at the same rate that motorists pay would have raised an additional £6.7 billion for the UK Treasury (when compared to revenues from Air Passenger Duty), which could have been used to aid the transition to net zero aviation.

Meanwhile, the industry, which benefits from no fuel tax and from zero rating for VAT on tickets, [continues to call](#) for Government subsidies to finance 'Jet-Zero' rather than digging into their own pockets.

While we wait for technological breakthroughs, cutting back on flying remains the best way to cut emissions. The [Travel Smart Campaign](#) published a poll revealing that 71% of UK employees believe that to reduce levels of corporate flying, a business must set targets and include travel policies. The poll surveyed 2,500 employees across 5 countries, including 500 from the UK. Not only did a large majority (68%) indicate a willingness to reduce their business flights for internal meetings, but an overwhelming majority also said that their employer should act in the fight against global warming.

Finally, The CAA has published the [outcome](#) of its consultation on a refreshed Airspace Modernisation Strategy, explaining how the 114 responses have been taken into account. The revised AMS will be published early in 2023.

## **Political updates:**

A [debate on night flights](#) was brought to the House of Commons by Liberal Democrat MP Sarah Olney. A number of MPs were present to support their communities. Olney and Munira Wilson, another Lib Dem MP whose constituents are affected, [called on the DfT](#) to ban night flights between 11 pm and 6 am.

<https://twitter.com/sarahjolney1/status/1590697460611002368>

There was also [debate in the House of Lords](#) around the 'Jet Zero' strategy, and whether or not it is consistent with the UK's sixth carbon budget. Aviation Minister Baroness Vere said that "we believe the technology-led approach is correct" and that one of the Government's policies is to "support the development of a sustainable aviation fuel industry in the UK". (AEF's views on the 'Jet Zero' Strategy are [here](#).)

In a [written letter](#) to the Treasury, Martin Vickers, Conservative MP, asked whether any assessment had been made on the number of people travelling by train between UK cities following the decision to cut Air Passenger Duty (APD) for domestic flights.

The Government launched a [consultation](#) on the 'effectiveness and efficiency' of the CAA - the aviation industry regulator. The consultation closes on the 22nd of January.

And the All Party Parliamentary Group on airport communities asked for views on its proposal for a national aviation strategy. Our response to the inquiry is [here](#).

## **Other aviation news**

Despite the headline, this [Financial Times podcast](#) covers the limits as well as the opportunities in green aviation tech, including the role of flying less to hit emission reduction targets.

The CAA's [consultation](#) into the environmental effects of a Shetland spaceport closed in December.

AEF Policy Director Cait Hewitt spoke at Travel Weekly's Sustainability Summit, warning that a reduction in flying is the only way to achieve net zero as, "aviation does not yet have the technologies ready to roll out that most other sectors do".

[https://twitter.com/The\\_AEF/status/1596205865601830919](https://twitter.com/The_AEF/status/1596205865601830919)

And the [BBC](#) asks whether air miles should be abandoned.

Till next time, we wish you a happy festive season!