

SKYPOINTER E-BULLETIN

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Luke Morgan

Dear Members

In a year that continues to present some of the biggest and unprecedented challenges our industry has faced, we will all, to some degree, have had to make adjustments and compromises to the way we live and work.

We will have had to prioritise our values and think carefully about how we deal with the effects of the Pandemic. The staff and board at the IPA are acutely aware of how challenging and potentially long lasting the variety of outcomes are for you.

We have made some tough but well-deliberated and thought-out decisions regarding finance throughout the year. These decisions are intended to ensure the long-term viability of the IPA, in order to continue to serve you, the members, while protecting our own staff. While we have seen fluctuations in membership, this is in the main for understandable reasons linked to the Pandemic fall-out. We continue to attract new membership and our financial reserve remains healthy.

We are a small but effective and efficient Union. The staff have been incredible – ‘making it work’ while maintaining our reputation for a highly professional and expert service.

The government is faced with a formidable task in looking after its citizens along with maintaining the economy. Hopefully, you will have read the letter from IPA General Secretary Phil Flower (available on the website) to Transport Secretary Grant Shapps – expressing our deep concerns over support for the aviation industry – we await a reply.

The approval of a COVID19 Vaccine offers light at the end of a dark tunnel – and more importantly a realistic hope for recovery for the industry moving into 2021.

I want to personally thank all of you for your continued membership with the IPA. I truly believe we are a partnership - and all play a part in being ready to support our members when they need advice, support, or action.

Christmas is a time to focus on our family and friends – it brings out the best in all of us - a time to prioritise what is truly important. Despite the restrictions I hope you are able to make the very best of things over the festive season.

The staff and board wish you all a very Merry Christmas - let's all look forward to a better and brighter future.

Very best wishes,

Luke Morgan

Chairman

UNION NEWSLETTER

By Phil Flower



As the end of 2020 approaches, I am sure we are all looking forward to a more normal 2021. Aviation has, to put it bluntly, been decimated. Here at the IPA we have been working continuously throughout the year to support members during this most challenging of times. Sadly, not everyone has made it through this crisis with their lives, and our thoughts are with their families and friends. We are also thinking of the many more who have lost their jobs. Christmas will be difficult this year for too many and in our view a more engaging and direct response from Government could

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have reduced this pain. Put shortly Government has been too slow to provide guidance and policy fit for the circumstances that could have kept you flying. It wasn't just about

money. The problem was and remains a lack of focus and direction.

The impact on aviation is huge but it does not stop at the door to the aircraft. Airports and surrounding communities are being savaged as well. Only

two aircraft departed from LGW yesterday, on a day which usually sees about 800 departures!

When the COVID crisis first hit we reduced our fees yet still maintained our usual personal, and high

standards of service. Sadly, we cannot keep the reduced rates in place indefinitely as like all commercial operations we need to survive to be able to support you. Unlike some companies involved in winding up businesses we don't look to make a profit out of a crisis by charging £1,000 per hour for our work. It has been reported in the press and I hope an official body is tasked to investigate the legitimacy of this.

I am pleased to be able to welcome new members; many having joined us after leaving our competitors. We are there to support and help you all, if you need help call. Do not think you are alone if a problem arises.

You will all be aware of the demise of Thomas Cook and Flybe. We understand that what is left of 'Flybe' has been purchased with an

intention of it starting up again. Some good news that is to be welcomed.

We expect flying will increase again once the vaccines have been delivered, but how long it will take to re-establish business levels is at best anyone's guess. The Vaccines are just that a vaccine to reduce chances of catching the virus, they are not a cure for it. It therefore follows that given the governments current stance on testing, that before restrictions can be fully removed there must be worldwide uptake of vaccines or a strict requirement that you produce evidence that you have been vaccinated before you can travel. So, no quick fixes without dynamic government activity! Watch this space.

I wish you all a happy and safe Christmas and a much better New Year. 🍷



ROUND-UP OF 2020

By Claire Pickford



2020 has been perhaps the most challenging year in aviation history. From the moment the (first) national commenced, the Independent Pilots Association (IPA) was there to support, advise and represent members.

Whilst unsurprisingly most of our work has been Covid19 related from March onwards, we have additionally acted in a variety of cases.

We have lodged proceedings in the Employment Tribunal on behalf of Thomas Cook and Flybe pilots. Thomas Cook claims are complicated by the company having entered compulsory liquidation, rather than administration, as was the case with Flybe. Whilst we endeavour to regularly communicate with those members we represent, most Employment Tribunal claims do progress slowly, and these two

cases are no different. The added delay is however down to tribunal offices closing due to Covid, with staff working remotely, and perhaps without the usual level of resources or support. Members should be assured that when there is an update, this will certainly be communicated.

In terms of the Thomas Cook claim, we recently lodged an application in the High Court to lift the stay of proceedings against Thomas Cook Airlines Ltd to allow a claim for a protective award to proceed. This application was quickly granted, and the Employment Tribunal has now lifted the stay.

Member communications around the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) have also been challenging. The scheme was introduced before the guidelines were finalised, and we found that

there were many iterations, changing on an almost weekly basis. We are now advising members under the provisions of the extended CJRS, the provisions of which are more in line with where we were over the summer. We have been incredibly conscious of the expectation to advise on new legislation, and we have already lodged claims in the Employment Tribunal in relation to redundancies made and the application of the CJRS. Sadly, we do not envisage any certainty for affected members in the near future.

We have been involved with the majority of UK operators to date during Covid19, either in relation to measures being adopted to mitigate redundancies (i.e., implementation of the CJRS and any additional changes), or the actual redundancy processes. Whilst we appreciate that employers have had to make hard decisions

rapidly, there is no excuse for not following clear and unambiguous processes. We have found that many operators have got themselves into difficulty in these areas.

One topic that is raised time and again is bond agreements. As a general rule of law, bond agreements are binding and enforceable. They are a contract between employer and employee. We cannot urge members enough to contact us before they sign a bond agreement, and/or before they take any steps or actions that could result in liability under the terms of a bond agreement. Employers/operators can and will seek recovery of training costs if a pilot has not adhered to the terms of the agreement. There are only very limited and exceptional circumstances when liability might be reduced, or it be determined that there is no liability.



Over the last 9 months, we have had many new members. Our greatest asset as a union is that we have a dedicated team of full-time staff who will ensure that members receive a high level of service and standard of work from us. As we deal with most UK operators, we are truly independent from any one airline, with a diverse and knowledgeable Board of Directors from both the fixed wing and rotary sectors. Feedback from many of our newer members is that we are more accessible than other unions, and that we are genuinely here to help.

We cannot get away from the fact that the impact of Covid19 is going to have long term and far reaching effects for our industry.

Our priority must be pilot retention, as most are confident that the industry will pick up. Unfortunately, specific tailored help for the aviation sector has been woefully lacking, and whilst there is positive talk about the 'future' of aviation, the Transport Minister does not seem to have answers for us as to how we get through the 'present' to ensure that there is a viable future for UK aviation. We have written to the Rt Hon Grant Shapps more than once to express the concerns of this union on behalf of its members. Responses do

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not address the specific difficulties the sector faces. Our General Secretary has also urged members to write to their won MP's, and we hope that many of you took the opportunity to do so, perhaps using the template letter provided on our website.

In summary, it has been another busy year, with much of the focus of our work being related to the global pandemic, but also ensuring that all full members, whatever their employment issue get the help they need from their union.

2021 will continue to be a tough year for aviation.

If you have colleagues who do not have union representation, we would invite you to suggest they join the IPA. The industry is in a current state of flux. We hope

for positive news for the industry in the coming year, we can also foresee continuing difficulties. Now more than ever, the value of union membership is evident.

We would like to thank all our members for their support of the IPA in 2020, and we look forward to a brighter 2021.

With warm wishes for the festive season,

From all the staff at the IPA 🚀