

Tuesday 10 September 2019 - For Immediate Release

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Photos / videos from the meeting will be uploaded here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wNk1s-yqzCOWIFtI8aGCU_7YCmCNTjAP

HEATHROW PAUSE MEET POLICE THREE DAYS BEFORE DRONE ACTION BEGINS

- Environmental activists will meet with police today at Lambeth Police Station between 9 - 11am to discuss plans to fly toy drones in the Heathrow exclusion zone
- Participants **Roger Hallam** and **Valerie Milner-Brown** will be available for photos and interviews outside the police station immediately before and after the meeting
- The planned nonviolent direct action, starting Friday 13 September at 3am, is designed to highlight the grave risk of airport expansion during the Climate and Ecological Emergency
- The full plan can be found at <https://heathrowpause.org/documents/>

On Tuesday 10th September, 9 – 11am at Lambeth Police Station: two people who have pledged to fly toy drones in Heathrow Airport’s exclusion zone will meet with the Metropolitan Police.

The two people, representing the group of individuals planning to fly drones as part of the [Heathrow Pause](#) action are:

- Valerie Milner-Brown (64, writer)
- Roger Hallam (53, organic farmer, researcher and co-founder of Extinction Rebellion)

The stated purpose of the meeting is for the activists and the police to share information, so that the action may pass off entirely peacefully and without any unforeseen difficulties for either side. Despite their intention to break the law and go to prison for it, the individuals flying drones as part of the Heathrow Pause action are utterly committed to the principles of non-violence, transparency and accountability and to cooperating with the police as far as is possible.

The meeting follows a similar meeting with the Heathrow Airport authorities on Friday 30th August, also at Lambeth Police Station, at which Heathrow Airport Sustainability Manager Matt Gorman suggested that the decision over the third runway should be put to a further vote before Parliament.

Heathrow Pause is an unaffiliated group of concerned people who feel that this disruptive action is necessary to get the Government to act on the Climate and Ecological Emergency with the urgency it deserves. They're also doing so to highlight the incompatibility of Heathrow Airport's expansion with the Government's own legally binding commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

Valerie Milner-Brown, one of the people risking prison by flying a toy drone, commented:

"I feel at the end of knowing what else to do. We know the science, we know what's already happening to communities around the world. Unprecedented extreme weather is ripping through regions and destroying lives. The breakdown of our environment spells disaster for billions. I can't with good conscience not act. I don't want to get arrested, but it feels like it's the last resort for our Government to take notice. I'm a grandmother and I care deeply about my children's and grandchildren's futures – and I would never do anything to put a life at risk.

"Which is why I'm participating in this action. By flying a drone at head height, well away from any flight path, but within the exclusion zone, I can safely break the law and make a statement about my love for our beautiful planet, the extraordinary web of life, and my fear for its destruction if we don't rapidly change and stop ludicrous plans such as the third runway at Heathrow."

Roger Hallam, one of the people risking prison by flying a toy drone, and a founding member of Extinction Rebellion, commented:

"If the science is to be believed, humankind is heading for indescribable suffering if we continue to put carbon emissions into the atmosphere. The Heathrow expansion is the biggest carbon-intensive infrastructure project in Europe. So I'll be flying a drone at head height, some distance from Heathrow. It'll be 100 percent safe and 100 percent illegal. So I'm likely to get arrested and I could be going to prison.

"So why am I doing it? I'm doing it because I'm a father. I've got children and I'm thinking about their future. I'd also like to think that I'm doing it for all the children in the world. And I'm also doing it because I'm a farmer. And as a farmer I've experienced the stress and horror of losing all my crops because of climate extremities. And I'd like to think I'm doing it for the millions of farmers around the world that have felt the same level of stress, or who are feeling the same level of horror about what's happening with the climate. And they don't have the voice that I have or able to do what I'm able to do.

"But also, maybe I'm mainly doing it because I'm trying to be a human being. And I'm 53. In a few decades I'm not going to be here anymore. Maybe in a few years. And when I die, I want to know I haven't lived a lie. And for me, I cannot pretend I don't know what needs to happen. What needs to happen is thousands of people need to create mass economic disruption and go to prison in order to force governments to protect their people and to enact legislation that will rapidly reduce carbon emissions. Simple as that."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

More about Heathrow Pause:

Our Three Objectives:

UK Government must:

1. Tell the Truth about global heating; comply with Parliament's declaration of an Environment and Climate Emergency; work with other institutions and influencers to communicate the urgency for radical new policies to halt and even reverse climate change
2. Act Now to reverse biodiversity loss and reduce CO2 emissions to net zero by 2025.
3. Go Beyond Politics by creating and being led by the decisions of a competent, well informed and properly resourced Citizens' Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice.

Safety Measures and Protocols:

To ensure no living being is harmed, the action will have strict safety measures and protocols:

1. Head height – Drones will be flown no higher than at head height. The relevant government legislation, (The Air Navigation Order 2016 SI 2016 No. 765), deems 400ft to be hazardous. A 6-foot (183cm) maximum height is not in breach of this and clearly no risk to aircraft.
2. Small toy drones – Drones will be small and lightweight. The relevant government legislation, (Air Navigation Order 2016 SI 2016 No. 765), deems 7kg (excluding fuel) to be hazardous. Our tiny toy drones are clearly no risk to aircraft.
3. Not within flight paths – If deployed as part of a planned action, drones may be flown at just above head height in the restricted 5km zone surrounding Heathrow but NOT within flight paths. As an example, advance notice could be given that a drone might be flown just above head height in a public park in West Drayton, presenting the airport authorities with the advance decision to safely close air space for the duration of this action.
4. 1 hour's advance notice – Heathrow Airport Authority will be given at least 1 hour's advance notice before each drone flight.
5. Early start – Drone use will start early (3am) before most night flights which run 4.30-6.00am, and scheduled flights, which run from 6am-11.30pm. The airport authority will therefore have the choice of not initiating flights when drones are in the air.
6. Call the police once completed – Drone pilots will telephone the police after their drone flight is completed for the day and wait peacefully to be arrested.
7. Regular intervals – Drones will fly at regular intervals throughout the day. Continual drone flights during the day will ensure that, to comply with Heathrow's own rules, no aircraft flights take place.

8. Emergencies – In the case of a genuine emergency all drone use will stop immediately. A direct communication hotline between the authorities and the action groups will be set up, to ensure fluent communication.
9. Advance notice – The authorities and public will have suitable advance notice of the start date and time. We hope this will also give members of the public sufficient time to make alternative travel arrangements if needed.

If a breach of these protocols should occur we can stop the action immediately, and advise the authorities accordingly through the 'hotline' set up for this purpose. Our protocols ensure this will be a nonviolent action. There is nothing violent about flying drones when there are no scheduled flights in the air. Initiating those scheduled flights is the sole responsibility of the airport authorities.

Likely Legal Consequences:

All participants flying drones know they risk arrest and imprisonment, and are prepared to be arrested peacefully. Our readiness and courage are based on the conviction that:

1. Our actions are a humanitarian act intended to save millions of innocent lives that will be lost if carbon emissions are not drastically reduced.
2. This is an act of conscience. We cannot live in peace with ourselves knowing that inaction will cost us the future. Faced with the prospect of such disaster, no rational, mindful person can live with the thought of having done nothing to prevent it. Our moral code is rooted in the principle of doing unto others as we would have them do unto us. We seek to save the lives of strangers because we believe they would do the same for us. Our conscience dictates that we act, for the good of us all.
3. This action is proportionate with the threat we face. If anything, it is comically modest. The death of millions versus flying a drone at an altitude of six feet? Really? It is a citizen's right and duty to bypass a law if not doing so will result in greater harm to life and property. We act out of necessity to protect our children, our fellows, and all the other lives that travel with us on this Earth.

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