

# Climate activists fly toy drones near Heathrow airport; 11 arrested so far

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## [Photos / videos available here](#)

- 3 Attempted drone flights near Heathrow airport this morning, at least one was successful.
- 11 climate activists, mostly from **Heathrow Pause**, have been arrested last night and this morning for charges including 'conspiracy to commit a public nuisance'.
- So far no suspended flights at Heathrow

**There have been 3 drone flights so far this morning. Some were interrupted by signal jamming, but at least one toy drone was flown at head height near the airport.**

**Following preemptive arrests yesterday, three toy drone pilots have been arrested this morning, including James, Marko and Steffen. Also Frank, who was live streaming the action. More flights are planned through the day.**

So far, the airport has not cancelled any flights, although there have been drone flights within the 5km exclusion zone around the airport. The action has been within the exclusion zone, but outside the airport. Some pilots have handed themselves over to police inside the airport after their flight.

On Thursday, seven people were arrested on a charge of 'conspiracy to commit a public nuisance' for intending to protest against the construction of a third runway at Heathrow airport, and seeking to draw attention to the aviation industry's role in deepening the climate crisis. Three pilots were arrested: Roger Hallam, Mike Lynch-White, and Valerie Milner-Brown. Also Howard Rees, a press liaison officer, and Andrew Medhurst, an administrator. A further, as yet unconfirmed arrest was announced.

Aviation passenger numbers could double to 8.2 billion 2037 [1]. This, at a time when the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** has told us we have now just 11 years to

take radical, decisive action if we are to curb emissions and stay below 1.5 degrees warming [2].

The Drone Pilots, following agreed safety precautions and their principle of non-violence, had warned police and airport authorities in advance that the drones would be flown. They were prepared to be arrested for this.

**Responding to news of the arrests, a Heathrow Pause spokesperson said:**

**“We must reiterate that interrupting the Airport and disturbing scores of travellers was never the ultimate goal of this action. The real objective was always to trigger a sensible, honest conversation, throughout society, on the dangerous folly of Heathrow expansion, with the ultimate objective of cancelling the third runway. That conversation is now happening. It is incumbent on all of us to keep it going.”**

James Brown, a pilot, said before he handed himself into police:

“I wish I did not have to disrupt people’s plans, but I have been left with no other choice. Even though Parliament has formally recognised the climate emergency we are facing, our own government is still pursuing plans to build a third runway at Heathrow;. This hypocrisy, and the general negligence of the aviation industry to face up to its contribution to the climate emergency, has forced me into considering arrest and, if necessary, imprisonment, to wake people up to the dire situation we are in.”

1. <https://www.airlines.iata.org/news/passenger-numbers-to-hit-82bn-by-2037-iata-report>

2. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

## **Notes to Editors:**

### **More about Heathrow Pause:**

Our Three Objectives:

UK Government must:

1. Tell the Truth about global heating, and Government plans to bring it under control.
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.

The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued a stark warning that we have only eleven years to implement the radical policies that might hold Global Heating to just 1.5°. The alternative is an uncontrollable global disaster. On May 1st Parliament acknowledged this, by declaring a Climate & Environmental Emergency. Our Government must immediately start work with private and public agencies, institutions and influencers to communicate and implement the urgent, radical new policies needed to halt - and then reverse - global climate change.

### **Safety Measures and Protocols:**

To ensure no living being is harmed, the action has 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 is 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 well below this, and pose 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 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 suggest that, if Heathrow is to comply with its own rules, no aircraft flights will 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.

### **Legal Considerations:**

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 inevitably 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 not acting 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. How can you equate the death of millions with flying a drone at an altitude of six feet? 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. If your neighbour's house is on fire, you can knock down her door to rescue her. We act out of necessity to protect our children, our fellows, and all the other lives that travel with us on this Earth.