

# Statement to Parliament: Update on Monarch Airlines: 9 October 2017

Mr Speaker, with permission I would like to make a statement about the steps the government has been taking to support those affected by the collapse of Monarch Airlines, in particular the 110,000 passengers this left abroad without a flight back to the UK and the almost 2,000 people who have lost their jobs.

Mr Speaker, this situation is deeply regrettable and all parties considered options to avoid the collapse of the company. Ultimately, however, Monarch's board took the decision to place it into administration and it [ceased trading at around 4am on Monday 2nd October \(2017\)](#). The engineering arm of the group remains a viable business and continues to trade.

Ahead of the collapse my department had been working closely with the [Civil Aviation Authority \(CAA\)](#) and several departments across Whitehall to prepare contingency plans, and the response has been swift and substantial.

To put this into some context, this is the largest operation of its kind ever undertaken and has meant the CAA has essentially set up one of the UK's largest airlines in order to conduct this operation.

To give members a sense of the scale:

- we have put arrangements in place to bring back 110,000 people to the UK
- this requires 700 flights over a 2 week period
- a maximum of 35 aircraft in operation at one time
- the CAA are working with 27 different airlines, more than 200 CAA staff working on the project with thousands more in partner organisations
- there are over 40 airports involved – in the UK, around the Mediterranean and beyond
- it has required 267 coaches carrying over 13,000 passengers
- so far there have been over 39,000 calls to our customer service centres, all swiftly answered by more than 250 call centre staff
- there have been over 1,000,000 unique visitors to a dedicated website [monarch.caa.co.uk](http://monarch.caa.co.uk) – and 7,000,000 page views
- furthermore more than a million people have been reached through our Facebook promotion
- and there have been 10 government departments and agencies involved, including the FC0 in London and our extensive diplomatic and consular network in the affected countries

I have seen first-hand the work being done across government and the CAA to make this operation a success and spoken to some of the passengers who have returned to the UK on government flights. I have been hugely impressed by what I have seen and the response from passengers has been overwhelmingly positive – with many praising the CAA and government themselves for a well-organised and professional response.

Normally, the CAA's responsibility for bringing passengers back would extend only to customers whose [trips are covered by ATOL](#). However this is the largest airline failure in UK history and there would have been insufficient capacity in the commercial aviation market to enable passengers to get home on other airlines. With tens of thousands of passengers abroad and with no easy means of returning to the UK, I therefore instructed the CAA to ensure all those currently abroad were offered an alternative flight home.

As of last night, around 80,000 passengers have returned to the UK – almost three quarters of the total number who were abroad at the time of the collapse. We have also deployed teams of government officials to overseas airports to provide advice and assistance to passengers.

Mr Speaker, despite robust plans and their success so far, this is a hugely distressing situation for all concerned. One of my top priorities has been to help those passengers abroad get safely back to the UK.

## **Employees**

But in addition to supporting passengers, we have also been working across government to ensure the almost 2,000 former Monarch employees receive the support they need.

I am pleased to report that airlines have already been directly appealing to Monarch's former employees. For instance, Virgin Atlantic are offering a fast track recruitment process for cabin crew and pilots, and easyJet have invited applications for 500 cabin crew vacancies. EasyJet are also calling for direct-entry Captains or First Officers who meet Captain qualifications.

All former Monarch employees will have received information from [Jobcentre Plus](#) outlining the support available to them. In total, Jobcentre Plus has pulled together a list of more than 6,300 vacancies across the major UK based airlines – around 3 times the number of people made redundant – which will help former Monarch employees remain in the airline industry.

Both I and the Aviation Minister have been in contact with those members whose constituencies will have been hardest hit by these job losses, and given assurances that we will work with the industry to offer what support we can.

## **Taxpayer**

However, I am also aware of the duty this government has to the taxpayer, and while affected passengers have been told they will not have to pay to be flown back to the UK, we have entered into discussions with several third parties with a view to recovering some of the costs of this operation.

The ATOL scheme will of course provide the financial cover for those with ATOL protection. We are currently engaged in constructive discussions with the relevant credit and debit card providers in order that we might recoup from them some of the cost to taxpayers of these repatriation flights. We are also having similar discussions with other travel providers through which passengers may have booked a Monarch holiday and I would like to thank them

for their constructive behaviour and approach.

Mr Speaker, the initial response to this unprecedented situation would not have been as successful were it not for the support and cooperation of many players.

The loss of a major British brand, which was close to celebrating its half-century, is undoubtedly a sad moment. However this should not be seen as a reflection on the general health of the UK aviation industry, which continues to thrive.

We have never had the collapse of an airline or holiday company on this scale before. We have responded swiftly and decisively. Right now our efforts are rightly focused on getting employees into new jobs, and passengers home. But then our efforts will turn to working through the reforms necessary to ensure passengers do not find themselves in this position again. We need to look at all the options, not just ATOL, but also whether it is possible for airlines to be able to wind down in an orderly manner and look after their customers themselves without the need for government to step in. This is where we will focus our efforts in the weeks and months ahead.

This has been an unprecedented response to an unprecedented situation, and I am grateful to all parties who have stepped in to support those affected.

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## **[News story: Webinar – 17 Oct – Prompt Payment](#)**

Tune in to this webinar with Emma Jones and Stephen Tokley (CCS Policy), to understand the government's payment policy for SME suppliers and the responsibility on large and strategic suppliers to sign up to the Prompt Payment Code. Questions on getting paid by the public sector or its major suppliers? This is the webinar for you.

Click [here](#) to register.

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## **[Press release: UK Government in Wales Minister in export push at global](#)**

## Welsh whisky firm

Minister for the UK Government in Wales, Guto Bebb MP is today (9 October) visiting Welsh whisky distillery, Penderyn to highlight the vast opportunities that await companies with the drive to get out into the wider world, to trade and do business right around the globe.

Penderyn, based near the Brecon Beacons National Park, has rapidly grown its brand since its creation in 2000. The company now exports to international markets in 25 countries including China, Russia, Australia and, more recently, Japan as the appetite for the locally produced single malt whiskies and spirits spreads worldwide.

The visit comes following the Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns recent trade mission to Japan where he met leading international companies to discuss the great potential for further inward investment in the United Kingdom. The UK Government in Wales will also aim to introduce other Welsh businesses to Japanese investors this week at a reception in Gwydyr House in London on Wednesday evening.

### **Minister for the UK Government in Wales, Guto Bebb MP said:**

Penderyn is a fantastic example of a local Welsh business with a world-wide reputation. The company is showcasing the very best of Wales on the international stage and paving the way for other Welsh businesses to become export success stories too.

Penderyn is a business that adds real value to the regional economy in the Welsh Valleys – both in manufacturing and also more recently in the tourism business. It is no surprise that thousands of people visit the distillery every year to see the quality of Welsh whisky and the strength of our food and drink industry.

As Britain prepares to leave the European Union, now is the time to explore new opportunities for trade and export further afield. The UK Government will fully support all Welsh businesses who are eager to seek out new markets overseas.

Wales is already an exporting nation. In 2016 there were more than 3,800 businesses exporting in Wales with an annual combined value of £12.4bn exports. Now, Ministers are urging other business to take up the support on offer including financial incentives and online matching services.

The Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns has recently written to over 26,000 Welsh businesses identified as potential exporters including a copy to the Wales Export Guide. The Wales specific guide sets out the full range of support available to Welsh businesses from the UK Government and contains inspiring stories of companies based in Wales that are successfully

exporting.

## Notes to editors

- Penderyn is a Welsh whisky distillery and brand, producing the first whisky made in Wales since the 19th century. Before this whisky was produced in Wales since the 4th century.
- Penderyn is distilled and produced at the Penderyn Distillery is situated in the southern tip of the Brecon Beacons National Park, in the village of Penderyn, Rhondda Cynon Taf, in the Cynon Valley, from which the brand takes its name. The site was chosen because of its own supply of natural spring water.
- The company initially began in 2000 as the Welsh Whisky Company. Whisky had previously been distilled in Wales for centuries, but ceased in 1894.
- Penderyn became the first whisky to be manufactured in Wales for over a century when sales started on St David's Day in 2004 at a launch with HRH Prince Charles. It remains the only whisky currently produced in Wales.
- The company opened up a visitors centre in June 2008, with Prince Charles, Prince of Wales leading the proceedings. The visitors centre now sees more than 35,000 visitors per annum.

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## [News story: Find out how you can join the commemorations on Sunday 12 November](#)

On Sunday 12 November 2017, the National Service of Remembrance will be held at the Cenotaph on Whitehall, London.

Starting at 11am, the service will commemorate the contribution of British and Commonwealth military and civilian servicemen and women involved in the two World Wars and later conflicts.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) is the coordinator

of the event, alongside colleagues from across government, the Armed Forces and veterans' organisations.

No tickets or passes are needed for the event and the public are welcome to watch the ceremony from the pavements along Whitehall and Parliament Street. There will be video screens north of the Cenotaph, near the green outside the main Ministry of Defence building and mounted outside the Scotland Office and south of the Cenotaph on the corner of King Charles Street. If you are thinking of attending the commemorations in London, please note the schedule of the event below:

### **Attending and taking part**

- 08:00: Whitehall opens to the public. The public are advised to arrive early to secure a good view, as space is limited. Please allow time to clear the police security procedures and you are advised not to bring suitcases or large bags.
- 09:00: Royal British Legion (RBL) detachments form up on Horse Guards Parade and in Whitehall.
- 10:00: All detachments march out from Wellington Barracks.
- 11:00: Two minutes silence marked by the firing of guns from King's Troop on Horse Guards Parade. Cenotaph Service commences.
- 11:25: Cenotaph Service concludes and Royal British Legion detachments disperse past the Cenotaph.

### **Security Information**

Extensive police security procedures will be in place on the day. Please allow plenty of time for clearance through security. We advise against bringing large bags or cases as these could delay your entrance into the public viewing areas. Please note that the unauthorised use of any drones (including quadcopters/helicopters) in this area and the roads surrounding Whitehall is strictly prohibited at all times.

### **Further information**

- Queries about the march past should contact the Royal British Legion at [cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk).
- Photography is permitted, but the Metropolitan Police have powers to remove obstacles (such as camera tripods) where they obstruct public access or views. We ask spectators not to take photographs during the 2 minute silence when shutter noises can offend.
- A space will be available for wheelchair users and other spectators who might find it difficult to view from the general public areas. This area is located on the west side of Parliament Street, close to the junction with King Charles Street. Space in this enclosure will be offered on a first come, first served, basis only. One carer or guest per person will also be admitted and a toilet for the use of disabled people will be available nearby.
- Temporary public toilets will be located in Whitehall Place. First aid facilities, provided by St John's Ambulance, will be available at various locations along Whitehall, whilst their personnel will also be

patrolling the area.

- Please note that due to the number of people likely to attend, it may be difficult for you to leave Whitehall before the end of the RBL march past. If you do not wish to stay for the march past, we recommend that you position yourself close to an exit point.

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## **Press release: Stewartby public consultation deadline extended**

The Environment Agency has extended the deadline for its public consultation on the draft environmental permit for the proposed energy from waste facility at Rookery Pit, Stewartby, Bedfordshire, which would be operated by Covanta Energy Limited.

The public consultation period has been extended by 2 weeks and will now run from 11 September to 7 November 2017 to allow people more time to read all the available information.

A permit will only be issued by the Environment Agency if it is satisfied that the facility will be designed, built, operated and maintained in such a way that the requirements of the relevant EU Directives are met and that human health and the environment are protected.

This will be decided following consultation with the relevant local councils and their health departments, the Food Standards Agency, Public Health England, the Health and Safety Executive and other identified statutory consultees.

People wanting to provide comments to be considered during the determination by the Environment Agency should send them to: [psc@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:psc@environment-agency.gov.uk) or write to: Environment Agency, Permitting Support Centre, Land Team, Quadrant 2, 99 Parkway Avenue, Sheffield, S9 4WF.

Please quote permit application number EPR/WP3234DY/A001.

To provide comments online and to view the documents that form part of this consultation, please follow this [link](#)

Interested parties can also make an appointment to view a copy of the draft permit and draft decision document at the local Environment Agency office, located at: Bromholme Lane, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4NE.