

# Aviation Climate Alliance



Aviation  
Communities  
Forum



## About the ACA

The Aviation Climate Alliance is an association of existing groups who share a concern about the impact of aviation on climate change. The ACA is a forum for focusing on that subject, with the objective of harnessing the collective strength of participants to produce positive change.

Not all participants have exactly the same views but we do have a common aim of reducing aviation's impact on the environment and a commitment to open debate of the means of achieving that aim.

## About this communication

This newsletter is the first communication under the ACA banner. The intention is to bring together the mass of information, speculation and proposals being discussed for what a post-Covid-19 aviation industry could look like, and for how we use the opportunity of the hiatus in flying to make impending climate breakdown a clear priority for our future transport system.

Hence this particular newsletter functions as a gathering of information already extant. Future communications will present more detailed debates around particular aspects, but our initial intention is to show that the diversity of material presented or linked here clearly demonstrates that this is a real movement - not just the ideas of one or two isolated individuals.

We hope you find it useful. We want the alliance to grow - any and all organisations, campaign groups and activists with a positive contribution to make are welcome.

### **Air France bail-out and green strings**

An article entitled [Airline bail-outs - has Air France been tied down by 'green-strings'?](#) by one of our members, Calum Harvey-Scholes, published on the Stay Grounded web site, discusses the conundrum facing the French

state and Air France in seeking to meet binding climate commitments while also remaining profitable in conventional terms. Calum proposes that a 'sector led Covid-19 recovery package might be the way to resolve this apparent dichotomy.

## Letter from the ACA to the Guardian

*This letter, submitted to the Guardian, sets out the ACA's position.*

Dear Editor

Your report on BA's financial situation (*British Airways owner reports £1.5bn loss due to coronavirus, 7 May*) notes the 'swingeing job cuts and savings' at BA and Aer Lingus. Previous reports argued that such job losses may represent an opportunistic attempt to cut costs through reduced pay and protections for workers. A number of airlines are seeking government financial support at the same time as laying off workers, and provide just one example of a much wider problem: the aviation sector failing to meet its social and environmental responsibilities.

The use of public money to rescue airlines should be tied to requirements to tackle climate change while protecting workers. These should include: legislating for aviation emissions to be included in UK carbon budgets; delivering an absolute reduction in carbon emissions and intensity; cutting flights where they compete with rail; ending tax exemptions for airlines; and providing support for a transition to greener jobs.

There is widespread public support for using this opportunity to build a better future. Instead of endless aviation expansion, we need a sustainable transport system and an economy that meets people's needs for the long-term. The climate crisis will still be with us once the pandemic subsides and, having learned that a different world is possible, we must ensure that decisions made now are consistent with our goal of a zero carbon society in which all sectors contribute their fair share.

## Campaign Against Climate Change event

This online event is taking place on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 18.00 – 19.30



The coronavirus pandemic is not just a public health crisis but one of inequality. The fatal flaws it reveals in our system are the same ones driving the climate and ecological crisis.

During this public health crisis we have seen governments suddenly find the financial and political resources to bail out sectors of the economy - on a scale previously derided as impossible to deal with the climate crisis.

The choices made now could push us deeper into crisis, worsening inequality globally, creating huge job losses and worsening the climate and ecological crisis through bailing out climate polluters in aviation and fossil fuel industries. Or we could seize this opportunity. In this webinar our speakers will discuss how we can mobilise for a just transformation of society, which has never been more urgent.

## PCS strategy to protect members

As well as dealing with individual employer-based negotiations, PCS is looking to a broader strategy to protect our members in the aviation sector. [Attached](#) is the text of a parliamentary briefing that represents the first steps in this strategy, to make MPs aware of the impact of the aviation industry's Covid-19 response on our members.

## Save People Not Planes

Stay Grounded, the global anti-expansion movement has published an [open letter](#) to national governments, titled 'red lines for aviation bail-outs'.

April 2020  
International Open Letter to the Respective Governments

### #SavePeopleNotPlanes: Red Lines for Aviation Bailouts



In the middle of the ongoing Corona crisis, while the world struggles against the virus and countless workers are losing their incomes, the aviation industry is demanding huge and unconditional taxpayer-backed bailouts. Yet, in recent years, the industry strongly opposed any attempts to end its unfair tax exemptions and refused to contribute meaningfully to global emission reduction goals – which would require measures to significantly reduce the scale of aviation.

Not only is aviation already responsible for 5–8% of global climate impact, mostly caused by a wealthy minority of frequent flyers, but the sector also assumes that it can continue growing. Enormous profits were made in the last decades, off the backs of low-paid workers and to the detriment of the climate.

Workers affected by the current crisis need support, but we should not let the aviation industry get away with privatising profits while the public pays for its losses. Without addressing the structural problems that have left our societies and economies so vulnerable to crises like this one, we will be even more vulnerable to the next ones as inequalities between and within countries continue to grow and the ecological and climate emergencies worsen.

Bailouts must not allow the aviation sector to return to business as usual after Covid-19 has been defeated; any public money has to ensure that workers and the climate are put first.

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The letter argues for opposition to unconditional bail-outs for aviation using taxpayer money, and demands protection for workers first, and that efforts are directed to building a climate safe transport sector, and resilience for future crises. Currently 346 organisations have endorsed or signed up to the letter, along with over 300 scientists and experts.

There is also a [petition](#), echoing the sentiments of the open letter, and we would encourage all readers of this newsletter to sign up.

## Possible letter to the Chancellor

A [high profile letter](#) was written by solicitors Leigh Day on behalf of climate action charity Possible and sent to the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak MP, on 4 May 2020. The letter makes the case against unconditional airline bailouts, and calls for any funding provided to be conditional on support for workers in the industry and emissions reductions, couching the demands in legal terms as regards the UK's carbon targets.

A reply was received and is attached here.



CX letter to Leigh  
Day 15 05 2020.pdf

Possible is also working with the New Economics Foundation on a report that foregrounds the need to support workers while also advocating transformative policies for the future of aviation and impact on the climate generally.

## Reforming aviation letter

The Aviation Communities Forum, which represents around 25 local community groups, sent a [reforming aviation letter to the secretary of state](#). The opening of the letter states its purpose:

“A far-reaching review of the aviation industry and the regulatory mechanisms through which it is overseen is long overdue and should be carried out urgently in light of recent events. The intention to carry out such a review should be a condition of, and announced in parallel with, any “bail out” of UK aviation businesses resulting from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.”

### Recent media stories

The sudden absence of flying and the associated environmental benefits in light of the Covid-19 crisis and the opportunity for change that the hiatus represents – a core element of the aviation climate alliance’s raison d’être - has been echoed by others, including the following in the *Guardian*:

[George Monbiot - airlines on the brink - no lifeline](#)

[jonathan watts is covid-19 crisis catalyst for greening of airlines](#)

And this one in the May edition of *Tribune*:

[magill townsend time for labour to be bold on airline crisis](#)

### Airport expansions

**Leeds Bradford** airport has submitted a planning application to replace the existing terminal building in anticipation of plans to expand from 4 million to 7 million passengers a year. With a clear negative impact on the climate, and the drop in flying as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, we encourage activists and groups to lodge their objections as part of the [public consultation](#) which closes on June 15. Further information can be found [here](#).

While the **third runway at Heathrow** may be off the agenda, at least pending HAL’s appeal against the decision of the courts, two reports commissioned by the No Third Runway Coalition and produced by the New Economics Foundation, covering the true costs of the runway, are well worth reading:

[Baggage Claim](#)  
[Flying Low](#)

### Demand to re-think Greater Manchester aid package

An [open letter](#) was sent to ten Manchester borough councils by eleven locally based organisations calling for a re-think of the £250M aid package to Manchester Airports Group. The letter expresses solidarity with workers at the airport and argues for their redeployment, seeks the re-direction of funds towards green infrastructure projects, and demands ‘a recovery that is just and fair’. The story is reported in [the meteor](#).

### Build Back Better

This is an organisation dedicated to the issue of what the post-pandemic world. The web site notes that ‘what we do next could change everything. As the world recovers, we have a chance to reset the clock and build back better than before’. BBB UK is seeking support, participants and signatories, so please check the [what we want](#) page for an elaboration of the envisaged programme.

### Just transition workers panel

PCS is participating in, and helping to shape, debates about the future of the aviation industry, and how that fits into a vision of a different social and economic model to the one that has caused such hardship to so many.

On 12 May, a panel on Just Transition was organised by Labour for a Green New Deal and, along with representatives from the rail and oil industries, also included PCS aviation group president Tahir Latif whose [contribution can be read here](#).