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UK Civil Aviation Authority

Minutes of the 603rd Meeting held on 16th September 2026, 11:00, Aviation House & Teams

Attendees:

Sir Stephen Hillier (Chair); Katherine Corich (Non-Executive Director); Jordan Giddings (Non-Executive Director); Manny Lewis (Senior Independent Director); Trisha McAuley (Non-Executive Director); Crispin Orr (Non-Executive Director); Charmion Pears (Non-Executive Director); AVM Cab Townsend (Ex-Officio Non-Executive Director)

Rob Bishton (Chief Executive); Giancarlo Buono (Group Director, Safety & Airspace Regulation); Tracey Martin (Chief Financial & Operations Officer)

Jonathan Spence (General Counsel & Company Secretary)

Present:

Tim Johnson (Director, Consumers and Markets Group, and Chief of Staff);

Karen St.Jean-Kufuor (Next Gen NED); Jo Martin (Head of Special Legislative Projects) (Items VI-VII and IX-XII)

Briar Mulholland (Head of the Office of Chair and CEO); Graeme Paterson (Board & ExCo Operations Lead)

Andrew Walker (Items V and VIII); Lou Braham, Simone Freire, Charlie Reynolds, Chris Whitehurst (Item VI); Alex Bobocica, Laurence Crook (Item VIII); Ray Forster, Ben Lippitt, Sophie O'Sullivan, Paul Sall (Item IX); James Bell, Niall Erskine, Padhraic Kelleher, Nic Stevenson (Item X)

I. Welcomes, Apologies & Conflict of Interest Declarations

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Although apologies had been sent, the Board noted that Anne Heal had joined the Board in August.
2. Apologies had been received from Anne Heal and Selina Chadha. It was noted that this would be Selina Chadha's final Board meeting.
3. No conflicts of interest were declared.

II. Approved Minutes of Previous Meetings & Matters Arising

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4. *Minutes* - The minutes of the July Extraordinary and regularly scheduled Board meeting were noted as having been approved out of committee.
5. *Actions* – The Board noted the updates on the actions.

III. Chair's Report (BRD-2026-054) By Sir Stephen Hillier

6. The Board noted the paper.

IV. Board Effectiveness Review – Implementation of Recommendations (BRD-2026-055) By Sir Stephen Hillier

7. The Board noted the paper.

V. CEO Report (BRD-2026-056) By Rob Bishton

8. **DECISION:** The Board approved the CAA's Modern Slavery Statement. This would be signed by the General Counsel & Company Secretary, with copies published on the CAA website and in the Home Office's statement repository.
9. In anticipation of future statements, the Board emphasised the importance of the CAA being able to demonstrate that suppliers were managing modern slavery risks across the lifetime of contracts, and reserve the right to seek that assurance at any time.
10. *Internal Matters* - The Board was provided with an overview of the CAA's current activities and the planning work that was underway in the run-up to the end of the current financial year.

VI. CEO Whistleblowing, Feedback and Insights Report (BRD-2026-060) By Tim Johnson and Jonathan Spence

11. Jo Martin and Karen St. Jean-Kufuor joined the meeting.
12. The Board received the annual report on arrangements for monitoring and analysing complaints, whistleblowing disclosures and internal confidential reporting. This was the third iteration of the report, with the first having been developed following the Post Office Horizon Inquiry, and was intended to provide greater assurance over emerging issues, stakeholder experience and organisational culture.
13. The Board noted that complaint volumes remained relatively modest in comparison with the wider sector and that the evidence available did not indicate systemic failings or issues. Members welcomed the continued focus on enhancing existing processes and organisational learning.
14. The importance of triangulating information from these and other feedback mechanisms to identify themes, emerging risks and potential underlying issues was emphasised.
15. The Board considered opportunities to improve consistency in complaints handling and noted that strengthened root cause analysis and lessons learned arrangements had supported the identification of recurring themes and improvement actions. The Board welcomed the

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alignment of this work with wider Customer Experience and Modernisation programme.

16. The Board discussed the use of artificial intelligence in correspondence management and noted its potential to support consistency through the use of precedent material and approved templates. Members also noted guidance regarding the limitations of AI-generated submissions and discussed whether correspondents should be invited to disclose the use of AI when making submissions.
17. The Board received an update on whistleblowing arrangements and reporter experience. Members noted the challenges associated with measuring satisfaction, particularly where reports were submitted anonymously, as well as the limitations imposed by the Prescribed Persons framework and legal restrictions on the feedback that could be provided. Efforts were made, where appropriate, to provide greater assurance and feedback than the minimum statutory requirements.
18. The Board noted enhancements to the Internal Confidential Reporting process, including strengthened feedback arrangements, post-closure engagement and retaliation checks.
19. It was confirmed that service level agreements for the initial review and triaging of Internal Confidential Reports and external whistleblowing reports were in place. However, due to the nature and complexity of reports, it was difficult to put an SLA in place for resolution.
20. The Board welcomed the progress made in strengthening complaints, whistleblowing and internal concerns reporting arrangements and supported the continued focus on oversight, consistency, organisational learning and continuous improvement. For future reports, it was suggested that it may be beneficial to include an analysis of external whistleblowing reports, including details of the entities involved and type of report received.

VII. Reviews under Regulation 6 of the Civil Aviation Regulations 1991 (BRD-2026-061) By Jonathan Spence

21. The Board welcomed the update and was assured of the effectiveness of the Regulation 6 process.
22. Jo Martin and Karen St. Jean-Kufuor were recused from the meeting.

VIII. CMG Report (BRD-2026-059) By Tim Johnson

23. The Board noted the update on workstreams within CMG.

IX. SARG Report (BRD-2026-057) By Giancarlo Buono

24. Jo Martin and Karen St. Jean-Kufuor re-joined the meeting.
25. The Board was updated on the appointment of a new Director of Airspace and Air Traffic Management Infrastructure and progress on work to procure and deliver a new oversight tool.
26. *Appendix 1* - The Board noted the quarterly update on safety risk management activities.

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27. *Appendix 2* - The Board noted the independent review of air displays had now concluded.
28. The Board discussed the importance of clearly defining responsibilities across the various organisations involved in air display safety and noted the need to demonstrate a clear line of improvement from the Air Accidents Investigation Branch's recommendations, subsequent safety enhancements and the findings of this independent review. The Board also emphasised the importance of ensuring that safety considerations extended beyond the airfield itself to encompass the wider environment affected by air displays.
29. *Appendix 3* – The Board was provided with a stocktake of the Future of Flight programme.
30. Work to develop a benefits realisation framework for the Future of Flight programme was underway. This was focused not just on benefits to the CAA, but to the wider UK economy and society.
31. With the scaling up of drone and RPAS use, it was recognised that the need to engage with multiple regulators and authorities could create complexity for operators. However, the CAA was taking steps to work more closely with other organisations and highlight to operators, the actions they might need to take to support their activities.
32. *Appendix 4* – The Board was updated on changes to the Air Navigation Direction, Guidance and consequential amendments to the CAP 1616 Airspace Change Process.
33. The Board was advised that the new arrangements provided a more robust mechanism for balancing considerations including safety, capacity, environmental impacts and noise.
34. It was anticipated that the arrangements would help to reduce the regulatory burden associated with making airspace changes. The Board emphasised the importance of being able to demonstrate that expected benefits were being realised in practice.

X. Enabling Aviation's Use of Artificial Intelligence (BRD-2026-058) By Tim Johnson

35. The Board was updated on work undertaken to engage with industry stakeholders on their current and planned use of artificial intelligence.
36. The Board welcomed the update and highlighted the importance of ensuring that the CAA had the right capabilities in place to effectively regulate more widespread use of artificial intelligence.

XI. Summary Report of the People Committee Meeting held on 15th September 2026 (Verbal Update) By Manny Lewis

37. The Board was updated on the People Committee's discussions on the ongoing delivery of the People Strategy. This was welcomed, as was work to monitor culture and organisational health.
38. The Committee had also discussed changes to the mid-year review process – these would take effect from the next financial year.

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Reflections had also been shared on the efficacy of the performance related pay award model utilised at the CAA.

XII. Draft October Board and Forward Agenda

39. The Board noted the draft agendas for October's Board meeting and awayday. Confirmation of timings for these events would be provided in due course.

XIII. Any Other Business

40. *Katherine Corich* – On the occasion of her final meeting, the Board expressed its thanks and appreciation of the contribution made by Katherine Corich and wished her well for the future.