FOURTEEN UK AIRFIELDS NOW TRAIL BLAZING ELECTRIC AVIATION - BBGA

News / Business aviation



The British Business General Aviation Association is pleased to champion innovation stemming from general aviation. Did you know? we now have 14 airfields around the UK with resident electric-powered aircraft. Fairoaks Airport in Chobham, Surrey, has just become the latest to receive a Pipistrel Velis Electro, the only electric aircraft to date certificated for passenger flight by the UK Civil Aviation Authority. The leased aircraft has joined Synergy Flight Training from UK Distributor NEBOair. It is operating in collaboration with sustainability solutions pioneer 4AIR, a Flexjet sister company and BBGA member.

Synergy Flight Training and 4AIR are partnering to bring a new era of decarbonised flying, enabling future pilots to be trained on fully electric aircraft in the South of England, mirroring operations at SaxonAir Aviation Training at Norwich Airport.

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Fairoaks and Norwich Airports join Duxford Airport, home of the British clean-tech innovator Faradair; Great Oakley Airfield; Humberside Airport, home of Eastern Airways; Old Buckenham Airfield, Popham Aerodrome, RAF Cranwell, Redhill Aerodrome, Rochester Airport, Sibson Aerodrome, Shipmeadow and Wickenby Aerodrome, in having resident Pipistrel Velis Electro aircraft, with charging supported by NEBOair.



An additional 36 airfields taking charging infrastructure

Supporting the all-important infrastructure needed for the first all-electric aircraft, London-based Aerovolt, specialists in smart charging for electric aircraft, have deployed, or are in the throes of deploying, charging points at 36 UK airfields and airports. Lydd, Shoreham, Henstridge, Dunkeswell, Sandown, Bournemouth and Snowdonia Aerospace Centre will be joined by Goodwood, Thruxton and Blackbushe Airports in the next few months. Others committing to installations include Balado, Deanland Airfield; Derby; Isle of Man Ronaldsway; Kittyhawk; Lee-on-Solent; North moor; Shobdon; Tatenhill and Teesside Airports.

Kennedy Ricci, President of 4AIR said: “The Pipistrel Velis (by Textron eAviation) generates emissions only during its construction, repair and maintenance, its eventual end-of-life disposal and from the electricity used for charging. Through our partnership with Synergy Flight Training, student pilots of the future (and qualified pilots too) will experience new forms of decarbonised flying which will become more commonplace over the next decade.”

Synergy Flight Training is now actively recruiting flying instructors to fly the Velis at Fairoaks

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Airport and is offering instructor rating sponsorships for commercially rated pilots, according to CEO and owner, Glen Heavens, who will also be instructing on the aircraft
himself.

150 hours of PPL training in Pipistrel Explorer and Velis Electro

Norwich Airport-based SaxonAir took on a lease of the Velis, also from NEBOair in October 2023 to gain experience and test its viability for a future electric fleet. SaxonAir operated nearly 150 hours PPL training in the Pipistrels (the enhanced Explorer and Velis Electro) over the summer – 30 hours (20%) in the Velis. SaxonAir CEO and Deputy Chair of BBGA Alex Durand highlighted: “You can advance flying training with the Pipistrel Velis Electro and we are seeing that people who are interested in flying, but haven’t learned, are enthusiastic to fly an electric trainer aircraft.”

In February, SaxonAir announced the completion of the Air League’s inaugural Electric Flying Scholarship, hosted within its Klyne Business Aviation Centre, using power direct generated from its recent rooftop solar PV installation. It is looking forward to accepting more scholars to its Flight Training Centre in 2025.

“General aviation has always been a valued innovation incubator for commercial aviation. The achievements lauded here serve to advance and benefit our whole sector,” said BBGA Managing Director Lindsey Oliver.



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