

Saxon Air launches world's first electric pleasure flights

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UK: As sustainability continues to be an essential aspect of the aviation industry, manufacturers worldwide are investing heavily to make their aircraft more sustainable; as such, electric planes are becoming an increasingly large part of the discussion. However, while getting such aircraft certified and in the air is one thing, generating a positive perception of them is another. After all, some members of the general public display a degree of hesitancy regarding electric propulsion.

Another significant step was made on November 22 as Norfolk-based private charter operator SaxonAir announced the launch of an "Electiflying" pleasure flight on board the world's first certified electric aircraft. The plane is the Slovenian-built Pipistrel Velis Electro, developed from the company's older Pipistrel Virus design. This two-seat electric light aircraft is powered by the EASA-certified Pipistrel E-811, which is 5 feet, 4.6 inches.

SaxonAir has been one of the leading carriers regarding sustainability efforts. A whole section of its online presence is dedicated to the topic. The carrier has a smaller facility in East Anglia, so they have been highly vocal about a more outstanding provision of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) at airports across the United Kingdom.

The launch party was attended by Chief Executive Officer of SaxonAir Alex Durand and Rebekah Hill, Saxon Air's Sustainability Manager. The Norwich Airport-based carrier stated that this new electric aircraft will usher in a new era in the aviation industry. Rebekah Hill added: "It's such an exciting time for aviation, with advancements in new technologies like hydrogen and electrification. The industry is going to look very different in 5- or 10-years' time, and we're lucky to be able to highlight the changing times, sharing the world's first certified electric aircraft with the public, giving everyone a taste of the future of aviation."

During the event , SaxonAir CEO Alex Durand outlined their vision for the future of electric aircraft. One of the significant shortcomings of electric aircraft is the short-range as technology is still being developed. However, for SaxonAir, this is not a problem as the plane is geared for shorter training flights. As such, the aircraft's lack of range does not inhibit its metrics as a trainer.

Moreover, the pilots will not need to wait such a long time between their flights. SaxonAir plans to make the charging process even greener. Unlike other training aircraft that run on conventional fuel-driven motors, pilots need to undergo special training to switch from one to the other. This training is minimal, consisting of just a ground school course and a handful of flight hours. Following this conversion, pilots can fly the electric aircraft solo.

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