



## **ASCENSION & ST HELENA AIR SERVICE Q&A**

### ***Q. When will flights start?***

**A.** This still has to be agreed with Comair and SHG. Although some technical issues remain to be resolved, our aim is to have a service in place by the time the RMS is decommissioned in July 2016.

### ***Q. How much will a ticket cost?***

**A.** This will depend on demand. Ticket prices will be made available as soon as possible.

### ***Q. How many seats will the Boeing 737-800 have?***

**A.** The aircraft is configured for 162 seats, but will be limited to a lower number for performance reasons. The precise number of seats available for sale will be discussed with Comair.

### ***Q. Has this air service to Ascension Island been agreed by the relevant authorities?***

**A.** AIG and SHG will be holding discussions with Comair and others over the coming weeks with a view to agreeing a service contract that meets the requirements of both islands. Subject to these discussions, AIG and SHG hope to make a more detailed announcement in the near future.

### ***Q. What term will the agreement stipulate?***

**A.** The service will initially run for a one-year trial period.

### ***Q. Is DFID or HMG subsidising the service?***

**A.** No. The service will be underwritten in full by the main Ascension Island employers.

### ***Q. Why was the extension not part of St Helena's tender process but agreed now?***

**A.** The SHG tender process did include an optional extension to Ascension Island which was not taken up by Comair at the time. Once the specific requirements for flights between the two islands were understood, Comair submitted a proposal that allowed the benefits of a complementary service to be realised.

### ***Q. How will St Helena cater for both inbound and outbound tourists, whilst the plane overnights on Ascension?***

**A.** St Helena is gradually increasing its stock of tourist accommodation. We envisage that on the one night every four weeks where there could be additional pressure on accommodation due to the Ascension flight, some tourists may consider alternative accommodation options for that night. Others may plan their trip for a different week.

***Q. Isn't St Helena Airport closed on a Sunday?***

**A.** There is no practical reason why flights shouldn't operate on a Sunday once every four weeks, although there are associated costs and staff implications. We are currently in discussion with the Airport Operator about this.

***Q. How will Saints be able to transport freight between the islands?***

**A.** The aircraft has no palletised cargo capability, but a limited amount of cargo can be bulk loaded. Depending on the number of passengers, the aircraft can carry from around one tonne to around five tonnes of cargo.

In addition, AIG is looking into the provision of a regular shipping service for heavy cargo between the islands.

***Q. Will employers force Saints to go to St Helena for their vacations and not go to UK?***

**A.** This will be a matter for employers and their staff. Employers will share the cost of running the air service between them, so they will have an incentive to use it.

***Q. How can private individuals make bookings?***

**A.** AIG will manage the bookings process. The final distribution methods are still to be determined.

***Q. How will an inter-island air service benefit tourism on Ascension and St Helena?***

**A.** We hope that a direct link will increase the appeal for tourists of visiting both islands, perhaps as part of a two centre holiday package. AIG is working with St Helena Tourism to increase its tourist offering and develop a co-ordinated tourism strategy.

Ascension has sandy beaches and green turtles to complement St Helena's sub-tropical environment and heritage.

***Q. Will I be able to fly my dog or cat to St Helena?***

**A.** This will be discussed with Comair during contract negotiations. If it proves possible, there will be an additional charge.