

## Historic RAF flight from Brize Norton powered by cooking oil

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By Miranda Norris Senior reporter

The Oxford Mail was invited onto the first ever sustainable RAF flight which set off from an Oxfordshire village. The air-to-air refuelling flight – powered by approximately 43 per cent Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) flew from RAF Brize Norton this morning. The voyager aircraft was run by a blend of fossil fuels and even cooking oil.

The Oxford Mail learnt that the aircraft can refuel mid-air as we joined the RAF and other media outlets.

The plane, emblazoned with the Union Jack which is usually used by the King, Prince of Wales and the PM, flew out over the North Sea where it undertook air-to-air refuelling with four Typhoons from RAF Coningsby, as part of planned training.

Returning home it flew 500ft above the runway at Farnborough where a two-day Sustainable Skies World Summit is taking place. Sustainable Aviation Fuel reduces lifecycle carbon emissions on average by up to 80 per cent compared to conventional jet fuel.

It is hoped, as more producers emerge and costs fall, increased use of SAF should help to improve the RAF's operational resilience and reduce its reliance on global supply chains and fossil fuels.

This significant flight is the latest in a series of milestones for the RAF towards a sustainable aviation future.

In November 2022 an RAF Voyager completed a ground-breaking trial flight during which it flew on 100 per cent SAF.

Leftover fuel from that test was mixed with regular fuel at around 46-48 per cent, the RAF said.

The RAF worked with BP, who supplied the fuel, to re-certify the mixture and ensure the required standards for a safe and effective mission.

Defence minister Baroness Goldie said: "Greater use of alternative and sustainable fuel can only lead to positive outcomes for defence, the United Kingdom, and our collective endeavour against climate change.

"This is not an easy undertaking by the RAF, but time and again we see that by working collaboratively with our partners across the industry we can achieve crucial transformation."

On the same day at the Sustainable Skies World Summit a new Net Zero Carbon roadmap for commercial aviation was launched.

Chief of staff support and chief engineer air vice-marshal Paul Lloyd added: "The continued success of sustainable aviation fuel is reassuring to see.

"If we are to achieve our net zero goal by 2040 then exploiting these technologies is going to be an enormous, but worthwhile, endeavour.

"Despite the challenge, the benefits of reducing our reliance on traditional supply chains and fossil fuels outweigh it.

"The RAF is proud to be leading in this area and I welcome the announcement introduction of commercial uses of SAF."