

**TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH MADE BY ASIF REHMANWALA ON BEHALF OF
DALE VINCE AT BRISTOL AIRPORT EXPANSION INQUIRY ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2021**

My name is Dale Vince and I'm the founder and owner of the Green Britain Group.

Our principal operations are in the sectors of Energy, Transport and Food.

We're based in Stroud just north of Bristol.

The first element of the group, Ecotricity - was formed just over 25 years ago.

We've grown in that time, from scratch, to an annual turnover of £280m with an EBITDA of £59m and £83m of net assets. We employ about 800 people.

We operate a no-fly policy.

I speak to you today as somebody who knows how business works.

You will hear from other participants in the course of this enquiry about the climate crisis and the role that flying plays - the urgent need to reduce our emissions and how airport expansion runs wholly counter to that and is thus inimicable to our international obligations - under the Paris accord and our own legally binding zero carbon targets as a country.

We need to fly less, not more. That's a fact.

But I want to talk to you from a business perspective.

The expansion of Bristol airport makes no commercial sense. I offer you two reasons.

The first is an effect of the pandemic. Pre pandemic we chose to use technology for meetings and for participation in conferences and discussion. It was not always a popular choice with organisers. The first time we did this with UEFA three years ago - they were reluctant. The experience was good though and UEFA have embraced this approach - it's the new normal.

The pandemic forced this kind of participation on all of us - and showed us the benefits of it. I can take part in multiple events, all over the globe - in the same day without leaving my office. The savings in travel time and cost and the improvements in efficiency are simply too considerable to ignore.

I believe, based on my own experience, that there has been a fundamental shift of business attitude away from flying - towards digital participation. And for this reason there will be less demand at Bristol airport in the future than there was pre pandemic.

My second reason is linked to the climate crisis and our zero carbon commitments. It's an economic argument though.

cont'd

It can only be a matter of time now before politicians grasp the nettle of flying and the extraordinary tax-free status airports is taken away. Duty free fuel will be a thing of the past adding considerable cost to flying. It's entirely conceivable that there will be a tax on flying beyond the imposition of fuel duty. A carbon tax. Flying's special status in our economy will not endure the next few years of intense carbon policy scrutiny.

Flying today is artificially cheap in the extreme. That will come to an end soon. When it does there will be a further drop in demand for flights.

This proposed expansion is an idea overtaken by global events: the climate crisis and the pandemic-inspired shift to digital participation in the pursuit of efficiency. If it goes ahead it will become a stranded asset and a monument to a lack of vision and inability to change direction.

Bristol Airport's published plan to be carbon neutral is the ultimate in greenwashing - it excludes the emissions from flying. You can have no better or authoritative confirmation that flying is incapable of reconciliation with notions of carbon reduction than this from Bristol Airport. They cannot deal with the emissions from flying themselves and so they exclude them from their plan.

I urge you to reject this expansion of airport capacity as a bad business idea.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

**DALE VINCE
FOUNDER & OWNER
GREEN BRITAIN GROUP**