FINAL VULCAN BOMBER FLIGHT: CROWDS URGED TO STAY AWAY FROM XH558'S FAREWELL

News / Manufacturer



Police warn the very last flights by the only airworthy Avro **Vulcan** may have to be cancelled if **crowds** ignore warnings **to stay away** from its home airport.

The final flights of Britain's last airworthy Vulcan bomber may have to be cancelled because of fears a huge influx of sightseers will create havoc on roads around its home airport.

Police have warned the charity which plans to stage two farewell flights next weekend the events may not be able to go ahead due to safety and security concerns.

Vulcan XH558 taking off

XH558 will no longer be able to fly after the coming weekend Photo: Andrew Crowley

The Avro Vulcan, known by its designation XH558, may have to be permanently grounded earlier than thought if crowds of well-wishers fail to heed warnings to stay away from Doncaster’s Robin Hood airport.

Superintendent Caroline Rollitt, of South Yorkshire Police, said: "Although I understand the

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passion of the supporters of the Vulcan over the past few months as we approach its final flights more and more spectators have turned up at events where the Vulcan has been.

"I must ask everyone please, do not come to Robin Hood to see her take-off and land."

Dr Robert Pleming, chief executive, Vulcan to the Sky Trust

"This has started to overwhelm local authorities and emergency services.

“My first priority is ensuring the safety of all road users and local communities.

“Doncaster airport is a small commercial airport that can accommodate its passengers.

"However, the infrastructure around it cannot accommodate a large influx of people hoping to see the Vulcan."

The distinctive delta-wing aircraft was formerly part of the RAF's Cold War V-Bomber force, and a key part of Britain’s nuclear deterrent.

It came into service in 1956 and 136 aircraft were built in total, including prototypes.

XH558, named The Spirit of Great Britain, was the first of its exact type to the flown by RAF in 1960.

The age of XH558’s airframe and engines mean three expert companies which keep the bomber aloft have decided they must end their support at the end of this season.

It is due to fly over town and cities in the north of England on Saturday in the first of two farewell sorties, and over southern England the following day.

Owned by the Vulcan to the Sky Trust, XH558 costs more than £2m a year to keep airborne but after the coming weekend will become a permanent exhibit at Doncaster.

Dr Robert Pleming, the trust’s chief executive said: "The situation we find ourselves in is a tremendous compliment to the passion and energy of XH558's supporters, many of whom have donated time and money to allow her to fly.

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The last airworthy Avro Vulcan XH558 flying over Doncaster Airport

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XH558 with its undercarriage down Photo: REX

"As someone who has devoted a significant portion of his life to this aircraft, I fully understand.

“But I must ask everyone please, do not come to Robin Hood to see her take-off and land.

"If you do, and the numbers are vast, the police have stated that they may well have no option but to lock down the airport, the financial consequences of which to the trust would be terminal."

Concerns about this weekend’s events centre on the need to keep unrestricted access to the airport for the emergency services as scheduled and chartered flights will also be taking place as normal.

Dr Pleming said: "The police have told us that they have a legal responsibility to ensure that emergency access points are clear of obstructions.”

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Vulcan Bomber's farewell over RAF Waddington

Aviation enthusiasts are being urged to view the Vulcan on its final flights from a range of other vantage points along the final flightpaths rather than at Doncaster Robin Hood airport.

Details of both sorties are due to be released on the Vulcan to the Sky Trust's website on Tuesday, allowing well-wishers to plan their journeys.

The last airworthy Avro Vulcan XH558 flying over Doncaster Airport

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XH558 came into service in 1960 and was restored in 2007 Photo: REX

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Steve Gill, the airport's director, said: "We urge people to listen to the pleas from the Vulcan team and the police and not travel to Doncaster to see the Vulcan but to maximise the opportunities available elsewhere."

The final flights are due to take place on Saturday October 10 and Sunday October 11.

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