



SAXAVORD
UK SPACE PORT

THE

SAXA VOICE

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SaxaVord and partners look forward

SaxaVord is supporting its partner RFA as it prepares for a new stage-testing campaign in 2025.

Minor repairs will be carried out to the company's launch stool, sustained when a fire occurred during a full nine-engine test of the first stage of its RFA ONE rocket in August. The launchpad was undamaged.

At its HQ in Augsburg, Germany, RFA is fully engaged in building and qualifying a new first stage and nine Helix engines, with more than 100 improvements planned across all systems to make them even more safe, reliable and effective.

The company plans to have the new, improved first stage on the launchpad at SaxaVord as soon as possible, with the first test flight planned for next year.

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While the fire was obviously a huge disappointment, it underlined the importance of testing and the high risk / high reward nature of the space industry.

Tests are carried out in a highly controlled and regulated environment, with the site completely cleared of people. The fire was allowed to burn out in line with SaxaVord Spaceport's safety plans.

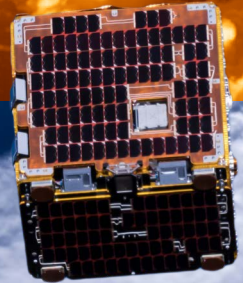
Saxa CEO Frank Strang said: "RFA will rectify the situation and carry on with their programme. Like all in the sector their team are passionate, committed and ultra professional in how they go about their business, and we at SaxaVord have nothing but praise for all of them.

"Because our own personnel carried out their duties and roles professionally and with their normal good-natured approach nobody was injured or hurt. They followed the protocols set down under our Spaceport licence."

Meanwhile, work is continuing towards the completion of the large integration hangar on site.

And development of Launch Pad Elizabeth will commence shortly as SaxaVord actively expands its roster of clients.

The importance of satellites



The most commonly asked question of staff at SaxaVord is what is it all for? Why do we have a rocket launch site in Unst?

While spacecraft blasting off into orbit is obviously exciting, the bigger picture is even more important.

SaxaVord exists primarily to launch satellites into space.

Without satellites modern life would simply cease to function and our understanding of the threats to our existence from phenomena such as climate change would be gravely impaired.

Space may even hold the key to curing some of humanity's most fatal diseases, such as cancer.

Demand for payload space transporting satellites into orbit is growing exponentially, and we could fill a whole newsletter with the tasks performed by satellites, from the everyday to the existential.

But here are just a few that might make you think, and consider next time you look at your phone, go to the supermarket or order online.

Satellites underpin e-commerce by providing global coverage and high-speed internet to remote areas, as well as helping to match supply to demand for groceries and frozen foods over large areas of the country, allowing conventional retailers to operate more efficiently.

Most apps on your phone, for example, those providing weather forecasts, rely on satellites for their meteorological information. Early warnings on extreme weather come courtesy of information garnered from space.

With complete coverage and reliable data 24/7, satellites are used to monitor the Earth's atmosphere, land and ocean to study environmental changes. They can track deforestation, ice-sheet melting and fluctuations in the temperature of the oceans.

Finally, the microgravity environment of space is ideal for scientists who are studying how biological processes change over time, which may be relevant to cancer. NASA and ESA have already deployed study satellites for this purpose.

To repeat, rockets and launches and spaceports may attract all the attention, but the most interesting aspect of this business is the staggering range of activities performed by the gleaming boxes of technology they deliver into orbit.

CEO at UK Investment Summit

SaxaVord Spaceport CEO Frank Strang was invited to attend the new UK Government's inaugural International Investment Summit in October.



Frank Strang with Secretary of State for Scotland Ian Murray at the Investment Summit.

Held at the Guildhall in London, the event attracted around 200 business executives from the UK and overseas.

The government is attempting to push a pro-business agenda and highlighting the importance of economic growth.

It came after Secretary of State for Scotland Ian Murray had visited the spaceport in September to hear all about our exciting plans for the months and years ahead.

The UK Government has invested in SaxaVord and Mr Murray was eager to learn about the activity at Europe's first fully licenced vertical launch spaceport.

He was taken on a tour of the site and its infrastructure and facilities, led by our deputy CEO Scott Hammond.

The UK Space Agency noted that "this pioneering project is advancing British innovation and securing the UK's leadership in the global space industry".



Mr Murray on site with Saxa deputy CEO Scott Hammond.

International spaceports join together

SaxaVord is one of eight spaceports around the world to join together in a new international forum.

They signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for better strategic collaboration at the International Astronautical Congress (IAC) last month, attended by our deputy CEO Scott Hammond and COO Debbie Strang.

As well as SaxaVord, the spaceports, located across five continents, are: Hokkaido Spaceport (Japan), Pacific Spaceport Complex (Alaska), Space Centre Australia, Stargate Peru S.A.C., Sutherland Spaceport, Swedish Space Corporation (SSC) and Virginia Commercial space Flight Authority.

Debbie said: "It will be a very useful forum for collaboration in a range of different areas that we all share in common and for work towards establishing international spaceport standards."

Introducing Saxa's new mascot

Hey everyone, meet Fredo!

Fredo is our company mascot, a cartoon character created to educate children aged 3-10 about the positive impact of space on all our lives.

He will also be deployed to raise general awareness of SaxaVord Spaceport and jobs in the industry.

The project builds on our education strategy, a key part of our business, and references existing material such as Starflight Academy Resources, Astronaut Job Camp, the Radio SaxaVord Podcast and this newsletter.



Fredo will deliver this message with a fun and playful demeanour which is appropriate for younger audiences.

Named after Launch Pad 1, leased by Rocket Factory Augsburg (RFA), Fredo embodies a unique blend of astronaut and Viking, in a nod to Shetland's rich Norse heritage.

Designed to honour the deep historical ties of Unst – the most northerly island in Britain and believed to be the Vikings' first North Atlantic landing spot – Fredo represents both the region's ancient past and its cutting-edge future in space exploration.

Just a short walk from the spaceport lies the remains of a Viking longhouse, one of over 60 scattered across Unst, giving the island the highest density of rural Viking sites anywhere in the world, including Scandinavia.

Fredo symbolises this powerful connection, merging the pioneering spirit of both the ancient Norse seafarers and today's space explorers.

So look out for Fredo in some of our forthcoming communications – we hope you find him as fun and engaging as we do!



Interns enjoy summer at SaxaVord

This summer, SaxaVord hosted 10 undergraduate students for internship placements, each lasting a minimum of six weeks.

The interns worked across various departments, gaining valuable hands-on experience and contributing to the spaceport's operations.

One of them, Rhiana Constable from Whalsay, said: "I have loved working at SaxaVord. Being a Shetlander myself, it's been an incredible experience to see their work from an insider's perspective.

"What they are doing will greatly benefit the archipelago's economy and recognition in the future."

The intern programme is part of SaxaVord's education strategy, which aims to engage young people of all ages and promote interest in the space industry as a career option.

Rhiana Constable taking part in a site sweep prior to engine testing.



Supporting careers in space

This summer, SaxaVord participated in two space careers conferences, hosted by The National Space Academy as part of its Space to Learn programme, which is funded by the UK Space Agency.

The first event in June took place at the Glasgow Science Centre, followed by the second in September at the Aberdeen Science Centre.

At the latter, our COO Debbie Strang delivered the keynote speech, while our education officer Bryden Priest led presentations and Q&A sessions on career paths in the space sector and the development of SaxaVord Spaceport.

Both events attracted around 150 young attendees.