

THE SAXAVOICE

Newsletter 09 March 2026

It's been a busy and exciting month at SaxaVord, with new sustainability milestones, industry partnerships and steady progress towards RFA's first test flight. Here's a roundup of what we've been working on.

RFA Update

Work with Rocket Factory Augsburg (RFA) continues at pace as we support them in preparing for their first test flight later this year. Our teams are working closely together across operational, technical and environmental workstreams to ensure a smooth, safe and efficient campaign.



Photo of RFA umbilical tower on Launch Pad 1

Hylmpulse to Launch from SaxaVord Later This Year

We're thrilled to announce that SaxaVord Spaceport has signed a launch agreement with Hylmpulse, marking the next step in our long-standing partnership and strengthening our position at the forefront of UK vertical space launch.

[View Full Press Release](#)



From Left: Robin Huber (SaxaVord Spaceport, Alfie Marturano (Hylmpulse) and Debbie Strang (SaxaVord Spaceport).

Unst Community Council Update

Scott Hammond, CEO of SaxaVord Spaceport, recently attended a meeting of the Unst Community Council to provide an update on progress at the spaceport and respond to questions from councillors. The session offered an opportunity for open discussion around upcoming activities, including preparations for launch operations.

Caroline Hunter, Chair of Unst Community Council, said: "We appreciate the additional information shared about the lead-up to and activity on launch days at SaxaVord. While it's helpful to better understand what's planned, the community council remains mindful of the potential impacts on residents and daily life. We look forward to continuing engaging closely with the spaceport team to ensure community voice is heard, communication is clear, and appropriate safeguards are in place as we approach the first launch."

Space-Comm Expo Europe 4th-5th of March 2026

Our Environmental Advisor Ruth Fain presented SaxaVord's leading role in shaping the UK's emerging space sustainability framework.

Ruth contributed directly to BSI Flex 1971, developed with BSI and the UK Space Agency, which sets out practical guidance to reduce the environmental impact of UK space launches. SaxaVord has already adopted many of these recommendations and will complete a full review against the code of practice during 2026.

Ruth also chaired and co-authored the new ISEP Good Practice Guidance on Assessing Environmental Effects (AEE), published in March 2026. Produced with industry experts and reviewed by the CAA, this guidance strengthens the UK's regulatory approach and supports operators in preparing robust AEEs-benefiting future launch operators at SaxaVord and across the UK.



Ruth Fain and Debbie Strang pictured at Space-Comm Europe 2025.

SaxaVord continues to enhance its environmental management systems, voluntarily aligning with BSI Flex 1971 and ISO 14001, and developing a net zero policy and program. Our team is also actively involved in ESA's Responsible Space Sector initiative, the Space Scotland Environmental Task Force, and the Earth Space Sustainability Initiative.

Ongoing Collaboration with Fishing Sector

SaxaVord has had regular engagement with the local and national fishing industry over the impact of test flights and launches on fishermen's working practices.

CEO Scott Hammond has attended meetings with both the Scottish Fishermen's Federation and the Shetland Fishermen's Association in recent months and weeks.

While specific details of small exclusion zones and larger warning zones can only be issued when launch windows have been finalised, he has made it clear that the impact on fishing activity will be minimal.

Arrangements are being put in place to communicate directly with the Federation, Association and individual local fishermen when launch window days and timings have been agreed.

SaxaVord Joins ESA's Responsible Space Sector Milestone at Space-Comm

Space-Comm Expo Europe marked another major step for the Responsible Space Sector initiative, and SaxaVord was proud to play a central role. Alongside ESA's Chief Climate & Sustainability Officer Andrea Vena, three new organisations signed the Statement at the AstroAgency stand—including our own Deputy Chief Executive, Debbie Strang. Bercella's Davide Solaroli and Grayspace's Sagar Singamsetty also added their commitment, joining more than 100 organisations backing a sustainable, ethical and inclusive space sector.



By signing, each organisation reinforced its dedication to protecting the long-term accessibility of orbit and supporting a resilient, sustainable space economy for future generations.

SaxaVord Collaborates with Dark Star Labs on an Interactive Spaceport Experience

We're collaborating with Dark Star Labs to build a 3D interactive 'Digital Twin' of our spaceport. This experience highlights our geography, infrastructure, and heritage in a simple, accessible web page - meaning anyone, anywhere, can visit SaxaVord from the comfort of their phone.

Dark Star Labs is a specialised studio dedicated solely to the space industry. Their mission is to visualise the future of space through fun interactive animations and games, and they've done a brilliant job of visualising our site. We highly recommend following them on LinkedIn to see more of their unique interactive content for Space!



SaxaVord Deputy CEO, Debbie Strang with Christian Teir of Dark Star Labs and a still from the interactive SaxaVord experience.

Viewing Spaces for Launch to be Offered to Local People First

SaxaVord has confirmed that Unst residents will have first access to limited viewing passes for upcoming test flights, in line with CAA safety requirements. Remaining passes will be offered more widely, and all launches will also be livestreamed.

Launch windows will be announced ahead of time, with exclusion zones and transport restrictions in place on launch days. CEO Scott Hammond noted that RFA's first test flight is expected this summer and highlighted Unst's limited capacity for visitors.

New Staff Join the SaxaVord Team

We are pleased to welcome Jim Buck as our new Head of Range Operations at SaxaVord Spaceport.

Jim brings over 30 years of experience from the Royal Navy as a Warfare and Navigation specialist, serving across a wide range of vessels from mine countermeasure ships to aircraft carriers, and operating around the globe. He has extensive expertise in range safety operations for multiple weapon systems, including cruise and air defence missiles. Following his naval career, Jim has spent the past decade in the port and maritime sector, including six years in Orkney where he managed island harbours, ferry services, public transport, air services and multiple airfields.



Jim Buck, Head of Range Operations at SaxaVord Spaceport.

Jim said: "I'm looking forward to assisting in the first UK space launches, providing a safe, dependable launch site for our customers."

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