

Chaplaincy Annual Report 2015



London Luton Airport

Welcome to new team members

You may have seen some new faces in “Chaplaincy” high viz - they are Ailsa, Bob, Darren and Jill. Piers is waiting for his Airside pass application and will be out and about soon. Please say hello and make them welcome as they begin to find their way around.

We have three more enquiries from people wanting to join the team – so by the end of 2016 we hope to be able to have Chaplains on site for longer hours and sometimes over the weekend too. With ever increasing passenger numbers there will be plenty of work to go around!

We also welcome Dilbar to the office, where she is taking on the task of admin, which is a growing responsibility as the airport and the Chaplaincy Team’s work expands.



Preparing for the opening of the new Multi-faith Prayer Room

Pictured:
Liz Hughes,
Senior Chaplain,
Rabbi Alan Plancey,
Jewish Chaplain,
Not pictured:
Imam Mohammad
Ohidur Rahman,
Muslim Chaplain

Being a Chaplain at London Luton Airport – the view from two new recruits

A request went out in May looking for volunteer chaplains for the Airport and the Casino in Luton town. We opted to volunteer at the airport and since then have completed a 6 week training course and spent quite a number of days at the airport.

As you can imagine, the job is quite varied. We are there to support workers and passengers in any way that is appropriate. Workplace Matters is involved in supporting the chaplaincy, as is the management of London Luton Airport.

The most interesting events we’ve been involved in so far have been planning for and meeting evacuation flights from Sharm-el- Sheikh on several nights and the carol singing by a variety of groups that took place in the arrivals hall before Christmas.

There is a lot to learn and we are still finding our feet but we are looking forward to establishing ourselves and contributing regularly to the work of the team.

So far everyone we’ve met at the airport has been pleasant and welcoming.

Ailsa & Bob

Multi-faith Prayer Room

The newly built airside Multi-faith Prayer Room, officially opened in November, has been very well received and is being used by passengers and staff of all faiths. 273 people have written in the Visitors’ book from its opening to the end of the year – here is a selection of their comments....

- *“I really appreciate the work (religion) done by LTN Airport.”*
- *“Congrats Luton. This is very good. Every airport in the world should have this. Keep it up.”*
- *“Great room for focussed prayer. Appreciated the ‘mizrah’ sign”*

The room is currently rather bare, but plans are in hand to locate some suitable artwork to give the room a lift and create a more spiritual atmosphere.

Christmas Entertainment

This year’s Christmas Entertainment was a great success, raising slightly more money for the Airport’s Charity partner, Sue Ryder, than the previous year, despite the relocation of the programme to the temporary arrivals hall due to the ongoing development works.

One of the many highlights was Eboracum Baroque (pictured below) who performed Airside prior to travelling to concerts in Germany – they surprised other departing passengers by beginning with a “flash-mob” rendition of “Hark the herald angels sing.”

Nineteen groups performed over the fortnight long entertainment programme and netted a total of £2,152.54, half of which will go to the charity, the other half split between the performers to offset their costs.



Support for passengers

Chaplains spend much of their time in the Terminal Building helping other airport staff to support passengers' everyday queries. Much of this is very practical, directing people to gates, loos and so forth.

Sometimes passengers are directed to the Chaplaincy Office because they need help with onward travel (having lost money or documents – or didn't have enough funds in the first place!)

We also get involved with more complex issues. This year we have built even closer links with Noah Enterprise (a local project for the homeless) as well as other statutory and voluntary bodies, to find the appropriate support for people who find themselves stranded at the airport.

One passenger says she had prayed on the way to the airport for the strength to get to her flight on time, as she was suffering from back pain.

As she was making her way fairly painfully down the walkway she encountered a Chaplain. With the aid of the Chaplain's arm and encouraging smile, she made it safely to her flight. The Chaplain confessed that she too had been praying that morning that she could be of some real use during her shift. Coincidence or the power of prayer...

Another Chaplain was called in to support a family whose brother was taken ill and died in the Terminal. Being the Sabbath it was difficult to find someone from the Jewish community to help support them, so the Chaplain accompanied them to the hospital and liaised with hospital staff to find a local Jewish representative to take over.

Don't let your worries stress you out – let a Chaplain help!

Support in Difficult Times

2015 has seen some tragedies around the world that have had a direct effect on this airport and our local airline companies. The shooting of tourists on the beach in Sousse, Tunisia, shocked the world and was followed later in the year by the shooting down of a Russian aircraft over Egypt. Both these incidents resulted in a number of extra flights into London Luton Airport bringing home stranded tourists.

Chaplaincy Team members worked alongside Airport staff, the Police, Handling Agents and representatives from Tui/Thomson,

easyJet and Monarch to greet tired and sometimes emotional passengers returning home.

Chaplaincies at other airports around the UK were similarly involved in these "rescue flights." One passenger at LTN was heard to say, "The staff here are wonderful – they even have Chaplains helping!"

Tui/Thomson also enlisted the help of the Senior Chaplain to assist in facilitating an incredibly moving memorial service – "Remembering Sousse." This was an opportunity for all their staff, some of whom had

been working round the clock, to stop and reflect, once the immediate crisis was over .

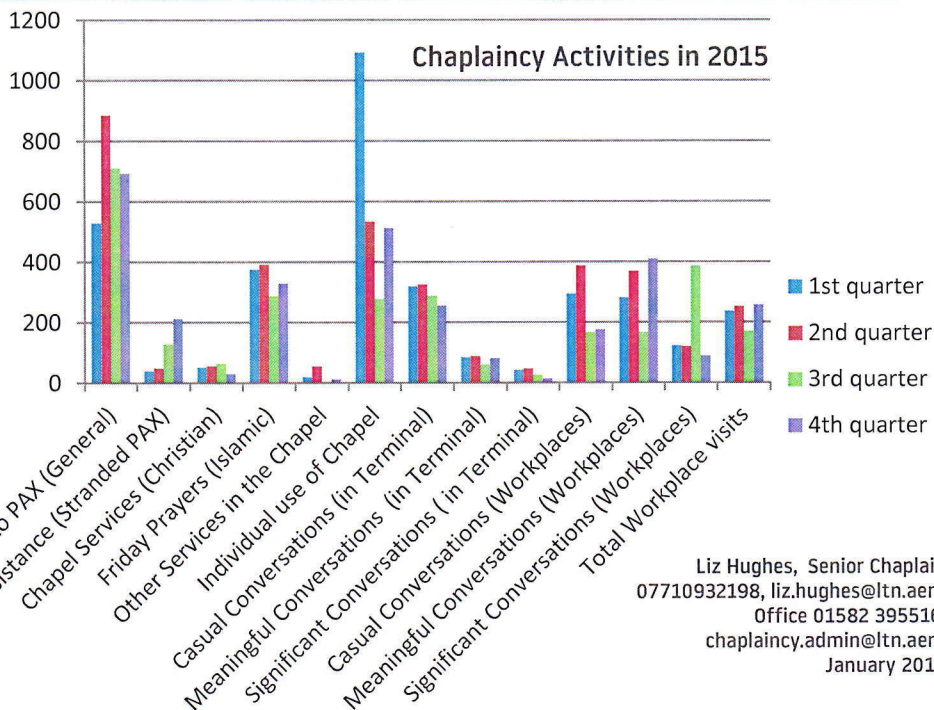
The service took place in their large engineering hangar and was relayed to their offices across the world.

These, alongside events in France, and many other parts of the world, have caused many people to question their normal travel habits.

Let us hope for a calmer and more peaceful 2016.



Out and about with the Terminal Duty Manager



Bringing meaning and purpose to work

LLA Chaplaincy - sponsored by Workplace Matters & London Luton Airport Operations Ltd

Liz Hughes, Senior Chaplain
07710932198, liz.hughes@ltn.aero
Office 01582 395516,
chaplaincy.adm@ltn.aero
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