

11<sup>th</sup> May 2005

## **Media Release – embargoed until 0600 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2006**

### **New local airline for the Isle of Man**

The Isle Of Man's air links are set to be boosted with the launch of a new local airline. Manx2 is registered in the Isle of Man and based at the airport and is committed to providing year round air links for both business and leisure customers. This summer it will be launching three routes from the Isle of Man to Leeds Bradford, Blackpool and Belfast International Airports.

The airline is the brainchild of two aviation entrepreneurs with long experience of operating regional airlines for Island based communities. Noel Hayes and James Filleul set up and ran Rockhopper (recently rebranded to Blue Islands – see 'profiles' below for more details) and last year flew more than fifty thousand passengers on nine routes to and from the Channel Islands.

Manx2's services to Belfast and Blackpool will be launched on 15<sup>th</sup> July, with flights to Leeds Bradford following on 12<sup>th</sup> August. Bookings can be made through its website, manx2.com from the beginning of June, and by telephone through Manx2's reservations centre on 0870 2422226 from the same time.

Manx2 will be operating a fleet of 19-seat aircraft which are specifically designed for making short, frequent flights to neighbouring regional airports. The aircraft will all carry the company's motto "Failt erriu - You're welcome".

"Having secure long term transport links is essential for Island communities, and we have many years experience in building strong routes which will serve local people all year round", says Noel Hayes, Manx2's Chairman. "We spotted a requirement in the Isle of Man for a strongly financed and well-managed small regional airline which would be based in the island and committed to opening up air links to nearby airports. That's exactly what Manx2 will do".

As well as providing regular flights for local people to get to Leeds Bradford, Blackpool and Belfast, Manx2 will be working closely with the Island's Tourism authorities to stimulate more visitors from Yorkshire, the North West and Northern Ireland.

Manx2 has also teamed up with the well known Manx travel agent Freedom Travel and highly successful low cost operator Jet2.com, and its flight schedule will be specifically designed to offer easy connections with Jet2 flights to a wide range of popular European destinations including Amsterdam, Paris, Prague, Malaga and Tenerife.

"The experience of living on an island ourselves and running a successful island airline has taught us three very important lessons", says Manx2 Communications Director James Filleul. "Manx2 will offer excellent customer service and some everyday low fares, and we have been working very hard on the schedules to make sure they offer a choice of flights at the times people want. Manx2 will have a very strong local flavour, and will combine the best practices of "low cost" carriers with the friendly service local passengers rightly expect".

The Isle of Man's Minister of Transport, Phil Braidwood MHK added, "Secure year round transport links are of obvious importance to our economy, and we welcome the re-opening of the route to Leeds Bradford, and the new route to Belfast International by this experienced team of island airline operators."

Manx2 is based in offices at Isle of Man Airport, and has already started recruiting a team of local people. **-Ends-**

**For more information about Manx2 or to arrange pictures or an interview, please contact James Filleul 01534 735253 or 07797 733 344.**

## Notes:

- Manx 2 will be operating a fleet of nineteen seat aircraft:



- **Noel Hayes:** Noel is a former successful City stockbroker who retired early to enjoy the 'quiet' life in Alderney; it proved to be a bit too quiet however, and he soon spotted a gap in the market for a decent modern supermarket. He soon set up his own airfreight service to overcome serious supply problems common to many islands, and that freight service soon grew into his first passenger airline, Rockhopper. From one route between Alderney and Bournemouth and one small Islander aircraft, that airline grew into what is now Blue Islands, carrying 50,000 passengers a year on routes between all three Channel Island airports and on to the south coast of the UK, the Isle of Man and to Brittany, using a fleet of modern aircraft. Noel has now sold all his shareholding in Blue Islands.
- **James Filleul:** James is a former BBC news editor, TV/Radio reporter and presenter. He left the corporation to set up his own communications consultancy which now has a range of major PR clients across the Channel Islands, manages some of the Islands largest public events, and trains public and private sector organisations across the world in managing their public profile.

James worked very closely with Noel to build Rockhopper from its roots flying fruit and vegetables into Alderney to winning the Jersey Tourism Award for Excellence in 2005.