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First ever plane lands in St Helena

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History was made on the island of St Helena earlier, as a Beechcraft King Air 200 aircraft arrived from Angola and touched down at the new Airport, prior to conducting a series of calibration flights.

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Stepping out of the aircraft, captain Grant Brighton said: “It feels fantastic and we’re privileged to have flown the first plane to land on St Helena and to be part of your wonderful project.

“The trip over was good.

“It was interesting landing here, a bit windy on the threshold but a terrific runway, surface, airport and facility.”

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The aircraft crew comprised Brighton, co-pilot and first officer Dillan Van Niekerk, chief aircraft engineer Jeffrey McKenzie - all of TAB Charters, SA - together with FC SL chief pilot, Stuart Rawlinson, and chief flight inspector Nick Whitehouse, also of FC SL.

Greeting the crew on the apron, governor Mark Capes remarked: “Today we witnessed an event that will feature prominently in the history of this Island.

“For the airport project another important piece of the jigsaw has slotted firmly into place.

“There are a few more vital pieces to be added before the picture is complete, but we are nearly there and I warmly congratulate everyone who has played a part in this extraordinary project.

“When we launched this work almost four years ago, such were the many obstacles to overcome that there were those who doubted that it would succeed and yet, behold, a plane has landed at St Helena airport.”

The calibration tests will now commence.

Several flights each day - weather permitting - will be undertaken from the British UK Overseas Dependency.

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