

PRESS RELEASE

January 9, 2018

iDrop: thrill-seekers are invited to take an eye-watering challenge – an abseil from the world’s tallest moving observation tower



The first public abseil from the British Airways i360 pod will take place on March 17 2018, in aid of Sussex children’s charity, Rockinghorse.

Thrill-seekers will be fitted with safety harnesses and lowered, either manually or mechanically, from the open pod doors at 450ft. The iDrop challenge will be operated by Belay Ropes Access and is open to the first 30 people to sign up who can commit to raising a minimum £1,000 each in sponsorship*.

British Airways i360 in Brighton is the world’s tallest moving observation tower, with a giant glass pod rising from ground level to 450ft. It was conceived and designed by Marks Barfield Architects, creators of the London Eye.

Executive director Steve Bax said: “The view from the British Airways i360 pod at 450ft is quite breath-taking, and for the very first time we will be opening the doors while the pod is at the top of the tower and allowing members of the public who are brave enough to abseil back down again. The highly experienced team at Belay Ropes Access will be operating the event and we are all very excited that the participants will be raising funds for local children’s charity Rockinghorse.”

Belay Ropes Access director Iain Tindall said: “The sheer exposure of British Airways i360 is what makes this abseil special because unlike other venues, you are descending in open space rather than against a wall. And the position on the seafront makes it unique. I would challenge anyone not to feel a few nerves when faced with a 450ft drop, so even for experienced people, this will present a fearsome challenge.”

Rockinghorse is the fundraising arm of the Royal Alexandra Children’s Hospital in Brighton. It also supports the Trevor Mann Baby Unit at the Royal Sussex County Hospital and the Special Care Baby Unit at the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath.

The charity abseil at British Airways i360 will help Rockinghorse to raise funds for a new specialist x-ray machine for premature babies at the Trevor Mann Baby Unit.

Rockinghorse chief executive Ryan Heal said: “We are delighted to have been chosen as beneficiary of the very first iDrop challenge! This is certainly a unique event and a fantastic opportunity for any thrill-seeker to take on the 450ft drop. Having recently celebrated our 50th anniversary, this is a great start to 2018 and continuing to support local children’s centres and paediatric services across Sussex.”

The abseil will be tested on January 13 and 14 2018, while British Airways i360 is closed for annual maintenance.

During the two-week shutdown, which started yesterday [January 8, 2018], the attraction will also be subject to independent inspection and testing for the renewal of its ADIPS, which is its license to operate, authorised by the Health and Safety Executive.

For full information about the abseil and to register, please email Hannah Seltzer at Rockinghorse: Hannah.Seltzer@rockinghorse.org.uk

*There is also a £75 registration fee.

ENDS

For further media information, please contact Emily.Bamber@BritishAirwaysi360.com / 01273 448363

Information for editors

About British Airways i360

British Airways i360 is conceived and designed by Marks Barfield Architects, creators of the London Eye.

The iconic tower has an overall height of 162m, and a glass observation pod that glides up from ground level to 138m above Brighton beach. Visitors enjoy unprecedented unfolding views across Brighton and Hove, the South Downs and the beautiful Sussex coast. ‘Flights’ carry up to 175 passengers and depart every 30 minutes. While on board, guests can enjoy a

drink at the Nyetimber Sky Bar which serves a range of drinks from Sussex including Nyetimber, an award-winning sparkling wine.

At the base of the tower is the British Airways i360 beach building which houses a stylish new restaurant, West Beach Bar & Kitchen, with sea views and a large terrace. Dishes feature ingredients sourced from the local area. The beach building also has flexible beachside events spaces which can be hired for private functions and can accommodate up to 1,100 people. British Airways i360 is licensed for weddings and couples carry marry in the pod, saying 'I do' at 138m above Sussex.

British Airways i360 has worked with the West Pier Trust to reconstruct two of the original West Pier tollbooths using Victorian building techniques. The reconstructed buildings now grace the entrance to British Airways i360, and house the West Pier Tea Room and the British Airways i360 ticket office.

The British Airways i360 shop stocks gifts and souvenirs, many of which have been created by local Brighton artists.

British Airways i360 is owned and operated by Brighton i360 Ltd.

Website: BritishAirwaysi360.com
Twitter: @BA_i360
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Hashtag: #BAi360

About Marks Barfield Architects

The late David Marks MBE was the architect-entrepreneur behind the creation of Brighton i360, together with his wife and business partner Julia Barfield MBE. They founded Brighton i360 Ltd in 2005. Previously David Marks and Julia Barfield performed a similar role creating the London Eye where they remained shareholders and directors until 2006. Together with a tight-knit group of extraordinary individuals, trusted consultants and companies, many of whom worked with David and Julia at the London Eye, they secured the planning permission, partners, land and funding for British Airways i360. Marks Barfield Architects is one of the UK's most versatile and innovative architecture practices, established in 1989. Julia Barfield now chairs the Brighton i360 board.

MarksBarfield.com

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About British Airways

British Airways is one of the world's leading global premium airlines and the UK's largest international scheduled airline, carrying approximately 35 million passengers worldwide annually, on around 800 daily flights. The airline employs around 40,000 people, the vast majority of these at its sites throughout the UK, and has an annual turnover of £8.5 billion. It employs 2,500 people in Sussex, several hundred of them in Brighton.

British Airways is the naming rights sponsor of British Airways i360. The attraction is owned and operated by Brighton i360 Ltd.

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