

Billund Airport – How it all began

Billund Airport is in 2025 a modern airport with yearly three to four million passengers and above 100 direct destinations. But how did it all begin?

Godfred Kirk Christiansen (LEGO owner at that time and called GKC) was the “investor”, but the idea came from a young man named Hans Erik Christensen (called HEC), and he was also the driving force to establish the airport and lead it through the many following years.

HEC would originally like to be a farmer but would also like to try something else. So together with another person he established what is today known as Sønderborg Airport.

HEC was also a pilot and flew with businesspeople from the region. Among them were GKC. HEC was in disagreement with his airport partner, and he asked GKC if he would not like to get his own plane and get a place to operate it. HEC was invited to Billund the same week and was asked to start the project the following Monday (GKC was not a person who used a long time to take decisions).

The first task was to find a place to fly from. HEC asked the military airport existing in Vandel at that time and tried also the small airport in Esbjerg, but did not succeed. So GKC decided to buy a piece of land north of Billund, where they established an 800 meter long grass landing strip. This happened in 1962.

Other companies were also allowed to use the landing strip. But the grass could not manage, so they had to put asphalt on the strip.

At that time there were discussions about building a major airport close to Aarhus. HEC felt it would be a better idea to place such an airport in Billund. It would be cheaper to build it here. The surrounding municipalities were asked if they would be interested. Together with HEC and the parish council chairman Hans Jensen GKC convinced the municipalities it would be a good idea. That was the start of Billund Airport. HEC got the responsibility to lead the process and the responsibility to run the airport.

The airport opened November 1, 1964. SAS had promised from the start to establish two daily connections to Copenhagen. The airport consisted of a landing strip, a platform and a control tower, but no passenger facilities. Instead, they used a part of LEGO’s own hangar until the first passenger facilities were ready in 1966.



The new facility opened in 1966 just south of the airport. (Picture below is from 1969).



But compared to today, the facilities were still modest illustrated by the booth for renting a car from (Picture from 1966). The booth was shared with the police.



The new facility gave the possibility for flights to other countries. HEC would like to use this opportunity and contacted the owner of a major Danish travel agency, who arranged holiday trips to more countries mostly in southern Europe. They hesitated but tried. And it turned into a major success. The charter flight possibility was used both by people from western Denmark, but also from northern Germany. Charter flights turned into being the major activity in the airport through the following years.

After many extensions including a much longer landing strip and the new facilities north of the airport, Billund Airport have today a broad base based on network companies, low-cost companies and charter flights as well as freight flights.