

Press Release

ESA Contract to Boost UK Space Capability

Magna Parva Work Will Support Manned Space Flights

January 27th 2011, BARDON HILL, UK -- Magna Parva, the company specialising in solving engineering problems in hostile environments, has been awarded a contract by the European Space Agency (ESA) to develop the capability to design and test window assemblies for future manned space missions. This is a first for the UK, as this capability has so far been available mainly in the 'traditional' manned space exploration countries.

Spacecraft window assemblies are key parts of manned missions – not only must they be strong and lightweight but must ensure the integrity of the craft in which they are fitted. As the strength of window glass is very dependent on its manufacture and its life history it is difficult to verify its suitability for use.

Over the next eighteen months, Magna Parva will deploy a team at its offices in Bardon Hill, Leicestershire and Harwell in Oxfordshire to develop a prototype of the window and testing apparatus to ECSS space standards.

The Magna Parva team consists of a small group of engineers and scientists with expertise across a broad range of technical and scientific areas. This cross-disciplinary approach will allow European space programmes to deploy a capability superior to the current visual inspection by employing testing and measurement techniques from other industries. The project will need to meet ESA's stringent requirements, and involve only non-destructive testing methods.

"We are very excited at being selected to deliver this important project", says Andrew Bowyer, Commercial Director of Magna Parva. "It plays to our strengths in

engineering for hostile environments, and in taking technology designed for one purpose and applying it to good effect elsewhere”.

Magna Parva has previously developed an Ultrasonic Drill Tool for planetary sampling. It is currently helping to develop a 'Life Marker' chip for use on Mars, and an optics structure for the BepiColombo mission to Mercury; both instruments being led by the University of Leicester. Spin out innovations are now being applied to terrestrial commercial applications.

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Notes to Editors:
Pictures available.

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About Magna Parva Ltd

Magna Parva is based in the UK, with offices in Leicestershire and at the Harwell Science Campus in Oxfordshire, providing advanced engineering research and development services. Magna Parva has exceptional experience in delivering engineering solutions for hostile environments. Work often begins at low Technology Readiness Levels or laboratory demonstrated technological principles. They employ advanced yet proven methodologies to take projects through to production engineered, fully field tested and supported products. The techniques developed and proved in delivering critical space technologies are harnessed to manage the risk of highly innovative approaches. Magna Parva engineers and scientists provide solutions to today's toughest challenges.

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