

Southend Airport Shut After Deadly Plane Fireball

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— Categories: Breaking News



London Southend Airport has suspended operations after a small aircraft crashed and erupted into a blaze, prompting an extensive emergency response and raising concerns about aviation safety protocols.

Essex Police reported that officers were alerted just before 4:00 p.m. British Summer Time (BST) on Sunday when a 12-meter plane burst into flames at the Southend-on-Sea site. Witnesses described the scene as a “huge fireball,” with debris visible from surrounding areas. Dutch operator Zeusch Aviation confirmed that one of its aircraft was involved in the

accident. The aircraft had earlier operated between Athens, Greece, and Pula, Croatia, before flying to Southend, with plans to continue to Lelystad Airport in the Netherlands later that evening.

John Johnson, a local father who was at the airport with his family to watch planes, described how the aircraft appeared to climb normally before banking sharply and inverting before impact. “I said to my wife, that’s unusual. We don’t find aircraft normally turning at that stage in their ascent,” he told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Within moments, the aircraft struck the ground nose-first, creating a towering fireball.

James Philpott, working at the Rochford Hundred Golf Club nearby, recounted feeling an intense heatwave before seeing the explosion. “Everyone was just quite shocked... we haven’t seen anything like this,” he said in an interview with the BBC. While some people on the golf course were evacuated because of the crash’s proximity, those further away remained in place as authorities assessed the situation.

Local clubs, including Westcliff Rugby Club, were advised to prepare for possible evacuation, though police later determined it was unnecessary. Pete Jones, the club’s chairman, explained that the crash site was around 1,000 meters from their clubhouse, and although they could see smoke rising, their event was allowed to continue.

The Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) is now leading the inquiry, working alongside Essex Police to determine what caused the aircraft to lose control so abruptly. Chief Superintendent Morgan Cronin stressed the importance of gathering all available evidence in the early stages of the investigation and urged residents to use the police’s dedicated major incident portal rather than emergency lines to report information.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander expressed her sympathy to everyone affected, stating that she is receiving regular updates on the situation. Local elected officials also shared their concern and commended first responders for their swift action.

While commercial operations at London Southend Airport have been suspended, passengers have been advised to contact their airlines directly for alternative arrangements. The Dutch aviation company has pledged full cooperation with investigators and extended its condolences to all impacted by the incident.

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