



CHAIRMEN OF WEST HAM 'LUCKY NOT TO HAVE BEEN ON BOARD DOOMED ESSEX AIRCRAFT'

News / Personalities



The **chairmen of West Ham** United have said they were fortunate *not to be* on the doomed aircraft which crashed in **Essex** on Saturday, killing two people.

David Sullivan and David Gold were scheduled to fly from Stapleford Airport to the north east where their team had a Premier League match with Sunderland.

The pair could have flown on either one of the two light aircraft available to them - including the Beechcraft King Air 200 turboprop aircraft, which crashed in a field in Chigwell shortly before 10.20am.

A spokesman for the football club confirmed the pair had been due to fly from the airport but had to change their plans when they arrived to find it closed.

The scene of a light aircraft crash in a field off Gravel Lane in Chigwell, Essex

The scene of a light aircraft crash in a field off Gravel Lane in Chigwell, Essex Photo: PA

Mr Sullivan said: "The aviation company, London Executive Aviation (LEA), have two planes and

we have flown on that particular plane about 50 times.

"It was 50/50 whether we got on the plane that crashed or the other one. It's a real shock. My heart goes out to the families of the pilots, it's very, very sad.

"When we arrived at the airport it was already closed off because of the crash and we had to divert to Stansted to get a flight to Newcastle to get to the Sunderland game. We were a bit late for the match.

"We used that airline all the time and they are really excellent."

Investigations are continuing into how the aircraft **crashed** only moments after take-off.

Both people on board were described by LEA as "highly-experienced professional pilots".

Witnesses reported hearing a "loud bang" and "the ground shaking" as the eight-seater aircraft came down a short distance away from where members of the Girl Guides were camping.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, who were called to the scene, said the aircraft was "100 per cent alight" when they arrived.

The Air Accidents Investigation Branch has sent a team to investigate the incident.

Detective chief inspector Stephen Jennings, of Essex Police, said: "We are working together with the Air Accidents Investigation Branch and the Essex Coroner's Office.

"The recovery and forensic investigations will take some time and we appreciate the patience of the local landowners and residents whilst this work continues.

"Our thoughts are with the families of those who died and we offer our deepest sympathies to them."

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SOURCE: THE TELEGRAPH

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