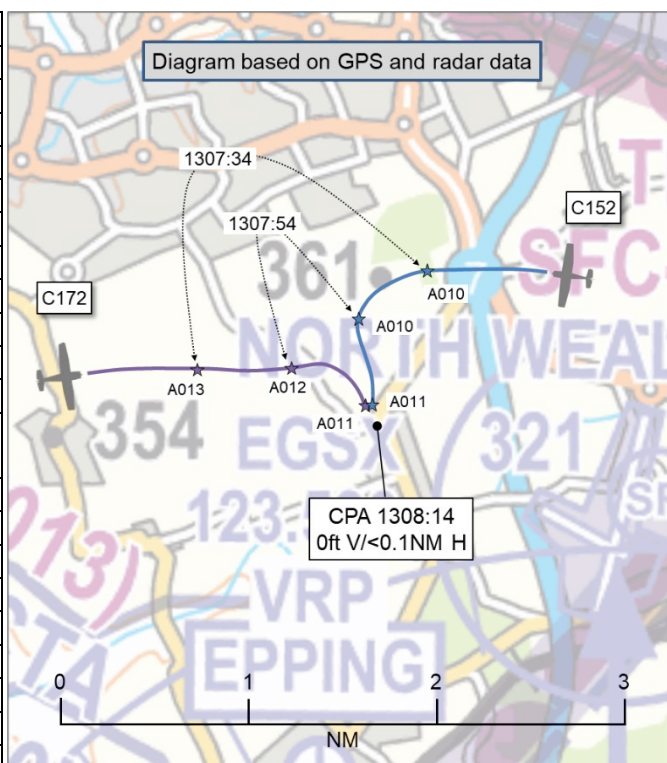


AIRPROX REPORT No 2026069

Date: 09 May 2026 Time: 1308Z Position: 5144N 00007E Location: IVO North Weald

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	C152	C172
Operator	Civ FW	Civ FW
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	AGCS	AGCS
Provider	North Weald Radio	North Weald Radio
Altitude/FL	1100ft	1100ft
Transponder	A, C, S	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	White, green	Blue, white
Lighting	Beacon, nav	Landing, taxi, nav, strobes, beacon
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	>10km
Altitude/FL	1200ft	1200ft
Altimeter	QNH (1017hPa)	QNH (1017hPa)
Heading	180°	170°
Speed	90kt	90kt
ACAS/TAS	SkyEcho	Not fitted
Alert	None	N/A
Separation at CPA		
Reported	0ft V/<200m H	50ft V/300m H
Recorded	0ft V/<0.1NM H	



THE C152 PILOT reports that they were flying circuits as PIC to check-out their student prior to a second solo flight. On the first circuit, they were established downwind and the student had started downwind checks when they became aware of a C172 heading towards them at the same height on an easterly heading from 3 o'clock [at a reported range of <500m]. Almost as soon as they saw the C172, it started a 180° turn to the right and cleared the circuit to the west. The Closest Point of Approach was believed to have been <200m. Both pilots were in RT contact with North Weald Radio, and they believe that the C172 pilot was attempting a downwind join from the west and was unaware of the position [of the C152] on the downwind leg. [The C152 pilot opines that], on observing [the C152], the C172 pilot had taken effective avoiding action and had left the circuit to the west. Had this action not been taken, they believe the C172 would have passed close behind [the C152].

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'Low'.

THE C172 PILOT reports that their flight, up to the point of the Airprox, was uneventful. At position BPK VOR, to the west of North Weald airfield, they contacted North Weald Radio on 123.530MHz and reported their position, stating that they were inbound from the west and requested airfield information for re-join. They were given the local QNH (1017hPa) along with the runway in use RW02 left-hand, which they read back and set in their altimeter. They were then listening on the frequency to build situational awareness of other traffic and their positions. They heard [the pilot of] one aircraft on downwind, and another approaching from the east (which was later found to be [a C152]¹). They believe there were several other aircraft but they cannot recall their positions. [The pilot of the C172] was monitoring their [own] position and altitude as the conditions at 1200ft were somewhat turbulent and

¹ The pilot of the C172 provided the registration of a C152 that had joined from the east, which was not the Airprox C152 in the circuit.

were causing the aircraft to gain some altitude. Due to the proximity to Stansted CTA (above 1500ft) it required extra attention.

As they approached the circuit from the west, they could not see other aircraft in the circuit. They could not recall hearing [the pilots of] other aircraft reporting 'downwind', or 'joining crosswind', and the [previously heard] position reports [had been] around 5min prior, therefore, they positioned themselves on a shallow right turn to join the downwind leg (from heading 090°, to approximately 170°).

As they were about parallel, and approximately 200m from the downwind leg, they sighted the other aircraft at approximately 300m on a relative bearing of 270° and around 50ft below. They immediately initiated a right turn back to a westerly heading, away from the circuit, and reported "*holding to the west of the circuit*". They heard the [pilot of the] other aircraft reporting the Airprox on the frequency. After completing a single 'race track' hold, they re-joined downwind and carried out a normal approach and landing.

After the flight, they telephoned the 'Tower' to enquire on the other aircraft's registration. The A/G Operator informed them that [the pilot of a C152²] was joining from the east, at the same time that they were joining from the west.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE NORTH WEALD AGO reports that [the pilot of the C152] departed to remain in the circuit and [the pilot of the C172] was inbound from west to join downwind for RW02 left-hand. [The pilot of the C172] had been on frequency for several minutes, during which time multiple other stations had called. There were two A/G Operators on duty at the time. Their immediate concern was paying attention to final and departing traffic. Appropriate responses were made to other traffic when appropriate and able. [The pilot of the C172] reported leaving the circuit and, shortly afterwards, [the pilot of the C152] reported a near miss with [the C172]. Due to workload, they did not progress this further as they were still dealing with high traffic levels.

Factual Background

The website for North Weald airfield provides the following information:

- Circuit altitude 1200ft (QNH), circuit height 900ft (QFE).
- Arrivals: Downwind join when arriving from the west.

The weather at Stansted Airport was recorded as follows:

METAR EGSS 091250Z AUTO 03005KT 340V060 9999 NCD 20/05 Q1017
METAR EGSS 091320Z AUTO 09008KT 040V130 9999 NCD 20/04 Q1017

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

An analysis of the NATS radar replay was undertaken and both aircraft could be positively identified from Mode S data (Figure 1). The C152, but not the C172, was observed by reference to ADS-B data sources. The pilot of the C172 kindly supplied GPS track data for their flight. The diagram was constructed and the separation at CPA determined by combining the data sources.

² The pilot of the C172 provided the registration of a C152 that had joined from the east, which was not the Airprox C152 in the circuit.

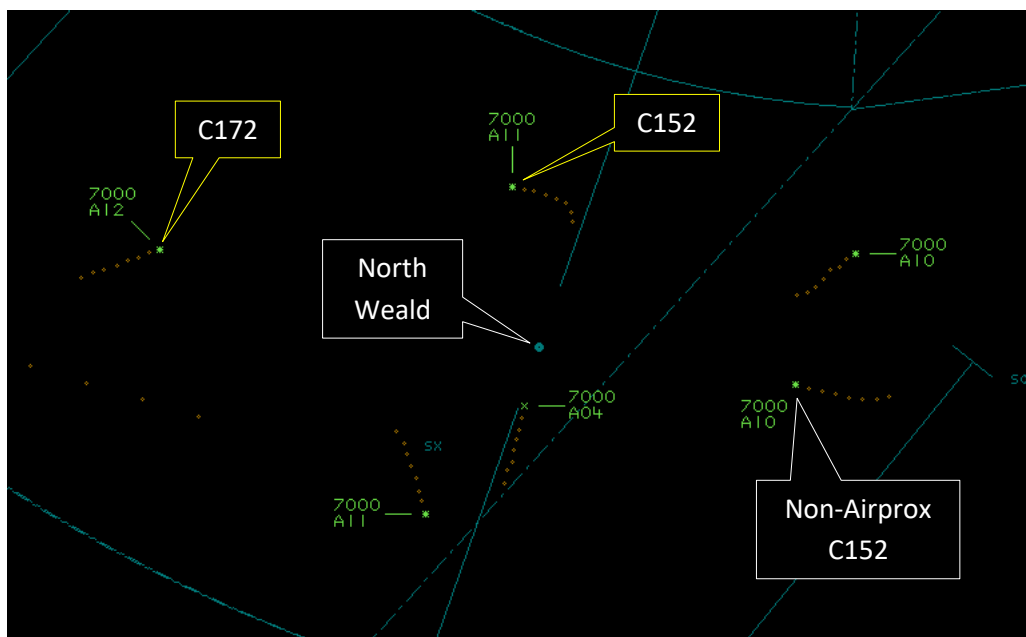


Figure 1 – Aircraft positions at 1307:04

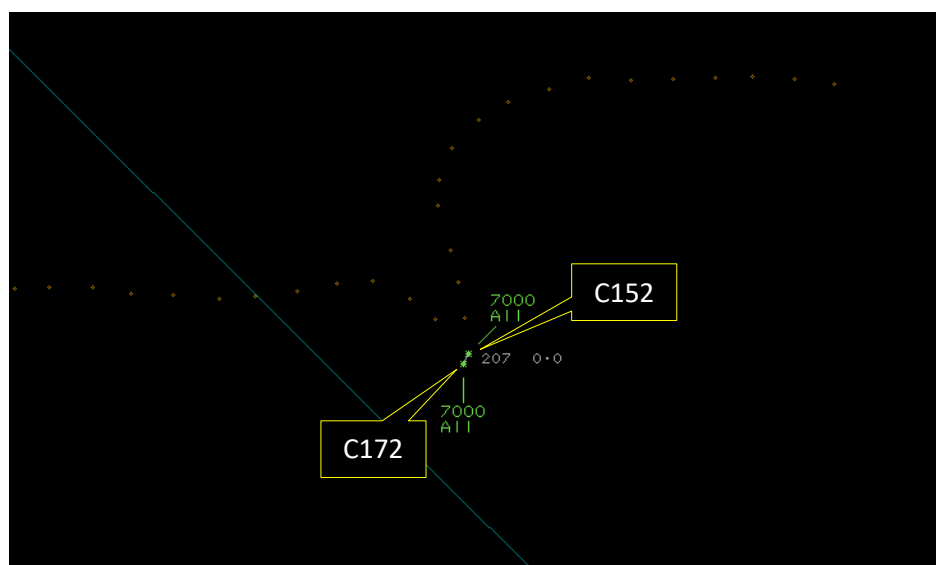


Figure 2 – CPA at 1308:14

The C152 and C172 pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard.³ An aircraft operated on or in the vicinity of an aerodrome shall conform with or avoid the pattern of traffic formed by other aircraft in operation.⁴

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a C152 and a C172 flew into proximity in the vicinity of North Weald aerodrome at 1308Z on Saturday 9th May 2026. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, in receipt of an AGCS from North Weald Radio.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, GPS track data for the flight of the C172, radar photographs/video recordings and a report from the AGO involved. Relevant contributory factors

³ (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity.

⁴ (UK) SERA.3225 Operation on and in the Vicinity of an Aerodrome.

mentioned during the Board's discussions are highlighted within the text in bold, with the numbers referring to the Contributory Factors table displayed in Part C.

The Board first considered the actions of the pilot of the C152, and members noted that they had been conducting circuit training with their student. It was noted that, whilst on the downwind leg, they had sighted the C172 as it had approached from their 3 o'clock. Members agreed that the EC device fitted to the C152 would not have been expected to have detected the C172 (**CF3**). It was also agreed that the pilot of the C152 had heard the earlier joining calls made by the C172 pilot and, therefore, had had generic, rather than specific, situational awareness of its presence before it had been visually acquired (**CF2**). Members pondered the timing of the encounter and surmised that, given that the C152 pilot reported that *"Almost as soon as they saw the C172, it started a 180° turn to the right"*, the moment of first sighting had been at the Closest Point of Approach. Members agreed that that had, effectively, been a non-sighting (**CF5**). Explaining the point further, members agreed that the C152 pilot had had no time to have taken any avoiding action before CPA, the point at which the C172 pilot had just begun to turn away.

Members next turned their attention to the actions of the pilot of the C172. It was noted that, after having made contact with the North Weald AGO, and having received airfield information, they had monitored the frequency to build situational awareness of other traffic in the vicinity. Members noted that they had been aware of one aircraft on downwind, and another approaching from the east. It was therefore agreed by members that they had gleaned generic situational awareness of the presence of the C152 (**CF2**). Members were keen to point out that, had the C172 been fitted with an additional (and compatible) EC device, it may have provided a timely alert to the proximity of traffic in the circuit.

Members noted that the C172 pilot recalled that the conditions had been somewhat turbulent, and wondered whether that may, perhaps, have been a distraction in the critical moments before they had joined the circuit pattern. Members appreciated that, for several minutes before they had turned right to enter the downwind leg, the C172 pilot had not heard (or had not assimilated) other pilots report 'downwind', or 'joining crosswind'. Notwithstanding, members suggested that it may have been prudent to have requested further information to have positively ascertained the presence (or otherwise) and position of circuit traffic before they proceeded with their downwind join. Members wished to emphasise the imperative of building an accurate mental model of the circuit traffic, and to be certain of aircraft positions before integrating into the circuit. Members noted that the C172 pilot had subsequently sighted the C152, and agreed that that had been a late sighting (**CF4**). It was appreciated that they had taken decisive action to resolve the close proximity and had elected to leave the circuit to the west. Nevertheless, it was agreed by members that the C172 pilot had not conformed with, nor had they effectively avoided, the pattern of traffic in the circuit (**CF1**).

Members next considered the actions of the North Weald AGO, and it was noted that the workload had appeared to have been quite high. Members agreed that the AGO had not been permitted to have sequenced the traffic in the circuit, but had passed relevant information to have assisted the pilots involved. Members agreed that there had been little else that they could have done to have helped the situation. It was noted that, during their conversation with the C172 pilot after landing, the AGO had provided them with the registration of an aircraft that had not been involved in the Airprox incident. That indicated to members that the AGO had not been aware of the Airprox incident when the encounter had unfolded.

Members turned their attention to the airspace surrounding North Weald and the nature of the expected join to the circuit. It was noted that the airfield, with an elevation of 185ft, is situated beneath the Stansted CTA which has a base (in that area) of 1500ft. The website for North Weald airfield provides the circuit altitude as 1200ft. Consequently, pilots are not able to perform an overhead join which, in most circumstances, is considered preferable in that it may afford the greatest opportunity for pilots to observe the airfield, and to identify any circuit traffic, before they commence a descent into the circuit. As an unlicensed general aviation aerodrome, pilots are directed to the airfield's official website for arrival procedures, which are as follows:

Arrivals:

Crosswind join when arriving from the east: When joining crosswind for runway 20, please join over the 02 numbers heading towards Thornwood. Ensure you keep Woodside Industrial Estate to your left-hand side.

Downwind join when arriving from the west.

Members wondered whether the procedures remain sufficiently robust, given that the aerodrome's position beneath the Stansted CTA is extremely limiting in terms of options for pilots to separate vertically from other aircraft. Furthermore, "North Weald has over 40,000 movements per annum and this is going to increase further".⁵ Members felt that the matter warranted further investigation and resolved to make a Recommendation:

The North Weald aerodrome operator considers additional mitigations to mid-air collision for aircraft joining the visual circuit.

Concluding their discussion, member's thoughts turned to the matter of the risk of collision. Although both pilots had had generic situational awareness of the presence of the other aircraft, the pilot of the C152 had not sighted the C172 in time to have taken any avoiding action, and the pilot of the C172 had sighted the C152 late. It was agreed that the C172 pilot had taken urgent avoiding action to have increased the separation at the last minute, and members agreed that safety margins had been reduced much below the norm. The Board concluded that there had been a risk of collision (**CF6**) and assigned Risk Category B to this event.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

	2026069			
CF	Factor	Description	ECCAIRS Amplification	UKAB Amplification
	Flight Elements			
	• Tactical Planning and Execution			
1	Human Factors	• Monitoring of Environment	Events involving flight crew not to appropriately monitoring the environment	Did not avoid/conform with the pattern of traffic already formed
	• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action			
2	Contextual	• Situational Awareness and Sensory Events	Events involving a flight crew's awareness and perception of situations	Pilot had no, late, inaccurate or only generic, Situational Awareness
	• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance			
3	Technical	• ACAS/TCAS System Failure	An event involving the system which provides information to determine aircraft position and is primarily independent of ground installations	Incompatible CWS equipment
	• See and Avoid			
4	Human Factors	• Identification/Recognition	Events involving flight crew not fully identifying or recognising the reality of a situation	Late sighting by one or both pilots
5	Human Factors	• Monitoring of Other Aircraft	Events involving flight crew not fully monitoring another aircraft	Non-sighting or effectively a non-sighting by one or both pilots
	• Outcome Events			
6	Contextual	• Near Airborne Collision with Aircraft	An event involving a near collision by an aircraft with an aircraft, balloon, dirigible or other piloted air vehicles	

Degree of Risk: B.

⁵ <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/leisure/northweald/about-north-weald-airfield/>

Recommendation: The North Weald aerodrome operator considers additional mitigations to mid-air collision for aircraft joining the visual circuit.

Safety Barrier Assessment⁶

In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the key factors had been that:

Ground Elements:

Situational Awareness of the Confliction and Action were assessed as **not used** because the North Weald AGO had not been permitted to have sequenced the traffic in the circuit.

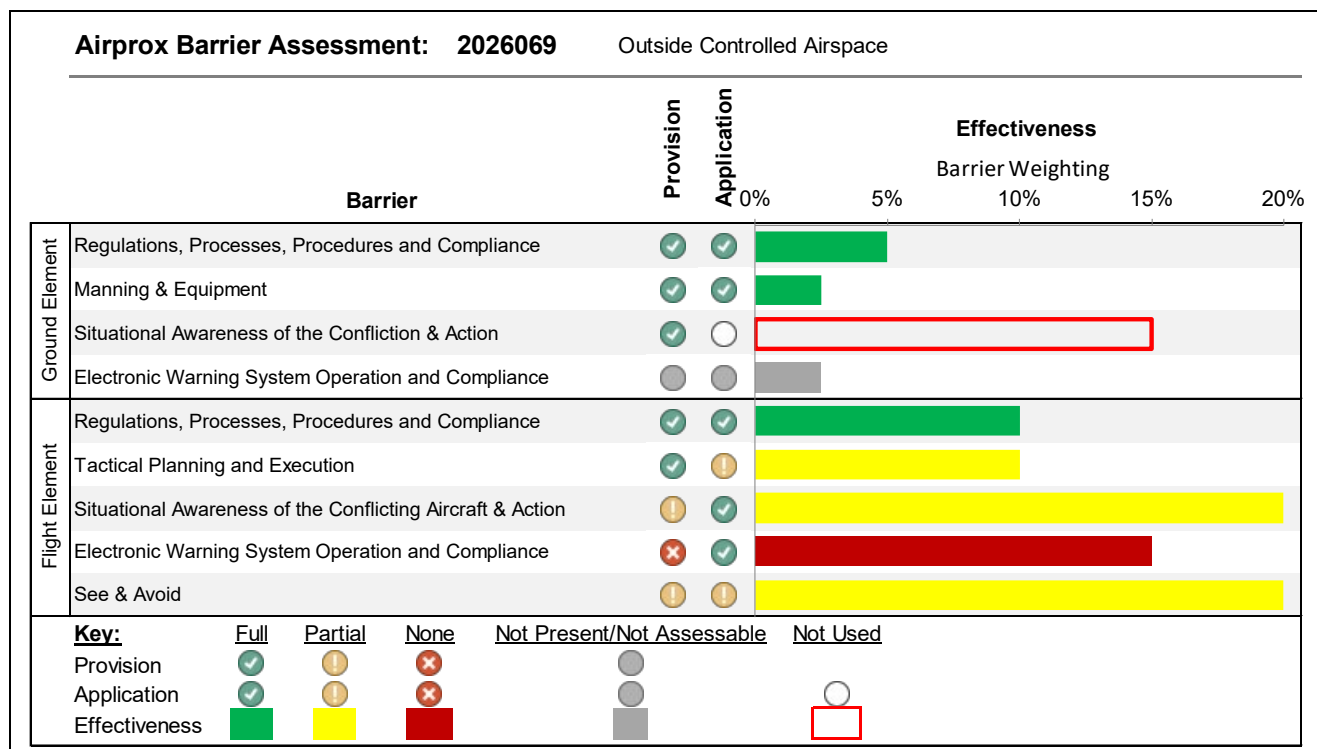
Flight Elements:

Tactical Planning and Execution was assessed as **partially effective** because the pilot of the C172 had not conformed with, nor effectively avoided, the pattern of traffic in the circuit.

Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action were assessed as **partially effective** because both pilots had only generic situational awareness of the presence of the other aircraft.

Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance were assessed as **ineffective** because the EC device fitted to the C152 would not have been expected to have detected the C172.

See and Avoid were assessed as **partially effective** because the pilot of the C172 had sighted the C152 late. The pilot of the C152 had not sighted the C172 until the moment of CPA.



⁶ The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the [UKAB Website](#).