Accident

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Beechcraft King Air C90GTx, D-IMEP	
No & Type of Engines:	2 Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A-135 turboprop engines	
Year of Manufacture:	2010 (Serial no: LJ-2026)	
Date & Time (UTC):	1 June 2024 at 1437 hrs	
Location:	London Biggin Hill Airport	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damage to the passenger cabin door assembly	
Commander's Licence:	Commercial Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	57 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	4,825 hours (of which 2,821 were on type) Last 90 days - 9 hours Last 28 days - 4 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and additional enquiries made by the AAIB	

Synopsis

The cabin door, although the external door handle appeared to be in the locked position, opened during the climb after takeoff. The aircraft returned for a safe landing.

History of the flight

The pilot reported that he boarded the aircraft and closed the passenger cabin door but shortly after takeoff, whilst passing through 1,700 ft amsl, the red warning annunciator for the cabin door began to flicker. It then illuminated steadily and, simultaneously, he heard a bang that he attributed to the cabin door having come open. He immediately made a PAN call to ATC and returned to the airport for a safe landing.

The airport's apron CCTV was reviewed by the on-duty airport manager, and according to the pilot, showed that the external door handle was in the closed position. Both the pilot checklist and Pilot Operating Handbook detail several visual checks that should be made on the door locking mechanism, as well as a mechanical check to ensure the door handle is in the locked position, that are intended to confirm the cabin door has been properly secured prior to departure.

The aircraft manufacturer advised that there have only been two other events on the King Air 90 series where the passenger cabin door has inadvertently opened during flight.