

Announcement from Colin Shearn following court case

Some of you know that I was in court two weeks ago, charged by Surrey Police for antisocial behaviour. Originally, the injunction stated if I "*caused harassment, alarm or distress, nuisance or annoyance to anyone in England and Wales*" I could be immediately arrested. Clearly, I could not accept an injunction that would mean I could be arrested as soon as I annoyed anyone, for any reason, so I had to challenge the claim.

Surrey Police relied on vast amounts of witness statements known as "hearsay" evidence that cannot be challenged in court. Some witness statements were more than 15 pages long and covered a period of more than 10 years. Witness statements were untrue, misleading or embellished. Evidence that should have been provided by Surrey Police under a process known as "disclosure" was not provided. Evidence that was provided related to other people and some of it appeared to be doctored. Even though the allegations regarding me disturbing the airport and FACC were dropped two weeks prior to the trial, 340 pages of case documentation was submitted by Surrey Police just three days before trial that included all the Farnborough allegations and documentation. The court procedures do not allow people to speak – they can only be questioned by a barrister. So even when supposed "facts" were being discussed in court, that can be shown to be untrue, you can't do anything about it. We have a situation where Surrey Police can't send an officer to investigate a break-in but it can spend hundreds of hours over a period of more than a year collaborating witness statements at the tax-payers' expense to unreasonably prosecute a member of the public. You may be absolutely staggered by this supposed "judicial process" but given the recent scandals like the Post Office and Met Police, it is more common than you might think.

I was given a two-year Anti Social Behaviour Injunction and all costs were awarded against me. These come to £67,000, largely because of the volume of documentation submitted by Surrey Police. Having spent the past 15 years giving my time to society as a school governor, charity trustee, protector of wildlife and regular volunteer to many environmental organisations, as well as all the work relating to Farnborough Airport, this outcome is as punitive as it is unreasonable.

We are still in the position where the airport, the CAA and the DfT won't answer questions, provide information and just run us round the houses rather than addressing the valid concerns raised. Sure, it is annoying for them but lying and providing false statements to court is not acceptable. Philip Riley, chair of the FACC, should immediately step down, apologise to me, and compensate me for the defamation in his statement to Surrey Police that he subsequently withdrew and he should compensate FNG for submitting false statements just two weeks before the airport consultation started that resulted in major disruption to the public communication and engagement we had arranged.

I cannot battle with organisations and people who lie and get away with it through the judicial process. The cost to me and to my family in recent years has been enormous. Conversely, walking away is an admission of defeat and a lot of people have given much time and effort themselves in challenging these issues. I am going to take some time to think about next steps. If there are people who have knowledge, experience or advice that would be helpful (no offensive comments please, I've had my fair share already), please message me.

Colin Shearn, 25th February 2024