

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales

A story from the magistrates blog The Sharp End

28/01/10 ... <http://thelawwestofealingbroadway.blogspot.com/>
or GOTO our **links** and enter **magistrate** in **search**

A year or so ago.

A man in his sixties is before the court. He has pleaded not guilty a few times but has finally decided to listen to his solicitor and accept that he doesn't have a ghost of a defence to the allegation of driving without insurance. The offence is technical, but the insurance laws are very rigid.

His representative is not, to be frank, **very good. We have to prompt him** in the right direction and he finally puts forward the arguments that we have already taken on board.

No Insurance is a Strict Liability offence, and there are few defences, other than having had a proper policy. We decide that we are hearing an honest man's account that he was, while in breach of the law, genuinely misled by brokers he relied on about whether or not he was insured.

We decided on an Absolute Discharge, no costs, and we found special reasons not to endorse his licence or disqualify him.

I told him our decision, and it took a moment for him to work out what I was saying, even though I did my best to be clear.

He broke down and sobbed, unable to speak, and I said, as gently as I could, "That's the end of it, you may go".

That decent honest man, with no previous convictions, had probably gone through purgatory pending the only court case he had ever been involved in. We did what we thought was right. I could not put out of my mind the swaggering contempt that some young offenders show to the court when charged with nasty, serious offences.

That's the kind of thing that makes the whole job worth doing.

The PPP comments ... this story mirrors just one of many brought to our attention in N.Wales ... an ANPR purge by NWPF resulted in a respectable and elderly driver being harshly treated by a police officer. The insurance company had not updated the National database. Similar abuses, using mobile speed cameras, of the decent majority are a daily occurrence across North Wales.

This magistrate is an absolute breath of fresh air BUT must air his views and recount his experiences in a secret blog. WHY is this? In this so called haven of freedom and democracy.

We reiterate, the power to do good and protect the vulnerable is the ultimate privilege of those we give the power to ...how often do they take advantage of it?