

Congleton Chronicle



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Dad wins 'justice, not vengeance' for death of son

By Kayleigh Williams

A Congleton father who lost two children in road accidents 25 years apart said he was "vindicated" by a court decision on Tuesday.

Keith Austin, of Semper Close, was the father of Karl Austin, a cyclist and member of Congleton Cycling Club who died when he was struck by a lorry on the A50, at Etwall.

The driver, Michael Bray, (62), 1, East View, Langwith Junction, Mansfield, who pleaded guilty to causing death by careless driving was told

by a district judge sitting at South Derbyshire Magistrates Court, that he would face a higher court for sentencing.

Mr Austin said he was relieved because at a previous hearing, the Crown Prosecution Service had not made an adequate case.

Karl Austin, of Bellringer Close, Biddulph, had been participating in a time trial on 30th June, the day his sister, Kim, would have turned 44 had she not been killed in a car crash in 1986.

In his statement read out in court, their father Keith, said: "We did not expect much justice, for we are all too aware that the once highly-

rated fairness of British justice is merely a myth.

"Neither are we vengeful: there is no wish on our part that Mr Bray should face years in prison, and that his family should suffer accordingly.

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True blue: Congleton MP Fiona Bruce joined pupils and staff at Mossley Primary School, Congleton, on Friday at the official opening of an extension to the school, which includes a new "learning zone." For more information, and to see what else the school has been up to, turn to page 35. ("Chronicle" photo. 1006a/12).

Boy threatened town councillor and natted head teacher: court

A 15-year-old, who pushed a town councillor into a hedge and head-butted a head teacher, has narrowly escaped prison.

The youth, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, pleaded guilty on Thursday at South Cheshire Youth Court to assault, criminal damage and using threatening behaviour.

The Crewe court heard that on the evening of 6th January the youth went to Coun Glen Williams's house at Edinburgh Road, Congleton, and smashed a glass panel in his front door. Beverley Dobson, prosecuting, said Mr Williams recognised the youth and phoned the police. The youth became agitated, shouting at the councillor before pushing him into a hawthorn hedge outside his home.

Mr Williams told him to calm down but the defendant shouted: "I'll f*****g kill you".

Of the second incident, Ms Dobson, said that the youth was found in the main reception area of Congleton High School, Box Lane, on 10th February.

He said he was looking for a boy called Chris, and he was going to "f*****g have him". The youth told staff: "If you don't get out my way, I'm going to knock you" and "I'll f*****g have you, you f*****g b***h, if you don't tell me."

The court heard that the 15-year-old then squared up to the head teacher, David Hermitt,

who had been alerted to the commotion, saying: "Come on then!" before, head-butting him on the nose.

According to Ms Dobson, the defendant, when interviewed, said he had gone to the school to confront "Chris" about an argument they had had. He became angry when he could not find him and Mr Hermitt got in his way.

In his statement, Mr Hermitt observed: "I'm 6 foot 3 inches tall but he was unperturbed."

Tim Edgeley, defending, said: "We're not talking about your average individual; he has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. He sets himself up for confrontation but not because he's bored or he feels like it."

He told magistrates that a custodial sentence would be "washing our hands of him" instead of giving him the support that he needed, saying: "This is someone who struggles to comprehend the consequences of his behaviour. He sees things differently but he's not a lost cause. He wants to learn and he wants to change."

"He doesn't see anything but the net result. Custody isn't going to alter his fundamental belief of the way he deals with confrontation. It should be the last resort."

Elizabeth Pacht, chairman of the Bench, asked the defendant if he went to school.

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Cheshire Lady



20A, MILL STREET, CONGLETON.
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