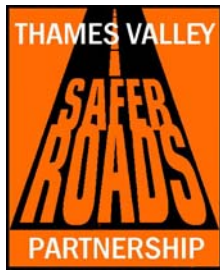


PRESS RELEASE



Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership

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From	Dan Campsall
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Magistrates Award £3000 Costs Over a £60 Speeding Fine

Thomas Francis WATKINS pleaded guilty to a speeding offence at Newbury Magistrate's court yesterday but was met with an £80 fine, 3 penalty points and costs awarded of £3000.

The offence took place on 7th August 2004, when a car driven by the defendant Mr WATKINS, 59 of Discovery Court, Newbury was detected travelling at 49 mph in a 40 mph speed limit, along the A4 Bath Road, Tilehurst, READING. The offence was detected by a mobile speed enforcement van.

Mr WATKINS was represented by Barry Culshaw and supported by expert witness Dr Michael Clark. The defence initially attempted to cast doubt upon both the accuracy of the equipment used and the ability of the operator despite being presented with certificates of conformity and calibration certificates for the device used.

The full trial was set for the 29th and 30th November 2006 at Newbury Magistrates Court, but at the pre-trial review Mr WATKINS was advised by Mr Culshaw to change his plea to guilty.

Culshaw & Clark had also represented a Dr Annette Abbott at Sudbury Magistrates' Court, Suffolk on 11 October 2006. In spite of their evidence District Judge David Cooper found Dr Abbott guilty and she was fined £500 with £2000 costs; her licence being endorsed with 6 penalty points.

Commenting on the outcome of the case, Malcolm Collis from Thames Valley Police, Roads Policing Department said:

"It is regrettable that motorists have been persuaded to try and argue their case based on poor counsel. The defendant in this case now has to meet an extremely large bill for costs after taking the advice of those calling themselves experts in this field.

We would encourage motorists to think carefully before pursuing the case through the courts; where the fines may be higher and significant costs may be incurred, in the hope that they may get off on a technicality. Most of the arguments have been shown to have no bearing upon the offence of speeding."

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