

# SHEFFIELD TREE ACTION GROUPS (STAG)

Press Release

18 July 2018

## NO CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST TREE CAMPAIGNERS

### Police investigation stopped

### Three innocent Tree Protectors suffer months of oppressive treatment

This week the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) announced that it would not pursue assault charges against three people dating back to January for 'evidential' reasons. The allegations were based on accusations from security guards employed by Sheffield City Council contractors, Amey. Such claims against tree campaigners have been made repeatedly by Amey staff but so far only one case has come to court and the defendant was found Not Guilty.

Two of the people accused wish to remain anonymous but **Martin Young** has made a detailed statement about his experience (on following pages)

**Martin Young** summed up his experience:

*I was accused of two different alleged assaults on the same day on Meersbrook Park Road while Amey were attempting to fell healthy street trees against the wishes of a large number of local residents who mounted a strong protest.*

*The evidence was very dubious, including a claim that I had broken a guard's wrist even though there was no medical evidence of the injury, and no video or independent evidence of the incident. Yet I was treated like a violent criminal, pulled out of bed in the early morning and held in cells for five hours not knowing what was happening. The police confiscated my phone, that I depend on for my self-employed work, and did not return it for six weeks, so I lost a lot of work. There was no reason for this as it does not take six weeks to get the data from a phone.*

*In Britain you are innocent until a court has proved you guilty, but I was treated with no respect, constantly misled and messed about, and my right to lead my life was ignored. The stress on me and my family was huge. Then after six months the authorities decided they don't have the evidence to take me to court. Why did it take so long? It feels like those who stand up to authority in Sheffield just get trodden on and those in power are too quick to believe one another.*

## Contact:

STAG press team: [sheffieldtreeactiongroupsmedia@gmail.com](mailto:sheffieldtreeactiongroupsmedia@gmail.com)

## **Martin Young's Full Account of his experience**

**I was arrested February 19th 2018 for two counts of assault.**

One being Aggravated Bodily Harm (ABH) - fracturing a security man's wrist.

The second being ABH - bruising and scratching another security man's hand.

This all allegedly occurred at a tree protest on Meersbrook Park Road on January 22nd 2018..

**All charges against me have been dropped!**

I've been left with what little faith I had in the police force and our 'justice' system shattered.

I was arrested at 7am at my home, dragged out of my bed by three plain-clothed police officers.

At the time I didn't even know they were police and having literally just woken up the whole event was really traumatising for me. I was then held in a cell for five hours until my interview. Eventually at 6pm I was returned home. Oh yes and obviously no breakfast.

**The only evidence the police needed to treat me as some kind of pond scum was statements from the security guard's colleagues.** There was no video footage of the incidents, no photos, not even an x-ray to prove the bloke had a broken wrist!!

Basically: *"Oi police this guy broke my wrist and my colleagues say so too! Go and arrest him."*

*"Yes sir, right away sir!"*

**I had my phone seized for six weeks** and lost a lot of work due to this as my business runs through my phone mainly. Not only this but obviously organising my life became quite difficult. I might have been better able to deal with this if I was told my phone would be taken for six months but the police kept stringing me along, saying I'd "have it back next week sir" and "*so sorry sir it'll be in a few days*". Utter rubbish. I had to be in at home at certain times to wait for the police to call my landline. Often they'd forget to call me or never call. I appreciate they are busy, but they should have some respect and a bit of courtesy...they even gave me the wrong number to contact them

**Was the police action proportionate?** It feels to me that the system was prejudiced against me as an ordinary person and rigged in favour of those who know how to play the system.

**All I wanted to do was exercise my right to protest and to defend people from harm as I am entitled under the Criminal Law Act and common law.** I never wanted to harm anyone and I didn't. I was trying to keep the peace on our streets and stop security guards hurting members of the public by using completely unreasonable force...all caught on camera, and I have the footage.

**I was then kept on bail with these charges hanging over me for more than four months. My friends and family, especially my mum, have been worried sick about me.** I was messed around even further. I was due in to report for bail on a couple of occasions, took the day off work,

rearranged important appointments, only to receive an email, not even a phone call, to say I wasn't needed or to attend a week later! Treated like my time meant nothing once again.

**After six months since my arrest the charges have finally been dropped.** What a waste of increasingly stretched police and public resources. What a waste of my time. What a massive stress and drama, all because the police were acting on command of AMEY and our lovely council to arrest protesters and squash the movement of peaceful campaigners.

The police are NOT impartial, they don't work for us, the people, they work for private corporations and political interest.

**Our council then made public statements unsubstantiated by any facts** that protesters (me!) had broken a security guard's wrist at a protest and bruised another man's hand. Should they be releasing statements based on hearsay, with no factual basis? They have an agenda and it is not to serve the citizens of this city. It is to serve big business and private investment. To make money and put profit over the rights of the people.

**If you thought your police force was working for the good of the people please think again.**

**If you thought our council was serving the interests of the people please think again.**

**I'm ecstatic about charges being dropped!**

**The truth always comes out!**

**Power to the peaceful!**