

Claimant  
S A Pateman  
Second  
SP2  
14 November 2022  
Claim No: G00LU797

**IN THE LUTON COUNTY COURT  
B E T W E E N :**

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Claimant**

**-and-**

**(1) PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO PARTICIPATE OR INTEND  
TO PARTICIPATE IN CAR CRUISES IN STEVENAGE,  
AS CAR DRIVERS, PASSENGERS AND/OR SPECTATORS**

**First Defendants**

**(2) PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO, OR WHO INTEND TO,  
PROMOTE, ORGANISE OR PUBLICISE  
CAR CRUISES IN STEVENAGE**

**Second Defendants**

---

**SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
SARAH ANN PATEMAN**

---

I **SARAH ANN PATEMAN**, Community Safety Manager of Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, SG1 1HN, **WILL SAY AS FOLLOWS:**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. I am an officer of the Claimant local authority, by whom I have been employed for 17 years and in this role for 4 years. I am authorised by the Council to

make this statement in support of its application to renew the injunction granted by this Court on 7 December 2020, prohibiting car cruising in the area of Stevenage.

2. Where the information contained in this witness statement is derived from my own knowledge, it is true; where it is taken from the Council's files or it is something I have been told by someone else, it is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and the source of the information is indicated.
3. I refer in this statement to documents in an exhibit bundle marked SP2. References to pages in that bundle are in the form **SP2/[X]**.

### **STEPS TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE INJUNCTION**

4. Schedule 3 of the Injunction Order required the Council to serve the Order by:
  - a. Placing signage in prominent locations throughout Stevenage;
  - b. Ensuring that the injunction details are publicised in a local newspaper;
  - c. Posting the Order on its website, and publicising it using facebook and twitter, and requesting that the Police also publicise it via social media;
  - d. Posting the Order on relevant social media sites including motorheadz.uk; and/or
  - e. In any other like manner as appears likely to bring the Order to the attention of persons likely to be affected by it.
5. Exhibit SP2 contains the following documents:
  - a. A screenshot of the Council webpage (which has been continually up on its website) publicising the papers in the original injunction [**SP2/1**];
  - b. Copies of articles in the Comet [**SP2/2**] and on the BBC website [**SP2/3**];
  - c. A copy of the social media post made by the Council on the social media pages of car enthusiast groups which were known to publicise car-cruising in Stevenage (motorheadz.uk, Herts BMW Owners Club and Herts Car Society) [**SP2/4**]. For completeness, the Council was blocked from posting on the Facebook page of Cruise Herts, which was the group involved in organising the July 2019 event;

- d. Copies of the Police's social media posts [SP2/5];
- e. A Map showing the locations of signage erected and the Stevenage boundary [SP2/6]; and
- f. A photograph of the signage in situ [SP2/7].

## **EFFECT OF THE INJUNCTION**

- 6. My First Witness Statement, given in support of the Council's application for the 2020 Injunction, describes the efforts of the Community Safety Partnership, and Hertfordshire Police, to deal with the issue of car cruising up to July 2020.
- 7. Since the Injunction was granted in 2020, however, car-cruising and the related nuisance issues have in practical terms stopped (although I am aware of the incidents referred to in Chief Inspector Walsingham's statement which I have read). There has been no feedback received by the Council from residents on the effect of the injunction, or regarding car-cruising generally or the nuisance issues (in particular noise) that are associated with it. This indicates to me that the injunction has been effective, in that the only feedback we would expect would be by way of complaints about ongoing problems.
- 8. I am aware, as I have said, that as part of the enforcement process, the police have spoken to a small number of drivers about their behaviour, but in the vast majority of cases, the police concluded that there has not been the need to take formal enforcement action via the Courts, and to my knowledge, those drivers who were spoken to and given warning letters have not returned since or caused any further problems.
- 9. In the case of two drivers, an incident on 7 May 2021 did lead to a report by police to the Council to consider enforcement of the injunction by committal proceedings. The Council considered carefully whether enforcement action could be taken, including taking legal advice. In the end, I concluded that committal proceedings were not appropriate on the basis of the available evidence, given the criminal standard of proof applicable in those proceedings.

## REASONS FOR RENEWAL OF INJUNCTION

10. A substantial part of the Council's reasons for seeking the original Injunction was the ongoing risk posed by car-cruising of significant harm to both participants and local residents. The incident in July 2019 which I referred to in my previous statement injured 19 individuals, nine of whom were seriously injured; it could easily have resulted in fatalities. The two drivers involved were sentenced to four and five years in prison.
11. Similar incidents have occurred in other parts of the country since then. I understand that in April 2022, a 20-year-old spectator at a car meet in Warrington was killed by a participating driver.<sup>1</sup> In addition, on 24 September 2022, 11 individuals were injured at a car meet in Scunthorpe involving around 50 vehicles. One of the injured subsequently died and another, who was pregnant, suffered a miscarriage.<sup>2</sup>
12. In addition, car-cruising activity has caused psychological harm to Stevenage residents (e.g. from prolonged sleep loss), and there have been reports of residents moving home just to get away from the nuisance caused.
13. If the Injunction is not renewed, I consider it is highly likely that regular meets will return to Stevenage, given the long history of such activity in the town. As I explained in my first statement, because the population of car meets is inherently transient in nature, Stevenage could again become a magnet for drivers from the wider area, and employing alternative forms of enforcement action or engaging with attendees to deter them is difficult.
14. Further, if the injunction was no longer in place, I am sure that the local community would feel that they were no longer being protected from this long-standing, dangerous and highly disruptive behaviour. This was previously how many people felt., the local media would pick up on the case, and I recall that complaints were raised in the press several years ago complaining about car-cruising and arguing that the Council was not doing enough to prevent it.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2022-04-11/beautiful-son-killed-after-being-hit-by-audi-at-car-meet>

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/we-never-ever-forget-you-23656685>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-63075918>

<https://www.grimsbytelegraph.co.uk/news/local-news/scunthorpe-car-meet-crash-victim-7780670>

<https://thelincolnite.co.uk/2022/09/pregnant-womans-warning-after-losing-baby-in-scunthorpe-car-meet-crash/>

15. The Council therefore considers that in order to stop the issues returning the Injunction needs to be kept in place. The Injunction serves to promote and protect the interests of the inhabitants of Stevenage for various reasons, which include fostering a law-abiding ambience, and protecting the physical safety and amenity of the inhabitants and those visiting the town for work and leisure. Dealing with the amenity issues which car-cruising events generate has, before the injunction was granted, generated significant costs to the Council's and the police's budget.
16. I understand that the terms of the renewed Injunction would be the same, i.e. to stop "car-cruising" including meeting as a group, racing, driving in a convoy and spectating in Stevenage. This has stopped the gathering of cars and the associated nuisance including noise, speeding and dangerous driving.
17. As with the original Injunction, there is a need for alternative service as in most cases the police will not know who the individuals are, and it will not be possible to serve individually.
18. We have investigated the names that we have obtained from the Police in order to decide whether it is appropriate to proceed against any of them as named defendants. In particular, we have considered:
  - a. those to whom warning letters have been given;
  - b. those who were reported to the Council for enforcement; and
  - c. A named individual who informed police in July 2022 that he intended to organise a car meet in Stevenage in August 2022, but who did not do so once told by police about the injunction.
19. The Council has decided that it is not necessary to proceed against the people who were given warning letters or reported to the Council for enforcement. The vast majority of the incidents involving those people are now well over a year old, with the other incident being almost a year old (January 2022). None of those people involved were, to my knowledge, previously known to the police as car cruisers and none, to my knowledge, has ever been involved again in cruising. It seems to me to be disproportionate in those circumstances to issue proceedings against them. If the court takes a different view, however, the council is willing to comply with the court's directions.

20. As for the named individual above, the Council considers him to have behaved responsibly in contacting police in July 2022 to inform them of his intention to organise a car meet in Stevenage, and then in agreeing not to do so (but to hold it elsewhere) once told about this injunction. Given his reasonably current interest in car meets, however, the Council wrote to him on 7 November, informing him of its intention to make this application and asking him (i) whether or not he wished to participate in the litigation and be named as a defendant, and (ii) whether or not he would agree not to do any actions that would breach the injunction if renewed. On 10 November, this individual provided a signed confirmation to the Council that he does not wish to take part in these proceedings, and that he does not intend to participate in, promote, organise or publicise any car cruise in Stevenage so long as an injunction prohibiting these activities is in force. The Council has not, therefore, added him as a defendant to these proceedings and does not intend to communicate with him individually any further.
21. The Council is also seeking a renewal of the Power of Arrest granted with the original Injunction, against the drivers of vehicles and their passengers (but not spectators, and not organisers etc.).
22. The renewed Injunction would be publicised as before, using our local newspaper, the police and Council websites, social media posts, and leaflets to be given out at events and surgeries. The Council would retain the signage erected around the town.
23. The renewed Injunction would be enforced by the police, who will take the lead including arresting the individuals involved in the car cruising. Officers from the local authority would continue to support the police.

#### **PROPORTIONALITY AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

24. As a Borough Council we understand the complexity of people's lives and what issues affect them. Car Cruises have impacted on people's lives not just residents but also commuters and visitors to Stevenage both for work and for leisure.
25. We consider it to be our duty to do all we can to ensure that no-one comes into danger by allowing car-cruising to take over our roads, car parks and green spaces. Many lives were affected by the incident in 2019, which is still recent history in the town. That reason alone, in my view, continues to provide

a strong reason for making this application. I note the two further fatal incidents that have occurred since July 2019, in Warrington and Scunthorpe, to which I have referred above, and which continue to demonstrate the danger posed by car cruises. I have not, however, relied on these incidents alone when considering proportionality and the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty (**PSED**).

26. In my first Witness Statement, I explained why I and my colleagues considered that the original Injunction was consistent with the PSED, and that the human rights impacts – if any – are proportionate in the interests of protecting public order and public health, and protecting the rights and freedoms of others.
27. On 19 July 2022, I met with the Senior Community Safety & Partnerships Officer, Catherine Davies, to consider whether, looking at these matters afresh, those were still our conclusions and whether anything should cause us to change our minds. Ms Davies and I agreed that we still consider that the conclusions set out in paragraphs 21 to 25 of my first statement dated 27 July 2020 reflect our current thinking.
28. I have read the statement of Graeme Walsingham which also supports the renewal of the Injunction. To the extent that I am able to comment, I agree with what Mr Walsingham has said.

### **Statement of Truth**

I believe that the facts and matters stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Sarah Ann Pateman

*S Pateman*

14 November 2022

**IN THE LUTON COUNTY COURT**

**CLAIM NO.: G00LU797**

**B E T W E E N :**

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

**Claimant**

**- and -**

**(1) PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO  
PARTICIPATE OR INTEND TO  
PARTICIPATE IN CAR CRUISES  
IN STEVENAGE, AS CAR  
DRIVERS, PASSENGERS  
AND/OR SPECTATORS**

**First Defendants**

**(2) PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO,  
OR WHO INTEND TO, PROMOTE,  
ORGANISE OR PUBLICISE CAR  
CRUISES IN STEVENAGE**

**Second Defendants**

-----  
**SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT  
OF  
SARAH ANN PATEMAN**  
-----

Legal Services,  
Hertfordshire County Council  
County Hall, Pegs Lane  
Hertford, SG13 8DE  
Telephone: 01992 588 716  
**Ref: JA2 / 013004**  
**Solicitors for Claimant**