

Motorist wins three-year battle

A motorist from Essex who faced a speeding charge has had the case against him dropped - but only after it was brought before the courts 24 times.

Graham Orme from Colchester, had always maintained his innocence and spent more than three years fighting the charge.

The case was finally dropped after a judge ruled that evidence put forward by a police officer was inadmissible.

Mr Orme, 56, was accused of travelling at 39mph in a 30mph zone in Colchester Road, Witham in September 2004.

A judicial review of the judge's decision was upheld and the case was discontinued this week.

'Ludicrous situation'

Mr Orme thought the case would be resolved on the first day it was brought before Chelmsford magistrates in December 2004.

He described the Essex Safety Camera Partnership as "incompetent and heavy-handed".

Mr Orme, an electronics engineer, believes the speed camera recorded a false reading of his speed because of confusion caused by the reflections of a parked lorry.

He believes police failed to take into account the obstructions when they placed an unattended speed camera on a tripod nearby.

Mr Orme, who has a clean licence, maintains he was travelling at or below 30mph at the time.

"I turned to my brother and said I think I've just been flashed, even then I wasn't sure I couldn't see any reason particularly why I should have been.

"It's a ludicrous situation and a frightful waste of public money," he said.

"It could all have been settled on that first day if only they looked at the evidence."

Mr Orme's legal case worker, John Tipple, of Linn and Associates of Harwich, told the BBC: "The Crown Prosecution Service have taken their eye off the ball for three years, putting my client through the stress and worry when he's always maintained his innocence."

Another motorist, Walter Probyn, 76, from Clacton, Essex, faced a speeding case which was also dragged before the courts 24 times before being dropped in August last year.

Both cases are estimated to have cost the taxpayer a total of at least £25,000.

Essex Police and the Essex Safety Camera Partnership refused to comment on the matter.

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