



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 April 1985

The Prime Minister has seen the comments from the Magistrates' Association, sent under cover of your letter to me of 2 April, and finds them very encouraging.

I am copying this letter to Giles Shaw (Home Office).

(Mark Addison)

Philip Dykins Esq
Department of the Environment

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

2 April 1985

Mark Addison
PS/Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

Prime Minister ⁽ⁱ⁾
This looks helpful.

Dear Mark,

views.
not

The Prime Minister may wish to see these comments which we have just received from the Magistrates' Association in response to consultation on the Inter-Departmental Working Group's report on Football Spectator Violence.

In brief, the Association have made the following points:

- They believe alcohol to be the underlying reason for most supporters being involved in trouble; they are therefore wholly in favour of an alcohol ban, both in grounds and on transport to matches.
- They are in favour of holding early sittings whenever possible.
- The Association feels that there is no need for a new offence, although they make certain points about how they feel particular types of case should be presented.
- Attendance centres can be a good means of punishing and deterring football hooligans. There should, however, be more provided for the 17-21 age range.
- They feel that it would be useful for magistrates to attend football matches as part of their routine training.

I am copying this to the Private Secretary to Giles Shaw in the Home Office.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Philip Dykins', written over a horizontal line.

PHILIP DYKINS
Private Secretary

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THE MAGISTRATES' ASSOCIATION

Report on Football Spectator Violence by an official Working Group.

1. Our comments on this report have been sought by the Minister of Sport. They are confined to that section of the report relating to measures for the law enforcement authorities.

2. Special hearings.

We believe that magistrates over the country as a whole are most anxious to minimise delays in all cases. They are especially apprised of the importance of the immediacy of punishment in cases of violence arising from football matches. We are inclined to the view that the immediacy of punishment is at least as great a deterrent as an exemplary sentence.

In our experience, steps can be, and are, taken to arrange late evening hearings, with justices ready to be called as required; this is normally as a result of advance consultation and preparation involving a meeting between the Clerk to the Justices, the Chairman of the bench, and between the clerk and the senior Police Officer concerned with the supervisory arrangements.

It is to be hoped that when all the duty solicitor schemes are completed and in operation any defendants who wished to avail themselves of the service would have the benefit of it at special hearings.

3. Delays.

Unavoidable delays will however occur where the defendant pleads Not Guilty, wishes to be represented by his own solicitor, or where there is a necessity for a Social Inquiry Report before imposing a custodial sentence.

Bearing this in mind, the Government may wish to reconsider its intention to repeal Section 134 (Magistrates' Courts Act 1980) or to substitute some other measure which would enable magistrates to order immediate custody for a period not exceeding five days, without the need for legal representation or for social inquiry reports.