



**Courts and
Tribunals Judiciary**

Rex

V

Daniel Heath

&

William Lawrence

1. You have both pleaded guilty today to the charge of criminal damage. The offence dated 2nd March 2025 related to damage to the Paddington Bear statue belonging to Newbury Business Improvement District. The value of the damage was £ 5451 to repair the statue.
2. CCTV evidence shows the two of you approaching the Paddington Bear Statue which is fixed to a Bench on Northbrook Street in Newbury. The statue is one of 23 located across the UK and Ireland as part of the Paddington Visits Trail. Of particular significance to Newbury is that the bear's creator Michael Bond came from the Berkshire Town. In what can only be described as an act of wanton vandalism, the CCTV shows the two of you forcibly remove the front façade of the Paddington statue and carry him through the town to a taxi which took you and the statue back to your base at RAF Odiham. You were both under the influence of alcohol. Paddington Bear was then located in William Lawrence's vehicle. Following your arrest on base you both made admissions in interview and expressed remorse for your actions.
3. Paddington Bear is a beloved cultural icon with children and adults alike. He represents kindness, tolerance and promotes integration and acceptance in our society. His famous label attached to his duffle coat "please look after this bear". On the night of 2nd March 2025, your actions were the antithesis of everything Paddington stands for. Your actions lacked respect and integrity, two values you should uphold as members of the armed forces.

District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) Sam Goozée
Link Judge – South East Circuit
Thames Valley | Reading Magistrates' Court

4. I turn now to the sentencing guidelines. In terms of your culpability, I accept there are no factors indicating high culpability. However, your actions certainly demonstrated recklessness as to whether serious damage was caused to the statue. Although it is apparent you did not set out that evening to damage the statue, and you could describe your actions as impulsive and immature it is clear from the CCTV that once you had embarked on the act, you obviously had some plan for the statue. You stood momentarily working out how to remove it. I place your culpability in the medium category. In terms of harm the value of the repairs is £5451 but there is also the harm caused to the wider community by your actions as evidence from the letter which has been read out from Newbury Business Improvement District. I place this in harm category 2. The reason I do so is that the impact of the offence long term is reduced by the fact the front of the statue was quickly recovered and it is fully repairable and will be returned to its rightful place on Northbrook Street. That gives me a starting point of a High level Community Order.
5. In terms of aggravating factors, this was an offence committed while under the influence of alcohol and the damage was caused to a community asset with cultural benefits.
6. I have considered your mitigation. You are both of good character albeit that is tempered by your employment in the armed services and the characteristics you should be upholding within that service. However, your Squadron Leader speaks of your both being committed and diligent members of the RAF despite your junior rank. The RAF recognise your strong promise for your future. I do not know what your futures may hold in the armed forces as a result of this conviction, that will be a matter for a different tribunal. You have both expressed remorse for your action and I have read your letter of apology to Newbury Business Improvement District and the Town's mayor. I will ask the Police to ensure that letter is forwarded to them. Finally I recognise your ages. You are both young men aged 22 years old. There is no doubt that a level of immaturity played a part in your offending.
7. Finally I give you credit for your guilty pleas.
8. I consider these offences to be serious enough for a community order. I have considered all sentencing disposal including whether this offence can be marked by a higher fine. However, I do not consider a higher fine to be a suitable alternative for this offence. You have committed an offence against a community and cultural asset and my purpose in sentencing you today is to punish you both and will require you to undertake unpaid work as payback to the

community for your actions. A pre-sentence report is unnecessary, and Probation have confirmed there are no barriers to you completing unpaid work.

9. You will both be subject to Community Order for 12 months with a single requirement that you will complete 150 hours of unpaid work in the community. I have reduced the number of hours to reflect your guilty pleas.
10. You will both pay. £2725 compensation for the repairs. You will pay £85 in costs and I reduce the surcharge to Nil.

DJ(MC) Sam Goozée

25th March 2025.