

15th November 2000

Hotel rape is case dropped

THE rape case against four cricketers from St Helens has been discontinued and the solicitor representing three of the men has issued a statement on behalf of his clients.

The four members of St Helens Recs Cricket Club, John Howden (23) of Sutton; Stephen Garvey (23) of St Helens; Stephen Martindale (21) of Haresfinch, and John Burrows (19) of Laffak, were due to appear at Gloucester Magistrates Court on Tuesday, November 14, charged with rape and indecent assault.

The incident, involving a 20-year-old woman, had allegedly taken place at the Fleece Hotel in Gloucester, while the cricketers were on tour in Gloucester on August 2 this year.

Solicitor Simon Hett, of John Martlew & Co in Cheltenham, who was representing John Howden, Stephen Garvey and John Burrows, has issued a statement on behalf of his clients.

He said: "The prosecution in relation to an allegation of rape and indecent assault, between August 1 and August 3 this year, has been discontinued.

"A notice was served by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) upon ourselves as Defence Solicitors and upon the Court on November 13 last, and the effect of this notice is that our clients no longer need to attend court in respect of those charges and that any bail conditions imposed cease to apply.

"The decision to discontinue these charges was taken by the CPS as they considered that there was not enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction, and we have been instructed to release a press statement in this regard.

"Our clients (Messrs Garvey, Burrows and Howden) have denied the allegations from the outset and are pleased that justice has now been served by virtue of discontinuance. Our clients wish to express their thanks to all those persons who supported them throughout these proceedings, including friends and family, most notably they wish to thank those members and people associated with the Ruskin

Drive club, who have been behind them throughout the discontinued proceedings. Our clients are now considering their civil remedies in this matter, but most importantly they desire to put this unfortunate matter behind them once and for all and attempt to return to normal life with reputations remaining intact."

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