

St Helens Star

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Sankey Valley rape accused found not guilty

Exclusive by Andrew Kilmurray

A MOTHER has described how her family's "nightmare is finally over" after her son was one of three boys cleared of raping a 17-year-old girl at a nature trail.

The Crown Prosecution Service confirmed it has dropped the case against the three teenagers, saying new evidence had come to light that meant there was "no realistic prospect of a conviction".

One of the boys' mothers has told the Star that her son had to put his life on hold after being falsely accused.

The three youths, two aged 16 and one aged 17, appeared at Liverpool Crown Court to deny the charges and were then told that the CPS would be offering no evidence against them.

Judge Aubrey declared the boys should be deemed not guilty of the charges, the CPS added this week.

The boys, none of whom have been named because they are aged under 18, had been arrested in the hours after the girl alleged she had been attacked on benches at Sankey Valley Park, Blackbrook, on Saturday, October 29.

They were charged and had made a series of appearances in court, with the case due to go to trial at Liverpool Crown Court in the summer.

They had been on conditional bail, terms of which placed them under a curfew, since last October.

Speaking to the Star, the mother said: "It is the end of a nightmare. My son had to put his life on hold for six months because of this. Now they have been able to walk from court with the judge saying they are not guilty."

The mother said her son had consensual sex with the girl and then subsequently faced the allegations.

She added: "I feel as though he has been wronged. Those boys have suffered. They were dragged out of their beds in the early hours and taken to separate police stations for questioning.

The boy's mother added: "We feared he could be looking at six years in prison for something he did not do. It was horrible and it was as though he could not go to other people for support.

"It has had a big effect on him. He's had to be even at 7pm every night and he stopped going to college. Hopefully he will be able to get back to normal now."

Janet Potter, CPS Mersey-Cheshire District Crown Prosecutor and CPS lead on the specialist Unity rape investigation team, said: "I have a duty to keep criminal cases under constant review.

"Due to new evidence coming to light, I made the decision to stop this case as there was no longer a realistic prospect of conviction.

"I have informed the victim of my decision and have met with the victim's parents to explain this decision in more detail."

<https://www.sthelenstar.co.uk/news/9577411.sankey-valley-rape-accused-found-not-guilty/>