

No evidence in rape case

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Gazette & Herald

A 24-year-old Trowbridge man accused of rape has walked free from court after charges against him were dropped.

Stephen Ford had been accused of attacking the woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, between Monday June 23 and Thursday June 26 this year.

But the alleged victim later changed her mind about the incident and prosecutors were left with little option but to offer no evidence in the case.

Verdicts of not guilty were passed on the rape charge as well as charges of common assault and criminal damage.

Judge John McNaught, at Swindon Crown Court, heard the woman made a complaint to police in the middle of the night telling them Ford had raped her.

He was arrested soon after and remanded in custody for three weeks before being allowed to live at a bail hostel and then with his parents in Bradford on Avon.

Ford, formerly of Willow Circle, Trowbridge, was not required in court to hear the decision.

He was granted costs to reimburse him for the cost of attending previous hearings.

Judge McNaught said: "I am sorry the resources of the police, Crown Prosecution Service and forensic scientists have been wasted."