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RESIDENT SET FLAT ON FIRE AND BIT STUDENT OFFICER

Cop cleared by court of assaulting woman

By JESSICA DAY-PARKER
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A POLICE officer has been cleared of assaulting a woman who set fire to her flat and jumped off a balcony before biting his colleague.

PC Leonard Fogg, 28, and a student female officer, responded to an incident at a block of flats in Basildon on March 22 last year.

They had been called to the incident after reports of a fire at one of the flats, and an allegation that the woman was carrying a gun, Suffolk Magistrates' Court was told on

Wednesday.

The police officers tried to gain entry to the third floor flat, with PC Fogg attempting to break down the door.

A neighbour heard the commotion, and informed them that the woman had been "screaming and kicking off all day".

When the officers gained entry to the flat, they found that it was indeed on fire.

The occupant of the flat, a woman, attempted to flee by jumping from a balcony and attempting to scale a six-foot fence, at which point the two police officers approached her.

It was heard that they attempted to calm her and tried to check for injuries.

The woman, who was described as behaving "erratically", admitted to starting the fire herself. At this point, the decision was made to arrest her.

However, the woman resisted, culminating in her biting the female police officer's hand.

At this point, PC Fogg, of Byron View, Chelmsford, made a "knee strike", which forced the woman's head backwards, hitting the ground. When this still did not subdue the woman, PC

Fogg employed PAVA spray, an incapacitant spray similar to pepper spray.

When she continued to struggle, PC Fogg struck her "two to three times" in the ribs, at which point she stopped resisting and said "okay".

While a case was brought against PC Fogg for this action, district judge Mr Justice Williams said he accepted PC Fogg believed the woman posed "a genuine risk" to himself and his colleague.

"I accept that for as long as [the woman] had her arms free, she posed a risk of harm to the officers, and herself," he said.

OVER 160 STUDENTS AND SCHOOL STAFF SUPPORT PARKRUN



A SCHOOL community has showed its support by turning out in force for a weekly parkrun in south Essex.

More than 160 students, teachers and parents from Mayflower High School took part in the Billericay parkrun at Lake Meadows Park.

Headteacher Damian Lee and students due to start at Mayflower in September were also among those joining in.

The school community supported the event by marshalling, volunteering, pacing, walking and running the 5k course.

PE teacher Laura Burroughs said: "Lake Meadows was buzzing - what a fantastic morning it was.

"We had a record number of volunteers and more than 60 first timers.

"The aim of the event was to help out the local community and to get our students active on a Saturday.

"Massive thank you to Billericay parkrun and all the hard work you do every week keeping people active and bringing people together."

■ Group - students, teachers and parents at the parkrun

'Stay away from Canvey Lake' - warning

RESIDENTS have been warned to stay away from Canvey Lake due to high levels of toxic Blue Green Algae being detected in the water.

The warning comes just a day after Conservative MP for Castle Point, Dame Rebecca Harris, wrote to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, urging immediate intervention to prevent an "ecological disaster".

While Canvey Town Council

is currently working with Castle Point Council on a co-ordinated response to environmental concerns around the lake, one campaign group has said their efforts come too late.

Blue Green Algae can quickly spread out of control, and these "blooms" can be toxic to people and animals who come into contact with them. Effects can include diarrhoea, nausea, and

skin, eye or throat irritation

A town council spokesperson said: "Due to high levels of Blue Green Algae present in the lake the town council is warning residents to stay away from the water.

"Algae occurs naturally in waters such as rivers, streams, and lakes - Cyanobacteria or Blue Green Algae, can produce toxins.

"Please keep pets and children away from the water and avoid

skin contact. Dogs should be kept on leads."

The spokesperson added that as Canvey Lake is not a bathing lake and fishing is prohibited, the risk to residents is limited as long as warnings are taken seriously.

Martin England, of the Friends of Canvey Lake campaign group, said: "We knew this was coming - this is too little too late for the council."