



Shrewsbury 24 Campaign

THE OFFICIAL SHREWSBURY 24 CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

**Chairperson: Harry Chadwick
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Success - Pickets to go to Court of Appeal

Wednesday 4 March 2020 was a momentous day in the 14-year long campaign for justice for the Shrewsbury pickets. On that day the Criminal Cases Review Commission finally announced that it would refer the pickets' convictions to the Court of Appeal.

The pickets first applied to the CCRC on 3 April 2012, almost eight years ago! Over the following three years the Campaign supplied several tranches of fresh evidence for the CCRC to consider. Despite this, in October 2017 the CCRC turned down the case. We had no choice but to challenge its decision through a judicial review. We were confident in the strength of our case but we needed to raise a significant sum of money to cover the pickets' legal costs.

We approached our trade union affiliates for support and received enough donations to commence legal proceedings. At the first hurdle a judge turned down the application as having 'no merit'. We challenged this through a full hearing in the Administrative Court on 9 November 2018 when another judge found in our favour and gave the green light for us to proceed to a full judicial review of the CCRC's decision.

On Tuesday 30 April 2019, halfway through our QC presenting our case at the Judicial Review hearing, the CCRC conceded the case without presenting any challenge to our evidence. It agreed that it would reconsider the referral of the pickets' convictions to the Court of Appeal. We submitted a further document to them setting out the pickets' case on two main grounds: the destruction of original witness statements by the police and the concealment of that fact from the defence and the court. Secondly, the prejudicial effect of a television documentary, *Red Under the Bed*, broadcast halfway through the trial.

It took over 10 months after the judicial review for the CCRC to reconsider the evidence before it announced its decision to refer the case. This has been an eight year wait by the pickets. We are now awaiting a hearing date from the Court of Appeal.

A magnificent success – continue to support the campaign

Eileen Turnbull, Researcher and Secretary of the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign said, "This is a magnificent success. The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign has worked tirelessly since 2006. Today's result is a testament to all our hard work and the support of the labour movement. We ask you to continue to affiliate and donate to the campaign's legal fund."

The chairperson of the Campaign, Harry Chadwick, added, "***We have achieved this success against the odds with the commitment of the Campaign Committee and***

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the support of the trade unions. Myself and other Committee members have travelled throughout the country to speak at meetings large and small. We have always been heartened by the warmth and generosity of the trade unionists and Labour Party members that we have met and I want to thank you all."

A number of the pickets wanted to express their thanks to all involved and those that have given support to the Campaign along the way. Terry Renshaw, convicted picket, was delighted, ***"I have been campaigning for over 14 years to clear our names. It was the proudest day of my life to be able to speak with my fellow pickets and let them know that we were now going to the Court of Appeal."***

This is fantastic news – well done to all involved! Many thanks to you and Harry and all those that put in the hard yards to get this far. Many thanks

Nick (Des Warren's eldest son)

I will never be able to thank the Campaign enough for all the hard work and commitment that you have put into our case. Myself and my family look forward to the day when our names are cleared.

John McKinsie Jones

This is an unbelievable result and one that I thought that I would never see. We were treated very badly in 1973 and I have lived with my conviction for over forty years. It was a miscarriage of justice which needs to be put right.

Michael Pierce

I am absolutely delighted that our case has now been referred back to the Court of Appeal. I never doubted that the Campaign would do it because you were so determined and worked so hard over many years to achieve justice for us all.

Kevin Butcher

[History of the Shrewsbury 24](#)

The first-ever national building workers strike took place in the summer of 1972. Five months after the strike ended 24 pickets were picked up and charged with over 200 offences, including unlawful assembly, intimidation and affray. Six of the pickets were also charged with *conspiracy* to intimidate. None of the pickets had been cautioned or arrested during the strike. Approximately 80 police had accompanied the pickets on the Shrewsbury and Telford building sites at all times on 6 September 1972. There were no police complaints laid against the pickets at the time.

As a result of the three trials at Shrewsbury, beginning in October 1973, six pickets were imprisoned. Des Warren received the longest sentence, three years imprisonment. Jailing these building workers remains one of the most notorious anti-trade union acts of the state in recent times. All the might of the police and criminal justice system were used against the pickets to deter trade unionists from organising effectively. The convicted Shrewsbury pickets were blacklisted from the industry and most were never able to work in their trade again.