

# Sentence increased for Walsall man who imported illegal firearms

News story

Robert Bartell has had his sentence increased by the Court of Appeal following intervention by the Solicitor General, the Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.



A man who imported illegal firearms has had his sentence increased following intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

Robert Bartell, aged 54, imported a number of blank-firing pistols in February 2019 and advertised two of them for sale on the internet. The two illegal weapons were subsequently seized by the police. Bartell was sentenced in the magistrates' court to a £100 fine and £100 in costs.

Bartell did not tell the police he still had several other firearms in his possession that he had imported. He converted some of these weapons to fire live ammunition and imported two further guns in October 2019.

In November 2019, police searched Bartell's house and found a box containing firearms and ammunition in his bedroom. They also searched a shed in his back garden, which was being used as a workshop to convert the firearms to fire live ammunition and included a test-firing area.

On 28 February 2020, Bartell was sentenced to 2 years and 6 months' imprisonment at Wolverhampton Crown Court. Following a referral to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, a remote hearing took place on 1 May. The original sentence was found to be unduly lenient and has been increased to a sentence of 5 years' imprisonment.

After the hearing the Solicitor General said:

"Bartell created a number of lethal weapons and continued to work on illegal firearms despite being sentenced only a few months earlier for having them in his possession. Converting these dangerous weapons put lives at risk, and it is important to send a strong message that crimes of this nature and repeat

offending will be met with robust action.”

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