

[Press release: Driver who killed best friend now jailed](#)

A driver who killed his best friend will now serve time in prison after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Stephen Whilde, 24, was driving his modified car 20 mph over the speed limit when he failed to negotiate a right hand bend, causing the vehicle to crash into a hedgerow. A piece of wooden fence struck the passenger, William Bye, 24, killing him.

The passenger was filming the drive leading up to the crash in November 2016. The footage was used by police and prosecutors.

Whilde was originally sentenced to 2 years in custody, suspended for 2 years last November at Shrewsbury Crown Court. The Court of Appeal quashed his suspended sentence and replaced it with an immediate 3 year prison sentence. Whilde has also been disqualified from driving for 4 and a half years.

Whilde has been ordered to surrender to Shrewsbury Police Station by 4pm today .

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

This was a sad example of deliberate, very dangerous driving that has caused the death of a young man and devastated a family.

I feel the increased sentence better reflects the seriousness of the offence and I hope this will provide some comfort to the family at this very difficult time.

[News story: UK and France sign new agreements to tackle corruption and match fixing in sport](#)

The British and French Governments have agreed to share expertise and best practice to help tackle sports corruption and match-fixing through illegal and irregular sports betting.

The Declaration of Intention was signed by Matt Hancock and the French Sports

Minister Laura Flessel as part of the UK-France Summit taking place this week.

Matt Hancock said:

The UK and France are steadfast allies in the battle against corruption. Doping and match-fixing scandals have rocked international sport in recent years and it is crucial that we take a global approach, working together to ensure the integrity of sport is upheld. Fans have to be able to believe in fair play in sport and be inspired by the best athletes in the world.

Through the work of UK Anti-Doping, the Gambling Commission's Sports Betting Intelligence Unit and our Code for Sports Governance we are ensuring that our sports bodies are more transparent and uphold the highest standards on integrity and governance. We want to share best practice with other nations and this agreement with France underlines how important it is to work in partnership on the threat of corruption.

Working together

At the [2016 Anti-Corruption Summit](#) in London, the UK joined the International Partnership against Corruption in Sport that has brought together the International Olympic Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the Council of Europe and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

At a meeting of the partnership in Paris in December 2017, it was agreed that three task forces would be created to reduce corruption risks in procurement relating to sporting events and infrastructure, ensuring integrity in the selection of host cities for major sporting events and mitigating the risk of corruption by improving compliance with good governance.

The [UK Code for Sports Governance](#), was announced in the [government's sport strategy](#). The code came into force in April 2017 and to date, 55 out of 58 national sports bodies have complied with the code, ensuring more diverse board membership and increasing transparency to help fans and those taking part better understand the decision-making of those leading their sports.

Major events

Under the Declaration of Intention, the UK has also agreed to share with France best practice and expertise gained from hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and England hosting the Rugby World Cup in 2015.

France will host the Rugby World Cup in 2023 and Paris will stage the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024.

London 2012 generated over £14 billion worth of trade and investment for the

UK while the 2015 Rugby World Cup, held in 11 host cities across England, set new attendance, viewership and competition records, generating an additional £1.1 billion to the UK economy.

Press release: New multi-million pound flood scheme in Birmingham opened

The scheme, which cost £2.7million to construct, has been delivered as part of the Environment Agency's programme of £2.5bn investment into flood defences across the country. The scheme was made possible through a partnership with Birmingham City Council and St Andrew's Healthcare.

The flood defences include a 500m long embankment on the public open space next to Dogpool Lane bridge. By doing this, the Environment Agency has created a flood storage area which will store water from the River Rea during times of heavy rainfall and then slowly release it back into the river when river water levels go down. The Environment Agency have also built a new flood wall and a higher river bank at the rear of 15 homes which back onto the river.

Mike Adams from the Environment Agency said:

We're pleased to deliver these flood protection measures for the people of Selly Park South. This community has experienced the terrible effects of flooding and the measures we've built here reduces future risk of flooding. We would like to thank local people for their patience and support throughout the building of this scheme.

Councillor Lisa Trickett, Cabinet Member for the Environment from Birmingham City Council said:

We've seen the devastating impact that flooding can have on communities, so I am delighted that these new measures are now in place. These will make a real difference by reducing the risk of flooding to hundreds of homes and businesses in Selly Park South.

Along with flood defences, knowing your flood risk is also important when protecting your family and property from flooding. People can [check their risk](#) and [register to receive free flood warnings](#) online or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

[News story: UKAEA launches National Fusion Technology Platform](#)

More than 80 delegates from key stakeholders across the UK nuclear sector have heard details of multi-million-pound contracts from ITER that they can target with help from UKAEA after the Government's recent £86 million investment in UKAEA at Culham.

John Devine, head of exports and investment on the civil nuclear team at the Department for International Trade, kicked off the event at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on Tuesday 16 January by saying he was confident in UKAEA's expertise, capability and record, before adding that the event represented an "opportunity for UK technologies and companies to get involved" and "take their expertise to the world."

Ian Chapman, UKAEA CEO, outlined how the two investments – H3AT and FTF – would help in making commercial fusion a reality.

The first centre of excellence – named Hydrogen-3 Advanced Technology (H3AT) – will research how to process and store tritium and helps with ITER's development.

Ian Chapman said:

The main purpose of H3AT is to looking forward to ITER. We want to partner with UK industry to make sure they win these contracts. This will allow the R&D to have other benefits as well as fusion, while these facilities will also help to train the next generation of people who will operate ITER.

Added to that was the Fusion Technology Facility (FTF) for developing thermal hydraulic tests for components under fusion conditions: for example in a vacuum, high heat flux, under a magnetic field. Partnering with UKAEA will support industry with a range of test and design capabilities, preparing them to bid for forthcoming major ITER contracts.

Ian Chapman commented:

We are extremely well placed – through using these processes in JET and the new facilities – to support the supply chain in its bidding for a wide range of projects.

Tom Greatrex, Chief Executive of the Nuclear Industry Association, added:

The level of Government investment seen with the £86 million National Fusion Technology Platform demonstrates the expertise, confidence and ability of staff at Culham in being at the cutting edge of research. As well as being a world leader in fusion research, we have a similar industrial capability which we have the opportunity to seize. There is a very real sense that the UK can make its mark on the world in helping to develop sustainable nuclear power for the future.

Statement to Parliament: Secretary of State's oral statement on Transparency of the Parole Board and Victim Support

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a further statement on the Parole Board's decision to release John Worboys and the government's response to the issues raised by this case.

I know that the victims of these horrific crimes have suffered significant emotional trauma. The prospect of the release of this man is deeply concerning to them, to many members of this House and to the wider public. I believe that I owe it to those victims and to the public to consider all the options open to me as Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

I therefore took the step of seeking legal advice, from specialist Leading Counsel to establish whether there were grounds to challenge this decision in the courts and, therefore, to ask the court to stop the release of Worboys before the decision was reconsidered.

Let me set out my approach to Judicial Review in general. Whatever one's personal feelings about a case, Ministers should not choose to bring a legal challenge that has no reasonable prospect of success. But it is right that public bodies can be held to account for their actions through due process of law – and, specifically, Judicial Review.

There has been significant public debate about the possible basis for a legal challenge in a case such as this. It has been speculated that there are two grounds open to me to challenge such a decision: that a decision was one that no Board could reasonably have taken; or that there were significant procedural failings in the way that that decision was taken.

The bar for a judicial review to succeed is very high. The test for deciding if a decision is unreasonable is not simply that the decision maker – in this case, the Parole Board – could have made an alternative decision – but that no reasonable person would have come to the same conclusion on the facts of

the case.

Similarly, on procedure it would be necessary to identify a failing to follow that process by the Parole Board that would have had a material impact on the decision.

Having taken considered and expert legal advice I have decided it would not be appropriate for me as Secretary of State to proceed with such a case. Honourable members will appreciate that I cannot go further and expose detail of the legal advice I have been given.

I know this will disappoint the victims in this case and Members of this House. Given the crimes for which he has been convicted, on a personal level, candidly I share those concerns.

I have taken a close personal interest in this case since assuming office as the Secretary of State for Justice. I believe it is important that all of the victims have clarity as soon as possible which is why I am before the House today.

I can reassure the House, and the public, that Worboys will not be released until his licence conditions have been finalised. I understand that contact and meetings with victims who have chosen to receive the services of the Probation Victim Contact Scheme have taken place this week, and further meetings about his release will take place next week.

This will have given those victims the opportunity to make representations to the Parole Board as to the conditions to which Worboys should be subject on release.

Let me be absolutely clear, Worboys will not be released until their representations have been properly considered and his licence conditions are in place. Indeed last week I asked for assurances that the views of victims were being taken into account and that robust licensing conditions would be put in place to manage his risk. I am aware that some third parties have indicated they are seeking to bring legal proceedings themselves, and that correspondence has been served on me, as Secretary of State, as a potential "Interested Party" to any litigation.

I fully support the right of victims to take their own legal advice and to challenge the decision. The approach I am taking does not mean that others, who may have significant interest in the case, are precluded from taking action. Each case depends on the circumstances of each individual bringing a claim.

And that is one of the reasons I do not intend to say more on this matter. I would not want to prejudice any legal challenges by commenting further on the facts of the particular case or the legal advice I have received.

I will be taking advice on how my department should consequently engage in any proceedings, but it would not be appropriate to comment further at this stage.

It is vitally important that the public and victims have confidence in the

justice system that is there to serve them. And this case has exposed some issues with the parole process as a whole. I have already indicated that aspects of the parole process more generally should be examined.

In my statement on the 9 January I said that my Department would review the case for transparency in the process for parole decisions, how victims are communicated with and how they are appropriately engaged in that process.

I now believe that this review should go further. I have therefore expanded the [terms of reference](#) of the review to include consideration of the law, policy, guidance and practice relating to challenges to Parole Board decision-making. I have published these today and have placed a copy in the House library.

In particular, I have expanded the review to include whether there should be a mechanism to allow parole decisions to be reconsidered and how that might be best achieved whilst retaining the independence of the decision making process.

This review remains a priority for me and for government and, despite this significant expansion of the terms of reference, I intend to complete that review before Easter.

I also acknowledge the concerns that the Victim Contact Scheme, operated by the National Probation Service, may not have worked as well as it should have in this particular case.

It is right that as well as looking at the process around parole decisions for all cases that we consider whether existing processes were followed in this instance.

I have therefore asked Dame Glenys Stacey, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, to conduct a rapid fact-finding exercise to confirm whether the legislative provisions, existing policy and processes relating to victims were adequately followed by the National Probation Service in this case. Her findings will inform the wider review. Mr Speaker, as I have said, I know Members of the House are concerned about this case and about how we deal with the release of offenders. I hope that this has reassured honourable members of the thorough and careful consideration I have made of this difficult case and that we are now giving serious and urgent consideration to ways in which the process can be improved that reassures not only victims of these terrible crimes but the wider public.