2. Case Studies

A few examples of successful outcomes when holding the police to account. There are currently cases on-going for many of the recent mass arrests of protesters.

Climate Camp

In 2008, the Camp for Climate Action (Climate Camp) held a protest near to Kingsnorth coal power station in Kent. A massive operation involving 10 forces was put in place to attempt to disrupt the protest, and meant that many of the thousands of participants had to endure a stop and search every time they left and re-entered the site. These searches were later challenged in the courts using a civil claim, and found to be unlawful, resulting in massive individual payouts that funded Climate Camp for the next year.

Dale Farm

In 2011, numerous people were arrested at the Dale Farm evictions. Following arrest they were held in vans for long periods while left in handcuffs and without water or toilet facilities. Several people successfully sued the police in relation to the length and conditions of detention and received four figure settlements. In addition, a protester who was arrested and prosecuted for failing to remove a facial covering brought a civil claim after she was found not guilty, on the basis that police officers did not reasonably believe she was using the scarf to conceal her identity. Her claim settled for a five figure sum.

UK Uncut

On 30 January 2011 a number of protesters were assaulted with CS spray at a UK Uncut protest. Three and half years later the officer was disciplined, the head of the Metropolitan Police gave a written apology and paid compensation. Along the way the protesters had to fight again and again to have their case taken seriously by the police. It can be a demoralising experience but trying to hold the police to account is another important tool protesters have to strike back against an unfair system.

> *“Protesters are better armed by having groups like GBC around, to watch their back and to provide the all important witnesses and video footage of incidents that help build a strong case agains the police. GBC were a massive part in the success of this case.”*

Royal Wedding

In 2011, a number of people were arrested in “squat raids” in the run up to the Royal Wedding. After initially being arrested and interviewed in relation to abstraction of electricity, they were further arrested for conspiracy to cause public nuisance based on “anarchist material” found in the squats. They were given strict bail conditions preventing them from entering the City of Westminster except for pre-arranged police and solicitor appointments. Although a judicial review relating to the search warrants was unsuccessful, at least two people brought civil claims resulting in four figure settlements.

March for England (Counter Demo)

In 2014, protesters staged a counter-demonstration against the March for England in Brighton City Centre. The event took place on St George’s Day and was marked by a heavy police presence. As an anti-racist protester made his way to the assembly point, he was set upon by a police officer. Although he had not been involved in any fighting, he was struck by a police baton and arrested for Affray before being detained for over 14 hours. He was then released on police bail once the counter-demonstration had concluded, and eventually informed that no further action would be taken. He sued and Sussex police admitted liability for wrongful arrest and assault, paying a substantial sum in damages.

Hunting

Two hunt monitors at a hunt in Wales were arrested for possession of offensive weapons, namely citronella spray and a home made whip. Claims were brought against Gwent Police for false imprisonment and assault. The police conceded the claim, paid compensation and offered an invitation to meet to discuss policing of future hunts.