

Faslane 365

Court Support Briefing

We have no idea how the Procurator Fiscal (PF — the prosecutors in Scotland) is going to respond to Faslane 365. There may be a stage at which some people are held for court the following day. The Trackers should know who that is and which court(s). For actions at Faslane people are usually taken to Helensburgh District Court or Dumbarton Sheriff's Court. The final decision about which court or whether in fact to just release people is made by the Procurator Fiscal when they start work in the morning. Dumbarton Sheriff Court sits every day Monday to Friday and custodies are usually heard from 12 noon. Helensburgh Court normally only sits one or two days a week (on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday). On these days custodies can be any time from 10am. If a special court has to be convened (with a PF from Dumbarton, a clerk from Lochgilphead and a Justice from anywhere they can find one) then it can be well into the afternoon before anything happens but it will be the next working day some time. Check with the Helensburgh Police Office or with the Clerks Office.

When you arrive at court confirm with the court officer that peoples' names are on the court list and what time it is due to start. If anyone is using a solicitor then make yourself known to them.

At the Helensburgh District Court you can get there early and stand outside to give your "prisoners" a friendly wave as they arrive. The Reliance van will park round the corner on Sinclair St. Dumbarton Sheriff prisoners usually arrive very early and the van goes into the back of the court.

There are lots of rules about going into court which vary from place to place. You might have to take your hat off, you will be expected to sit in silence, usually you are not searched at these courts. Definitely turn your mobile phone off.

When the custody court starts try and sit near the front so that you can hear as much as possible. Write down as much of the proceedings as you can. Particularly listen out for the Trial Diet and possibly an Intermediate Diet date. (All Scottish court hearings are called diets). If there are any special bail conditions set note them down.

When people are given bail they will be taken back to the cells until their bail forms are completed and their property returned. In Dumbarton people are released around the back of the court building, in Helensburgh it's usually into the court room.