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Knife attack denied

Court told racist abuse led to stabbing

A MAN subjected to racist abuse and threatened with wooden planks by a group of youths stabbed one of them with a kitchen knife, a court heard yesterday.

Donald Williams, 31, armed himself after he was confronted by the youths outside his friend's house in Partington, it was alleged.

After a scuffle, 17-year-old Michael Green was found bleeding with a stab wound to his chest, and Williams, of Crowborough Road, Tooting, London, was arrested.

Prosecuting at Minshull Street Crown Court, Mr Darren Preston said: "The offences arise out of a disgraceful incident of public disorder on the streets of Partington on April 12, 2009."

The court heard that Williams and his pregnant girlfriend Jenna Griffiths had spent the Easter Sunday with friends Michael Rochford and Kandaline Taylor. As they sat outside their house, the youths walked past with their hoods up.

They then walked back to the house and threatened Ms Taylor. The group left briefly before returning armed with fence panels, sticks and even roof tiles or slates.

"The main attack appeared to centre upon Michael Rochford who was hit with sticks," said Mr Preston.

The court heard that police later recovered a knife blade from the street.

Michael, now 18, was taken to hospital where he had two operations to treat his injury.

Mr Preston said: "Donald Williams, for his part, was initially abused but then became increasingly intent on dishing out retribution.

"This was not self-defence, he could have run away, he could have driven away, he could have called the police and barricaded himself inside."

Williams denies wounding with intent, wounding and possession of a knife.

The trial continues.

Park celebrates £43,500 Lottery cash boost

A STRETFORD park has been awarded a huge Lottery grant.

The Friends of Victoria Park will receive £43,500 from the Big Lottery Fund's Community Spaces programme to pay for improvements.

Organisers told *SUM* users can expect to see special exercise equipment for adults and children, a 23ft mural, mosaic stepping stones in the wildlife area, and a French boules court.

The work is expected to be complete by October, with a launch party planned for Halloween.

The group's chairman, Shelly Quinton-Hulme, said: "This project will not only bring the community together in creating new pieces of artwork, but will also enable us to exercise and play together.

"I can't wait to get started and I'm excited about every aspect. The changes this grant will bring will be immediately noticeable within the park and pushes us further along in completing our strategy plan."

Ms Hulme said the fitness equipment will be placed strategically around the park as part of a 'trim trail', and will consist of 11 pieces of exercise equipment.

The huge mural, 8ft x 23ft, will be sited within the under 5s play area running almost its entire length. The 30 mosaic stepping stones will have a wildlife theme and will be created with artist Amanda McCrann and community groups, each one guiding people around the wildlife garden.

There's also cash for balance beams in the play area, and a new wooden totem pole will be carved by craftsman Mick Burns.