

# Inquest touching the death of Laionie Kennard

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By Richard Wheeler

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Richard Wheeler was instructed by Hollie Muckley and Tutsi Allport at HCC solicitors to act for the family in the inquest touching the death of Laionie Kennard.

Richard successfully persuaded the Area Coroner for Dorset to resume the inquest after the criminal proceedings concluded and secured additional findings concerning speed, alcohol and driver inexperience having contributed to Laionie's. The Coroner also agreed to issue to Prevention of Future Deaths Reports.

On 26 October 2026 the Area Coroner for Dorset, Brendan Allen, concluded that Laionie died in a road traffic collision on 16 September 2023 when the BMW in which she was travelling left the carriageway and struck trees on Hurn Lane near Ashley. The Coroner recorded a formal conclusion of Road Traffic Collision.

The driver and two other passengers in the BMW were of similar age to Laionie and suffered only minor injuries in the accident. The driver was convicted of death by careless driving and sentenced to a 10-month suspended sentence.

Ordinarily, an inquest would not resume after conviction in the criminal court. However, the family remained concerned that important issues surrounding the collision had not been fully explored and sought a resumption of the inquest. The Coroner was persuaded it was in the public interest to resume the inquest.

Following a two-day inquest, the Coroner found that the vehicle had reached speeds in the region of 84mph at an earlier point in the journey and was being driven significantly above the speed limit of 40mph immediately before the collision.

The Coroner concluded that excessive speed was a significant contributing factor in the collision. He also found that the driver's inexperience, use of dipped headlights on an unlit rural road, and alcohol consumption before the journey all contributed to the fatal outcome.

The Coroner announced he would be writing a Prevention of Future Deaths Report to the Ministry of Defence in relation to an intensive driving course that had been provided to the driver in this case, and to the Department for Transport in relation to graduated driving licences for new drivers.

The Coroner paid tribute to Laionie, describing her as a kind, thoughtful and loyal young woman who was deeply loved by her family and friends.

The Coroner also thanked Tutsi Allport, Associate at HCC, and Richard Wheeler for their representation of the family throughout and for the submissions made, particularly in relation to resumption of the inquest, which he described as “*very helpful*”.

After the inquest, Laionie’s family expressed their thanks to Richard for his support throughout the proceedings. Miss Allport said “*Richard’s advocacy in court was outstanding and he showed tremendous empathy towards the family throughout his work on this tragic case*”.

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