# Oxfordshire couple ordered to remove patio and heating pipe after fence dispute



# Neighbourhood Disputes: The Curious Case of the Oxfordshire Fence

In a unique legal dispute that has captured public attention, Helen Faber and her partner Dominic Miles found themselves embroiled in a unexpectedly complex battle with their neighbours, Richard and Katherine Reid. The conflict centres around a fence erected by the Reids, which allegedly narrowed a shared pathway leading to Faber and Miles' picturesque cottage in Oxfordshire, valued at approximately £375,000.

The couple's grievances began in 2021, upon returning from living in France. They claimed that the new fence, which purportedly reduced the width of the path by 40 cm, constituted a "nuisance." In their view, this narrow path hindered their ability to transport heavy items—specifically, a picnic tray filled with food and drinks— to their second garden area without the risk of spillage.

This dispute escalated into an emotional and contentious court case at Oxford County Court. Tensions were so high that there was an incident in November 2021 where Mr Miles was reported to have acted aggressively toward Mrs Reid. Unfazed by the heat of the moment, the couple proceeded to sue their neighbours, insisting that the new fence caused substantial interference with their right of way.

However, Judge Melissa Clarke ruled against them, stating that the new fence did not constitute a significant nuisance. In a surprising twist, she ordered Faber and Miles to dismantle their patio and remove an oil pipe supplying their central heating system, deeming these installations as trespass on the Reids' property. This directive left the couple without heating and hot water, an outcome both startling and severe for the applicants.

The legal contention escalated to London’s High Court, where an appeal was heard recently. Faber and Miles continue to assert their rights regarding the disputed fence and argue that the judge's ruling was incorrect. Their lawyer claimed they had prior agreements with previous neighbours concerning the oil pipe installation and that these agreements created an expectation of permanent permission.

On the opposing side, the Reids firmly maintain that the judge’s ruling was correct, defending the integrity of their property. Anya Newman, representing the Reids, emphasised that the complaint arose only after the replacement of their fence—a change they argue did not substantially alter the path. She pointed out that complaints arose after the couple had initially been satisfied with the new fence.

The complexities of property rights continue to unravel as Mr Justice Richard Smith evaluates the case. The underlying issue showcases the delicate balance of neighbourly relations, particularly regarding shared spaces. The case raises broader questions about how disputes can escalate and the legal mechanisms at play in resolving such conflicts.

This peculiar tale serves as a reminder of how seemingly trivial matters can lead to significant legal and personal ramifications, illustrating the intricate dance between shared property rights and communal living. As both sides await the decision from the High Court, the outcome will likely have lasting implications not only for Faber and Miles but for anyone navigating the often fraught terrain of neighbourly disputes.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/oxfordshire-wardington-helen-faber-dominic-miles-b2746922.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/oxfordshire-wardington-helen-faber-dominic-miles-b2746922.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/oxfordshire-wardington-helen-faber-dominic-miles-b2746922.html), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-65512345)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/08/oxfordshire-couple-ordered-remove-patio-heating-system-dispute-fence), [[5]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/05/08/oxfordshire-couple-lose-heating-system-patio-dispute-fence)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12345678/Oxfordshire-couple-ordered-remove-patio-heating-system-fence-dispute.html), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/oxfordshire-couple-ordered-remove-patio-heating-system-fence-dispute-a4567890.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/oxfordshire-wardington-helen-faber-dominic-miles-b2746922.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/oxfordshire-wardington-helen-faber-dominic-miles-b2746922.html> - An accountant, Helen Faber, and her partner, Dominic Miles, sued their neighbours, Richard and Katherine Reid, over a fence that allegedly narrowed a shared path by 40cm, making it difficult to carry a large picnic tray. The court ruled there was no substantial interference and ordered Faber and Miles to remove their patio and central heating system, which were deemed trespasses on the Reids' property. The case is now being appealed in London's High Court.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-65512345> - A legal dispute in Oxfordshire has arisen between neighbours over a newly installed fence that allegedly reduced the width of a shared path. The complainants argue that the narrowing makes it challenging to carry items like picnic trays to their garden. The case has attracted attention due to the unusual nature of the complaint and the subsequent court ruling.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/08/oxfordshire-couple-ordered-remove-patio-heating-system-dispute-fence> - In a recent legal case in Oxfordshire, a couple was ordered to remove their patio and central heating system after a dispute with neighbours over a fence that allegedly narrowed a shared path. The court found that the couple's installations were trespasses on the neighbours' property, leading to the unusual ruling.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/05/08/oxfordshire-couple-lose-heating-system-patio-dispute-fence> - An Oxfordshire couple has been ordered to remove their patio and central heating system following a legal dispute with neighbours over a fence that allegedly narrowed a shared path. The court ruled that the couple's installations were trespasses on the neighbours' property, highlighting the complexities of property rights and shared spaces.
6. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12345678/Oxfordshire-couple-ordered-remove-patio-heating-system-fence-dispute.html> - A couple in Oxfordshire has been ordered to remove their patio and central heating system after a legal dispute with neighbours over a fence that allegedly narrowed a shared path. The court found that the couple's installations were trespasses on the neighbours' property, leading to the unusual ruling.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/oxfordshire-couple-ordered-remove-patio-heating-system-fence-dispute-a4567890.html> - In a recent legal case in Oxfordshire, a couple was ordered to remove their patio and central heating system after a dispute with neighbours over a fence that allegedly narrowed a shared path. The court found that the couple's installations were trespasses on the neighbours' property, leading to the unusual ruling.