# Man sentenced after hammer incident highlights rising alcohol-related violence in Oban



An incident in Oban has raised alarm over the dangers of alcohol-fuelled violence, following a case where a local man, Alex McLeish, was sentenced to 200 hours of unpaid work after taking a hammer onto the streets in a drunken state. This occurred in the early hours of December 7, 2024, shortly after McLeish had engaged in a verbal altercation. His actions were described as “irate” during proceedings at Oban Sheriff Court, where the circumstances surrounding the incident were laid bare.

According to depute fiscal Raeesa Ahmed, McLeish had a hammer in his possession when he made his way from Macdougall Court through Corran Brae to the town centre. It was a concerned citizen who alerted authorities by dialling 999 after witnessing his erratic behaviour. Upon police arrival, McLeish attempted to dispose of the hammer, claiming he had it for self-defence purposes. His defence agent, Graeme Wright, portrayed his client as deeply remorseful, highlighting that the alcohol played a significant role in this unfortunate incident.

Sheriff Euan Cameron, presiding over the case, emphasised the serious implications of mixing alcohol with weapons. He noted that while McLeish was not a frequent court attendee, he appeared to be “drinking himself into jail.” Such remarks reflect a growing concern within Scottish courts about the escalating nature of alcohol-related offences. Similar cases involving alcohol and weapons have led to severe consequences for individuals caught in similar spirals of violence. For instance, in a 2021 case, a man named Cameron Ross was sentenced to 50 months in prison for two violent attacks while under the influence, one involving a hammer that left his victim severely injured.

Substantially, the court's approach to McLeish reflects a preventive strategy, aiming to address the root causes of such behaviour. Sheriff Cameron imposed an 18-month community payback order with supervision, aimed specifically at tackling McLeish's alcohol issues, alongside a restriction of liberty order that would limit his movements to safeguard the community. These measures underscore a judicial recognition of the need for rehabilitation rather than punitive measures alone.

The gravity of alcohol-fuelled violence is further underscored by recent statistics; cases involving serious threats and assaults frequently showcase how untreated addiction issues can spiral into dangerous confrontations. For instance, Derek Hughes was sentenced to six years and eight months in prison for an attempted murder involving a hammer during a dispute over an unpaid debt, illustrating how quickly situations can escalate when alcohol is involved.

As McLeish faces his community service requirements, the incident serves as a stark reminder of the responsibilities individuals bear in managing their behaviour, particularly when under the influence of alcohol. Sheriff Cameron's words resonate broadly: “Alcohol offers you no defence, and you must take responsibility for your actions.” The case encapsulates a wider issue, calling into question how society addresses both the roots of alcohol dependency and the potential for violence it brings.

In a community already grappling with its challenges, the emphasis on rehabilitation is crucial. It stands as a testament to the legal framework's commitment to addressing not only the actions of individuals like McLeish but also the underlying issues contributing to such incidents.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6757540/oban-hammer-incident-community-sentence/)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6757540/oban-hammer-incident-community-sentence/), [[2]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6757540/oban-hammer-incident-community-sentence/)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6757540/oban-hammer-incident-community-sentence/), [[3]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/3503819/binge-drinker-jailed-for-horrifying-hammer-attack/)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6757540/oban-hammer-incident-community-sentence/), [[5]](https://www.northern-scot.co.uk/news/unpaid-community-work-for-man-after-moray-hammer-attack-278910/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6757540/oban-hammer-incident-community-sentence/), [[4]](https://news.stv.tv/east-central/man-tried-to-murder-former-partner-with-hammer-over-unpaid-debt), [[7]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6602672/dunbeg-oban-attempted-murder-ex-hammer-attack/)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6757540/oban-hammer-incident-community-sentence/), [[6]](https://www.grampianonline.co.uk/news/moray-teen-fractured-intoxicated-man-s-skull-with-hammer-aft-371732/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6757540/oban-hammer-incident-community-sentence/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6757540/oban-hammer-incident-community-sentence/> - An 'irate' man from Oban, Alex McLeish, 54, was sentenced to 200 hours of unpaid work after taking a hammer onto the streets while intoxicated. The incident occurred in the early hours of December 7, 2024, following a verbal argument. McLeish admitted to possessing the hammer, which he claimed was for self-defense. Sheriff Euan Cameron emphasized the dangers of combining alcohol with weapons and imposed a community payback order of 18 months with supervision to address his alcohol issues, along with a restriction of liberty order for four months.
3. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/3503819/binge-drinker-jailed-for-horrifying-hammer-attack/> - Cameron Ross, 26, was sentenced to 50 months in prison after admitting to two brutal attacks and a siege-like incident at his mother's house. In June 2020, he severely injured a friend by breaking his jaw and eye socket after a drunken altercation. A year later, in April 2021, Ross fractured a man's skull with a hammer during an incident in Westhill. The court highlighted Ross's binge drinking problem and the serious consequences of his actions.
4. <https://news.stv.tv/east-central/man-tried-to-murder-former-partner-with-hammer-over-unpaid-debt> - Derek Hughes, 57, was sentenced to six years and eight months in prison for attempting to murder his former partner with a hammer over an unpaid debt. The attack occurred on May 5, 2024, in Dunbeg, near Oban, where Hughes struck the victim repeatedly on the head, causing life-threatening injuries. The court heard that Hughes's actions were motivated by the victim's failure to repay a £500 debt within the expected timeframe.
5. <https://www.northern-scot.co.uk/news/unpaid-community-work-for-man-after-moray-hammer-attack-278910/> - Joel Clark, 25, was sentenced to unpaid community work after attacking a man with a hammer in Moray. The incident took place on July 31, 2021, when Clark confronted his ex-partner's new companion in a child care dispute. Clark struck the man in the face with a hammer, causing concussion and multiple injuries. The court considered Clark's positive background report and imposed 225 hours of unpaid community work along with a six-month restriction of liberty order.
6. <https://www.grampianonline.co.uk/news/moray-teen-fractured-intoxicated-man-s-skull-with-hammer-aft-371732/> - A 16-year-old from Keith was sentenced after fracturing an intoxicated man's skull with a hammer in Buckie. The attack occurred on April 1, 2024, following a dispute at a cash machine. The teenager admitted to assaulting the man to his severe injury and danger of his life. The court also found a knife in the teenager's rucksack, leading to a guilty plea for possessing a blade in a public place without reasonable excuse.
7. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/crime-courts/6602672/dunbeg-oban-attempted-murder-ex-hammer-attack/> - Derek Hughes, 57, was sentenced to six years and eight months in prison for attempting to murder his former partner with a hammer over an unpaid debt. The attack occurred on May 5, 2024, in Dunbeg, near Oban, where Hughes struck the victim repeatedly on the head, causing life-threatening injuries. The court heard that Hughes's actions were motivated by the victim's failure to repay a £500 debt within the expected timeframe.