

Sittingbourne man spent day drinking at Wetherspoons pub before fatal crash in Wormshill which killed pensioner [Sean McPolin](mailto:smcpolin@thekmggroup.co.uk) smcpolin@thekmggroup.co.uk
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An intoxicated driver spent the day drinking at the pub and smoking cannabis before killing a 71-year-old cyclist in a fatal crash and fleeing the scene.

Danny Gibson, who was described as “drunk as a skunk” by his parents, had been drinking and smoking cannabis before he took his mum’s car and collided with David Prentice on a back road of a quiet Kent village.



Danny Gibson, 38, was jailed after killing a cyclist in a fatal crash. Picture: Kent Police

At around 4.45pm on October 18, 2022, Gibson was driving a yellow Renault Scenic in The Street, Wormshill, near Sittingbourne and Hollingbourne, when he hit the pensioner with such force that he was thrown over a 5ft hedge.

Gibson, who at the time lived in the same village as his victim, was due to stand trial in April charged with causing death by careless driving while unfit through drink or drugs, causing death by driving without a licence, and causing death by careless driving while uninsured.

However, after a jury was sworn, the 38-year-old changed his pleas to guilty before the case was opened by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

At a sentencing hearing on Friday, at Maidstone Crown Court, Gibson was slammed by Judge Oliver Saxby KC for his “utterly despicable” decision to leave the scene of the crash, resulting in Mr Prentice’s body not being found for almost four hours.

He said: “David Prentice was a man of real substance – intelligent, irreverent and interested in life. Much loved and admired by his family and friends, he was someone who touched people – whether through his kindness and humanity or because he prided himself on doing things his own way.

Danny Gibson jailed for 12 and a half years after causing death in Wormshill

“He played a great part in the lives of many people and his loss has had a profound effect, especially on those close to him.”

A victim impact statement from Mr Prentice’s sister, Jenny, on behalf of his family and friends, detailed the heartbreak suffered after the much-loved villager's death.

“We will all sorely miss David after this senseless act,” she said.

“He loved a laugh and being a bit naughty. The world is a greyer place without him.”

His second sister, Diana, said she was left “shocked and sad” by his passing.

She added: “I can’t process how anyone could have left the scene of the crime.”

Other friends described Mr Prentice as a “wonderful eccentric and a radical thinker”.

Prosecutor Tom Nicholson told the court how Mr Prentice was a “placid man and a creature of habit,” who would go cycling for 20 minutes twice a day – always taking the same route.

Mr Nicholson told the court how, on October 18, 2022, Gibson, of Oast Court, Sittingbourne, had been drinking at The Belle and Lion Wetherspoon pub in Sheerness for his brother’s birthday.



Cyclist David Prentice died after being hit by a car in Wormshill near Sittingbourne. He had travelled up via train from Sittingbourne railway station with his parents, who he lived with, and returned with them in the early evening.

Once home, Gibson took his mum’s car at around 3.30pm and returned on foot at 5.30pm, telling her he had “gone through a hedge and smashed the car up”.

Police were called to the home after claims of a domestic incident involving Gibson, but nobody at the property reported the crash or the car in the field to officers.

Later that evening, several villagers had spotted the yellow car in the field, while also becoming concerned Mr Prentice hadn’t returned from his daily cycle.

A group effort was launched to try and find the Cambridge-educated man, who was eventually located in the opposite field to the abandoned car.

You can remember what happened, but you are not brave enough to stand up to what you have done. Mr Nicholson highlighted evidence from villagers, including Deborah Harrold, who had been walking her dogs at around 4.30pm.

She stated Mr Prentice had said hello to her while on his bike and heading out of the village. A few minutes later, Ms Harrold heard a “sudden noise, a bang” coming from down the road. When she went to see what it was, she saw the yellow Renault “bouncing” along the field before

coming to a stop.

Ms Harrold then saw a man, later identified as Gibson, who, she says, appeared as if he had been drinking by the way he was speaking and looked.

A post-mortem confirmed Mr Prentice died from a critical head injury, which would have been unsurvivable even with immediate medical attention.

At around 3am the following morning, Gibson was arrested at his partner's home in Sittingbourne and made to do a sobriety test by police, which he failed.



Floral tributes in The Street, Wormshill, for David Prentice. Picture: Megan



Carr

Floral tributes in The Street, Wormshill, for David Prentice. Picture: Megan Carr

He initially tried to shift the blame of the fatal crash onto his father, who was sent to retrieve CDs from the car, unaware Mr Prentice had died, and was spotted at the scene by a witness.

However, he was linked to the crash due to fragments of glass from the smashed windscreen being found in his hair.

The court was told how Gibson was driving around intoxicated for around 30 minutes and had been spotted by one witness veering onto the wrong side of the road, slowing down and accelerating, and nearly hitting bushes at the side of the road.

A forensic collision specialist concluded Gibson would have had up to 85 metres to react before seeing Mr Prentice, but he failed to "brake significantly".

Sentencing Gibson to 12 and a half years in custody, Judge Saxby KC said: "By your utterly

despicable decision not to stay at scene to help, Mr Prentice's body lay in the field for four hours.

"You are sorry someone died and worried about your sentence. But you, Danny Gibson, have been unable to summon the courage to confront what you have done. You can remember what happened, but you are not brave enough to stand up to what you have done."

Gibson, who has previous convictions for drink driving offences, was disqualified from driving for 20 years. He must also take an extended test if he wants to drive again. A fourth charge of aggravated vehicle taking will lie on the file.

Tributes poured in for Mr Prentice at the time of his death, after a group of villagers had spent hours searching for him before he was found in a nearby field at about 8pm. This was a tragic and entirely avoidable incident that has devastated a family and a community

One man who was a friend and neighbour said at the time: "It's a tragedy. David was a creature of absolute habit and went for bike rides in the morning and late afternoon. He did it religiously every day of the year. So when he didn't come home, we were concerned and myself and some others went out to try and find him."

Mr Prentice had lived in Wormshill almost all his life and had worked on Yew Tree Farm, which had been owned by his parents.

Detective Constable Dave Holmes from the Serious Collision Investigation Unit said: "This was a tragic and entirely avoidable incident that has devastated a family and a community. Gibson's reckless actions and decision to flee the scene showed a complete disregard for human life. We hope this sentence brings some measure of justice to the victim's loved ones."

no_comment wrote: 17/10/2025 18:55

Why have I never seen any roadblocks with drink driving checks? Way too lax on controls...

Honestly wrote: 17/10/2025 18:36

Wow! 12 years, makes a change to see a reasonable sentence. They Normally only get 2 - 4 years.

Haswheels wrote: 17/10/2025 17:52

At least this cowardly, drink-driving POS Has been given a proper sentence . But it won't bring back his victim. Deepest condolences to family, friends and everyone in the village affected by this pointless tragedy.

A1RGY wrote: 17/10/2025 16:56

A truly remarkable man lost his life and was left in the most disrespectful way. I will always remember fondly how you liked to remind me of one of my previous faux pas David and how we would laugh about it every time we saw each other. Thinking of you and your family today and always.

Tessa wrote: 17/10/2025 16:45

David was a nice gentleman who never judged anyone and made me laugh many times in Sainsbury's. He's so sadly missed and 12 1/2 years doesn't feel long enough. As David was then 71 and the bloke was 38, 25 years feels more appropriate to me, he'll be out by 50 and still have a life it's so sad.

Cheerful6 wrote: 17/10/2025 16:07

These days how can anyone afford to spend all day in a pub, or even to get drunk ?

LordBurgate wrote: 17/10/2025 15:58

Driving whilst drunk, and killing someone, is pre-meditated murder. 20 years would have been better. My thoughts only...