

HANDCUFFING STOPS PLAY FOR BRIEF PERIOD

Around 300 spectators looked on at a charity match played in Kent on Monday as a woman protesting about the frequency with which balls have been hit into her garden over the last five years was arrested by two of the players, who happened to be policemen. Maria Chiappini, 41, is said to have stormed on to the ground yelling and waving her arms but ended up being handcuffed and taken to Maidstone police station.

After her arrest by two of the players, both of whom are detectives with Kent Police, Chiappini was detained in the pavilion until a patrol car arrived, and then held in a cell at the local police station for six hours, a time during which she had her DNA and fingerprints taken, was given a penalty notice for public disorder and being verbally abusive, and later fined £80.

Chiappini and her husband, John, 53, have been locked in a long-running dispute with Bearsted Cricket Club since they bought their £1.2 million property facing the village green five years ago. "She was fed up with balls landing in her garden and was worried they would damage the property or hurt one of her children", say local media reports, but things came to a head "when she saw one of the players making a rude gesture at her". She went over to remonstrate and says someone came "charging" towards her and she was grabbed by two men and marched to the pavilion.

One of the players at the annual charity match between Bearsted Cricket Club and the Bearsted and Thurnham Club said: "There has been a lot of correspondence between the club and that family. They own the biggest house that borders the village green and don't like the fact that matches are played so close to their property". Chiappini has appealed against the fine and lodged a complaint about the way she was treated, which is being processed by Kent Police's Professional Standards Department.

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