

Fancy a beach hut for the summer? You had better start queueing

Ben Webster

A group of people queued for more than 24 hours in the cold and rain to secure a sought-after beach hut for the summer.

There were only 12 cabins available for summer or all-year rental at Avon Beach in Christchurch, Dorset and four people began queuing before 7.30am on Sunday. The administration office at

the beach began taking bookings at 8am yesterday, by which time about 40 people were queuing.

The huts, which typically measure 2.1m by 2.35m, cost £2,820 for April to the beginning of September and £3,870 for the whole year. Another 28 cabins were available for weekly rental.

Overnight stays are not permitted and the cabins have no electricity or gas but people are allowed to bring their

own portable gas stoves. People have queued overnight to book one of the huts every year for at least 15 years, apart from last year when lockdown meant that there was no queueing.

Among the first in the queue were Ken Ryder, 72, and his partner, Jan Manton, 70, who arrived at 4am on Sunday and waited for 28 hours. Ken said: "This is the sixth year I've queued to get a beach hut... You read books and

chat, that's all you can do to pass the time. Luckily we're under cover beneath a canopy by the ice cream kiosk... My wife came down from 8am until 10 yesterday morning so I could go and get breakfast, then she came back from 12 until 2pm and I stayed overnight.

"The reason we retired here was to be close to the beach and having a hut is just the icing on the cake."

Nicola Davies arrived at 4am yester-

day and managed to secure a hut. The 38-year-old mother of two said: "My grandfather made me promise to get one for the whole family but he passed away in November aged 93 so never got to see it happen. He loved to come down and watch his eight great-grandchildren play by the sea.

"It's such a beautiful and friendly beach which is so clean and the kids feel safe here. It was well worth the wait."

Duke's lawyers target Giuffre's \$500,000 deal with Epstein

Will Pavia New York

Virginia Roberts Giuffre was paid \$500,000 to settle a claim against Jeffrey Epstein and "any other person" she might have named in her lawsuit, according to a newly unsealed document cited by lawyers for the Duke of York as an agreement that bars her from suing him for sexual assault.

Legal observers were uncertain, however, as to whether the duke would be covered by the agreement.

Giuffre's lawyers said in a statement that the document was "irrelevant" to the claim she filed against Prince Andrew in August last year, alleging that

duke will argue that she was referring to him as a "potential defendant" who would be "forever discharged" from further legal action.

Giuffre, 38, is suing the duke for sexual assault in a New York court, alleging that she was trafficked by Epstein and Maxwell and made to have sex with him.

The duke denies the allegations. His lawyers have cited Giuffre's 2009 settlement with Epstein to have the case dismissed.

The text of that deal, which has now been unsealed by two federal judges, shows Giuffre agreeing to a \$500,000 payment to settle her claim that she was transported by Epstein for sexual abuse when she was a teenager. The settlement does not mention the duke but his lawyers argue that it must be read in conjunction with the complaint it settled, which accuses Epstein of "entertainment" and "transportation" of Giuffre across state lines and internationally, as a minor, for sexual abuse.

"In addition to being continually exploited to satisfy the defendant's every sexual whim, (she) was also required to be sexually exploited by (Epstein's) adult male peers, including royalty, politicians, academicians, businessmen, and/or other professional and personal acquaintances," the complaint said.

This confirmed that Giuffre "could have asserted claims and/or potential claims against Prince Andrew and others, all of which were ultimately released by virtue of the release agreement," the duke's lawyers said in a filing.

They say the release agreement has already caused Giuffre to drop part of a claim she had filed against Alan Dershowitz, who was Epstein's lawyer. Dershowitz has denied the allegations.



Jeffrey Epstein was found dead in his jail cell in 2019

Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell forced her to have sex with him.

"The release does not mention Prince Andrew," they said. "He did not even know about it." They added that he could not have been a defendant as he was not subject to the jurisdiction of the court in Florida and because the suit against Epstein related to allegations "to which he was not a party".

Signing her name neatly before an Australian justice of the peace in November 2009, Giuffre agreed not to mount further legal action against Epstein and a broad range of third parties including anyone "who could have been included as a potential defendant".

At a hearing today, lawyers for the



Virginia Roberts Giuffre, who is suing Prince Andrew, settled a claim with Epstein in 2009 that would also include others

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What difference does the release make?

The "release agreement" for which Jeffrey Epstein paid Virginia Roberts Giuffre \$500,000 seems to absolve third parties. But it does not say if the Duke of York was one of them.

"He has an uphill battle because his name is not specifically mentioned there," Gloria Allred, a civil lawyer who has

negotiated thousands of similar agreements, said. "Therein lies the rub." The judge would have to decide whether Prince Andrew was "a third party beneficiary of this release". But she added: "I can see there's an argument [for it]."

Bradley Simon, a New York lawyer, thought the judge would conclude that the settlement was too broad to be

enforced. He added: "Does the prince really want to be perceived as engaged in legal gamesmanship to get out of a case which he has up until now denied?"

Lisa Bloom, a civil lawyer who has represented victims of Epstein, said the agreement was "incomprehensibly vague".

Giuffre's lawyers say her complaint against Epstein "made claims against those who trafficked, not those to whom girls were trafficked".

They say the duke was neither a party to the suit nor to its settlement and release agreement, nor did he fall under the jurisdiction of the court in Florida. They also note that despite the release agreement, Giuffre successfully filed a claim for compensation from the victims' fund set up by Epstein's estate after his death.

"Epstein's estate, recognising the questionable validity of the 2009 release, even as to Epstein, entered into a further settlement," they say.

The tyrant's worst trait is their claim to virtue, Melanie Phillips, page 24

Driverless cars kick off by taking footballers to training

Emma Yeomans

Driverless cars will be tested on roads in Milton Keynes in one of the first big schemes of its kind.

A trial of the remote-controlled Fetch car system, which is backed by the government and Milton Keynes council, will begin this month with footballers from MK Dons.

The system will allow people to summon a small car via an app. It will be controlled remotely by an operator and delivered to them. They then take over

and drive it to their destination. They will not need to find a parking space when they reach their destination and can just get out and allow the app to take control of the car again.

Koosha Kaveh, chief executive of Imperium Drive, the company behind the trials, said its cars were "driverless but not autonomous", meaning that they were never driving themselves.

"There's still a human involved, but they'll be sitting in a control centre controlling the vehicle in the same way you would control a drone," he said.

So far the Fetch system has been trialled on private land and in car parks around Milton Keynes, including around the football stadium.

Initially players and staff will take part in the trials and will be able to use the cars to travel between the training ground and the stadium. If the trials go



MK Dons are testing the Fetch cars

well, they will be expanded to include Milton Keynes railway station, where they will be used by commuters.

Simon Crampton, the MK Dons performance director, said it was hoped that the single-person driverless vehicles would help to reduce the spread of Covid-19 to players. "The biggest thing at the moment is Covid, because we can't start

putting players together in cars, particularly with the Omicron variant being very contagious."

In October 2020 the first UK trial of automated cars began in Oxford, as part of the government-backed scheme Project Endeavour.

The cars drove a nine-mile round trip from Oxford Parkway station to the city's main railway station, with a safety driver on hand to take over if needed.

The trials took place at all times of day and night to assess how good the cars were in a variety of conditions.