

Zippora Lisle-Mainwaring:

I have been the subject of libellous claims in the Press and whilst in theory that was resolved by legal action, the expense and time this took made it a Pyrrhic victory.

Some improvements I suggest.

1. The right to reply should have a 48 hour window. It is a standing joke, the Friday afternoon call, when the intention is to publish at the weekend. It is almost impossible for people to exercise that right of reply in time, and once published, the attitude of some newspapers notably The Mail is to say well too late we have published. In view of the internet, the libels can never be successfully wholly eliminated from the web.

2. Corrections and reports of admissions of libels or inaccuracies should have the same prominence as the original article.

3. In my own case, I pursued the informants of parts of the libel, and achieved a retraction, damages and costs and the usual Statement in Open Court. Whilst there were many reporters, no one save the Press Gazette reported the matter. My suspicion is that newspapers do not want to tell their informants that it is not a risk free process to use the newspapers to libel someone and it is only the newspaper who is at risk. If a newspaper has published the libel it should be obliged to publish all the retractions in relation to that libel not merely its own.

4. Copyright. Newspapers publish photos generally and plans of people's proposed building works taken from local government planning sites with no regard to who owns the copyright. It should be a requirement to check that the copyright holder is content for the works to be published and an automatic large fine where this is breached. Again to sue for breach of copyright is simply too expensive in relation to the sort of stuff that the newspapers breach but that does not mean they should continue to breach with impunity.

Yours

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