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Fraud accused moved £38,000 of Linfield supporters' club money into his own bank account, court is told

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Body

THE bookkeeper of a Linfield supporters' club is accused of stealing tens of thousands of pounds paid into the group by other fans of the Irish League giants.

Perry Clements is accused of fraud by abuse of position by transferring more than £38,000 from the fans' club into his own bank account.

At the time of the alleged fraud, the 36-year-old was the bookkeeper of 1st Newtownabbey Linfield Supporters Club.

Prosecutors claim he took the money from the fan club between October 2009 and March 25, 2011.

In total he was said to have transferred £42,703.04 - £38,067 more than the £4,636.04 he was entitled to as part of his role, it is alleged.

Clements is contesting the allegation. The single charge against Clements alleges he transferred the money "with the intention, by means of the abuse of that position, to make a gain for yourself or another or to cause loss to the said club or to expose the said club to a risk of a loss".

Clements said he understood the charge against him when he appeared in the dock at Laganside Magistrates Court yesterday. Dressed in a pink polo shirt and jeans, he stood with his hands clasped throughout the brief hearing. He did not make any reply to the charge.

Judge Fiona Bagnall said she was satisfied Clements had a case to answer and he will stand trial at the Crown Court at a later date. Clements was released on his own bail of £500.

The 1st Newtownabbey Linfield Supporters Club has been involved in a series of charity events in recent years. They include an annual charity match which has in the past attracted a number of high-profile figures from the Irish League. The Belfast Telegraph attempted to contact a member of 1st Newtownabbey Linfield Supporters Club but was unable to do so. A spokesman for Linfield Football Club declined to comment on the court proceedings.

Perry Clements at Laganside Court in Belfast yesterday where he was charged with defrauding a Linfield supporters' club **PACEMAKER**

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