

## £1,000 fine for dumping waste in southwest London

A man has been fined £1,000 for dumping waste on private land in Raynes Park in the London Borough of Merton, following a trial at Wimbledon Magistrates' Court on 1 July, 2021. He was also ordered to pay £500 costs and a £100 victim surcharge.

Simon O'Donnell, 31, of Latimer Road, London W10 6QX, was found guilty of his part in the illegal dumping by a number of individuals of mixed waste at a site in West Barnes Lane, Raynes Park, Wimbledon, Merton.

His crime was brought to light thanks to the help of a local resident who reported a group of travellers occupying private land at West Barnes Lane, which prompted an investigation by the Environment Agency.

The court heard how in May 2018 a group of men, women and children moved onto the site with caravans and trailers, and subsequently used the space as a dumping ground for illegal waste. O'Donnell was identified as one of the individuals involved in the depositing of waste thanks to the efforts of the resident in question who photographed and documented the illegal activity.

The resident observed the men on the site removing fencing to access land to dump builder's waste including disused furniture, wood, plaster, used oil, metal, plastics and sacks of rubble. Photographs the resident took showed O'Donnell using a Ford Transit drop-side van to deposit waste on 29 May 2018.

The travellers left the site after approximately a week. They left behind a significant quantity of waste. The clear-up and associated costs to the landowner totalled in excess of £100,000.

In his sentencing remarks, Deputy District Judge Bisgrove described the unlawful depositing of waste as:

A selfish, lazy and inconsiderate way of earning a living.

Daniel Ketteridge, Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency, said:

We hope that today's ruling sends out a strong message that we will search out and prosecute anyone found to be dumping waste illegally.

The operation of a waste site without regard for the environment and the law have the potential to harm our natural resources, blight communities and undermine the legitimate businesses that do follow the rules.

Our role is to protect the environment for people and wildlife, so we won't hesitate to take action against those who put it risk. And to businesses flouting the rules our message is clear: you won't get away with it.

O'Donnell was prosecuted by the Environment Agency as part of Operation Angola, targeting criminal gangs who dump significant amounts of waste across the South East.

O'Donnell was guilty of unlawfully depositing waste contrary to s.33 (1) (a) and (6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 on 29/5/18.