

Press release: RSPB to host flood scheme information evening on 11 October

Environment Agency staff have teamed up with RSPB Sandwell Valley and local RSPB volunteer, Andy Purcell, to present further information about Phase 2 of the Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme.

Attendees are invited along to RSPB at Tanhouse Avenue, from 5pm, where they will have the opportunity to see how the Environment Agency is progressing with the construction work in Sandwell Valley Country Park. Guests will be treated to a presentation by Andy, who has captured drone images of work since construction started.

Following the presentation, Environment Agency staff will highlight progress to date and next steps, followed by a Question and Answer Session at the end.

Josh Harris, Environment Agency project lead for the scheme said:

We have been working closely with our partners and the local community, to ensure that we keep everyone informed. The drone footage will provide a very interesting aspect to the information we give, and we look forward to speaking to people and listening to any feedback that they may have to offer.

Cathy Taylor, Site Manager at RSPB Sandwell Valley said:

We are looking forward to the Environment Agency sharing project updates with our team and the public at the RSPB Sandwell Valley visitor centre. Our volunteers are interested to hear what has been happening recently and the plans for what is coming up for the flood scheme. We are also looking forward to showing the Environment Agency our newly improved marsh as this work was made possible thanks to their supporting it as an environmental improvement associated with the Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme.

If you are unable to attend the event, but would like more information about the Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme, please visit [our webpage](#) or contact the Environment Agency project team at witton.frms@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Along with flood defences and flood management schemes, knowing your flood risk is also important when protecting your family and property from flooding. People can check their risk and register to receive free flood

warnings by visiting the [Environment Agency flood information pages](#) or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

[Press release: New housing rental rules to protect thousands of tenants](#)

New rules which will help protect at least 850,000 more people in privately rented homes from poor living conditions and overcrowding have come into force this month.

All landlords who let out a property to 5 or more people – from 2 or more separate households that share facilities – must get a licence from their local housing authority.

Previously, the rules only applied to properties of 3 or more storeys – but now all properties will be covered.

The clampdown is one of a number of government measures to rebalance the relationship between landlords and tenants.

The vast majority of landlords provide decent accommodation, but these measures are about raising standards in private rented homes where landlords knowingly flout their responsibilities.

Under the new rules, all bedrooms must be at least 6.5 square metres and councils must ensure tenants have suitable space to store their rubbish outside homes.

Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said:

Everyone renting a home has the right to expect it is maintained to a decent standard.

Extending licensing to 170,000 more properties will ensure people benefit from better quality accommodation across the country.

There are currently around 60,000 licensable ‘houses in multiple occupation’ (HMOs) but from today a further 170,000 will require licences.

An estimated 4 million people live in private rented homes, and now at least 1.1 million who are in licensable HMOs will benefit from the protection provided by HMO licensing.

Under the existing rules, enforcement officers in Brent, north-west London, raided an unlicensed 3-bedroom HMO in September 2017, and found 35 men

bedding down on mattresses in every room except the bathrooms.

The property was raided after neighbours complained about overcrowding, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping.

Before a landlord gets a HMO licence, they must prove to the council they are a 'fit and proper' person and the property is of a suitable standard for the number of residents.

Councils can put in place conditions about how the HMO is managed.

See [advice on applying for a HMO licence](#).

All HMOs with any number of storeys that have 5 or more tenants, who aren't related, and who share facilities like kitchens or lavatories, will require a licence from today.

Landlords should speak to their council about getting a licence, or they could face enforcement action.

If the HMO already has a licence under a local authority 'additional or selective licensing' scheme, then the landlord will not need to apply for a new licence until it expires.

The rules came into force on 1 October 2018.

[Press release: Security systems boss jailed for defrauding creditors](#)

Peter Druzyc appeared at Coventry Crown Court on Monday 1 October after he was found guilty of two counts of fraudulent trading and one count of fraudulently removing property in anticipation of winding up.

Incorporated in 1988, Secure Systems Limited (SSL) designed and manufactured electronic security systems. Peter Druzyc (58) of Kenilworth, Warwickshire, was appointed a director in January 1999 before becoming the sole director of SSL in August 2005

However, between 2009 and 2011 SSL entered into financial difficulties and as a result was placed into administration, before being liquidated in August 2013.

Investigators from the Insolvency Service looked into the conduct of Peter Druzyc while boss of SFF and concluded he was fully aware the company was performing poorly and could not meet its liabilities, yet continued to conduct business and avoided paying his creditors on purpose.

He owed between £400,000 and £436,000, as well as more than £45,000 to other creditors. Peter Druzyc also paid out £43,500 across several payments from SSL's bank account to other accounts he controlled, with the last payment taking place only 7 days prior to the company entering into administration in February 2012.

In addition to the sentence, Peter Druzyc previously agreed to an eight year directorship disqualification and at court was ordered to pay costs.

Peter Druzyc's disqualification means that he is banned from directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

Glenn Wicks, lead investigating officer for the Insolvency Service, said:

This man systematically ripped off two companies with no intention of paying either his creditors or his tax liabilities and took every opportunity to dishonestly maximise his income and personal finances prior to SSL's liquidation.

The courts have shown that they will always consider imprisonment for this type of offence and we are pleased with the final result.

Peter Druzyc is from Kenilworth, Warwickshire, and his date of birth is August 1960.

Secure Systems Limited (Company Number: 02251448).

Peter Druzyc agreed to an [eight year disqualification undertaking](#) in February 2014.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Press release: RSPB to host flood scheme information evening on 11 October](#)

You are invited to hear more about the £32m project in Perry Barr and Witton, reducing flood risk for 1,400 properties.

[News story: Exciting opportunities available for industry placements](#)

The placements, which will run for a minimum of eight weeks, include using satellite images to map deforestation and working on electric propulsion systems.

The scheme, which offers paid work placements for students who graduated in 2017 or 2018 or postgraduate students, is funded by the Agency's Space Placements in Industry (SPIN) programme, with grants of up to £3,000 for the organisations involved.

Speaking during World Space Week, Kathie Bowden, Point of Contact for Skills and Careers at the UK Space Agency, said:

I am delighted that our SPIN scheme is proving to be so popular with companies in the UK space sector. We have some fantastic opportunities available for people to apply for and we will be announcing more placements in the coming weeks. The space sector is a growing success story in the UK and these opportunities offer a great taste of working within this exciting industry.

The UK space sector is growing fast, with an additional 30,000 new staff required by 2030. This scheme, which is supported by the Satellite Applications Catapult in Harwell, is part of the Agency's efforts to help build a skilled workforce in the UK.

While Tim Peake's Principia mission captivated people across the world,

inspiring millions of youngsters, working in space is not just for astronauts: there are many exciting jobs behind the scenes. This scheme allows students to experience the breadth of opportunities that the sector can offer, developing skills crucial to the success of the sector and supporting the growth of businesses within the sector.

The list of placements was unveiled during World Space Week, which runs from 4-10 October. The week-long international celebration of science and technology is co-ordinated by the United Nations and involves thousands of events around the world.

The start dates for each post will be agreed between the applicant and the host organisation. Each placement must be completed by 28 February 2019.

The first four placements are below and there will be at least six more announced in the coming weeks:

Carbomap

A forest mapping company using Earth observation data for carbon monitoring, based in Edinburgh, the project will use Sentinel data to map deforestation.

S&AO Ltd

An atmospheric remote sensing company based in Harwell, the project involves working on a feasibility study to develop a radar wind profiler to provide key ocean data.

University of Sheffield

An opportunity to gain experience in the space engineering industry developing rocket engineering and space technology.

AVS UK

A company developing a wide range of electric propulsion systems that will enhance the UK capability of spaceflight and in-orbit space propulsion, based at Harwell. This project will be working on electric propulsion systems.