

[Press release: Man sentenced for North East fish kill incident](#)

Graham Simpson, 61, from Ellingham in Northumberland, appeared at Berwick Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 8 January, where he pleaded guilty to two separate offences of polluting a tributary of Long Nanny Burn.

He was fined £2,261 and ordered to pay costs and a victim surcharge amounting to £3,922.

Prosecuting for the Environment Agency, Matthew Treece told the court that on 18 May 2017 Graham Simpson reported a spill of around 3,000 litres of liquid fertiliser from an overturned tractor mounted sprayer at Home Farm, Ellingham.

Environment Agency officers attended and found the fertiliser had gone into a tributary of the Long Nanny through two highway drains. Simpson had covered the drains with soil to try to stop the fertiliser entering.

However, water quality samples along Long Nanny found high levels of ammonia. Officers also saw thousands of dead fish, with the official mortality count at 2,110 caused by the increased levels of ammonia in the water.

Stream affected for four days

The elevated levels of ammonia lasted 24 hours over a length of almost 10km from the source at Ellingham to the confluence with the North Sea, and affected the watercourse for four days. Dye tracing confirmed the source of the pollution.

In interview Mr Simpson said he had hit the steps of one of the farm buildings which overturned the sprayer and spilled the fertiliser, which travelled down the road and into the drains. He believed a malfunctioning rear axle may have caused the issue, but the sprayer was not adequately checked before he started the work. He took immediate action to block the highway drains with soil and apply sawdust to the road surface to absorb the spill.

In a second incident, on 29 September the same year, the Environment Agency received an anonymous report of a fuel spill in the same area, again affecting the tributary of the Long Nanny. Investigations revealed kerosene was polluting the stream.

In interview Simpson said he was transporting a fuel storage container with kerosene heating fuel oil inside, to top up his home heating system. The tank was unsecured on top of a pallet which was on a fork lift truck, and when he turned a corner the tank slipped off the pallet in to the ground causing the spill. He had put down absorbent straw pellets to reduce the impact of the spill but the oil had already entered the stream. He was remorseful about

both incidents. He now carries drain mats which are designed to temporarily seal drains.

Serious pollution incident

Laura Mollon, Water Quality Lead for the Environment Agency in the North East, led the investigation. She said:

The first incident was a serious pollution incident which affected 10km of stream and killed thousands of fish, including more than 60 critically endangered eels.

The watercourse had not even started recovering when the second incident happened, which again polluted the stream, this time with oil.

This shows why it's so important that landowners and farmers check their equipment thoroughly before starting any work on their land and take great care when transporting and spraying substances.

Pollution incidents such as this, caused by negligent or reckless breaches of environmental permits, have a serious negative impact on our environment and are something we work hard to prevent.

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A Northumberland farmer has been fined after polluting a stream with liquid fertiliser and killing thousands of fish.

[News story: Trustees Reappointed at the British Library](#)

Tracy Chevalier

Tracy Chevalier FRSL is the author of ten novels. She is best known for the international bestseller *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, which has been translated into 39 languages, sold over 5 million copies worldwide, and made into a

film. Her most recent books are the historical novel *At the Edge of the Orchard*, and *New Boy*, a retelling of *Othello* for the Shakespeare Project. Her new novel, *A Single Thread*, will be published in 2019. She is President of the Royal Literary Fund, a Trustee of the British Library, former Chair of the Society of Authors and of the Public Lending Right Advisory Committee, and holds honorary degrees from her alma maters, Oberlin College and the University of East Anglia. She grew up in Washington DC and in 1984 moved to London, where she lives with her husband and son.

Dr. Simon Thurley

Dr. Simon Thurley is a leading historian, curator and heritage expert. Between 2003 and 2015 he was chief executive of English Heritage. Previously he ran the Museum of London and before that was Curator of the Historic Royal Palaces. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research and Visiting Professor of the Built Environment at Gresham College. His books include *The Building of England*, *Men from the Ministry*, *Houses of Power* and *Whitehall Palace*. He holds several non-executive posts including being a member of the shadow board for the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. In 2012 was awarded a CBE for services to heritage.

This appointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Tracy and Simon have declared no such activity.

[News story: Gambling Commission Reappointment](#)

Trevor's background is in law enforcement, in which he spent 40 years across local policing and national agencies. He began his career in the Kent County Constabulary before moving on to the National Crime Squad, Serious Organised Crime Agency, and National Crime Agency, spending the majority of his time in specialist investigation and intelligence roles. Trevor is also Chair of UK Anti-Doping, a Trustee of Canterbury Oast Trust, a charity providing residential and other services to adults with learning difficulties, where he also chairs the Care committee and a trustee of Stop the Trafik, a charity working to prevent human trafficking. Since concluding his law enforcement career, during which time he was Director General of both the National Crime Squad and the Serious Organised Crime Agency, Trevor has focused on regulatory roles and risk management. Trevor brings significant experience of running large complex organisations, dealing with international serious and

organised crime, and investigation and intelligence practices, including those around anti-money laundering.

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News story: Natural History Museum Reappointment

Sir Stephen is Professor of Geology in the School of Earth Sciences at Bristol University and his research has been highly influential in the field of volcanology and petrology. He became a fellow of the Royal Society in 1988, was awarded a CBE in 2012 for services to environmental sciences and became a Knight Bachelor in 2018 for services to geology. His research has been recognised by several awards including the 2015 Vetlesen Prize and the 2018 Royal Medal. He has served as President of the Geological Society of London (1994-1996) and the International Association of Volcanology (1999-2003).

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