

# [Press release: Camera footage helps secure fisheries conviction](#)

Body worn camera footage captured by Environment Agency officers on patrol has been used to support a conviction for the first time.

Callum Bell, 26, of Lyndsey Street in Houghton-Le-Spring, was fined for obstructing Fisheries Enforcement officers during an incident at Ouston near Chester-le-Street in June last year.

The footage shows Bell using insulting and threatening behaviour towards the two officers as they investigated an illegal fishing offence.

He appeared at Newton Aycliffe Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, 31 January, where he pleaded guilty to two offences of wilfully obstructing the officers in the execution of their duty, and two offences of using threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour towards the two officers. He was fined £534 and ordered to pay costs of £530.

In a separate offence from the same incident, David Daniel Bilverstone, 23, of Northlands in Chester-le-Street was charged with fishing without a licence. He failed to appear and the case was proved in his absence. He was fined £110 and ordered to pay costs of £180.

## **Threatening towards officers**

Acting on behalf of the Environment Agency, Chris Bunting told the court that on 18 June last year, the enforcement officers were carrying out a patrol of the freshwater lake Ouston Springs. They saw Bilverstone fishing with a rod and Bell seemingly asleep on the bankside.

One of the enforcement officers took Bilverstone aside to fill in an offence report form. He said he goes sea fishing and claimed he didn't know he needed a licence.

At this point Bell awoke and walked towards where the officers were standing by the lake side. It was apparent he was affected by alcohol. He quickly became aggressive and threatening towards the two officers.

He tried to grab the offence report book, threatened to push them in the lake and twice lunged towards one of the officers, trying to grab the officer's baton from its holster. Over the course of several minutes he continued to be verbally abusive, repeatedly swearing and making threats.

Even after the officers had finished dealing with the illegal fishing offence, he continued to shout abuse towards them from across the lake.

When interviewed, Bell said he was drunk and hadn't meant to obstruct the officers. In court, he offered an unreserved apology for his actions.

## **'Safety of staff is paramount'**

Rachael Caldwell, Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader for the north east, said:

Bell was told on more than one occasion that he was being recorded by the cameras but he continued to be threatening and abusive.

Our officers are doing an important job to ensure people are fishing legally and taking action against those that aren't. The safety of our staff is paramount and they shouldn't have to put up with any kind of abusive or threatening behaviour.

This is the first time cameras worn by our officers have been used to support a conviction. Our preference is to prevent hostility in the first place and I hope this serves as a warning to others that their actions are being recorded and will be used in future court proceedings. Hopefully people will think twice before acting in such a way.

Environment Agency enforcement officers in the north east first trialled the use of body worn cameras last year to help reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour, assaults and threats against staff. It's expected they will be rolled out to teams elsewhere in the country in the coming months.

The cameras – which are the norm among many enforcement agencies – can be used in a variety of ways, including at visits to poor performing waste sites, illegal waste sites, during fisheries and navigation patrols and even during incident response.

Officers must follow clear guidelines on use of the cameras, including telling people they are being filmed, and deleting any footage after a month unless it is used for evidential purposes.

Fishing is free for children under 16, although those aged between 12 and 16 still need a junior licence. For anyone over 16, a full annual licence costs from just £30, with some short term and concessionary licences also available. [You can buy your rod licence online](#)

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## **Press release: 50th Promising Innovative Medicine (PIM) designation granted**

The scheme, which launched in 2014, helps to give patients with life threatening or seriously debilitating conditions earlier access to new and innovative treatments.

Medicines developers, including research organisations, can apply for a PIM designation if they have evidence to support that a medicinal product is likely to offer major advantage for patients. Upon designation, the application can then proceed to a scientific opinion assessment which leads

to patient access in the NHS.

EAMS is a key part of our commitment to accelerating patient access to innovative treatments and supporting the UK life sciences environment. Between April 2014 and December 2017, 18 positive scientific opinions have been awarded in a number of different clinical areas with unmet medical need.

Dr Ian Hudson, Chief Executive Officer at MHRA said:

Reaching this milestone means 50 new indications from promising medicinal products have emerged in the last four years alone. As a result, current and future patients will be able to access potentially life-saving drugs that they may not have otherwise had the chance to have.

We are delighted with the success of the scheme, to date, which is part of our priority to ensure, new, good quality, safe and efficacious innovative treatments are available to patients at the earliest opportunity.

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## **Press release: National Citizen Service Trust Chair Campaign**

After carefully considering the field of candidates who applied through an open recruitment exercise that was launched in July 2017, the Prime Minister has taken the decision to re-run the competition to appoint the Chair of the National Citizen Service (NCS), under paragraph 3.2 of the Governance Code for Public Appointments.

A new campaign will launch in due course, and will be focused towards identifying a candidate with appropriate commercial experience, or experience of setting direction and supporting an organisation to develop.

Government is committed to the continued development of the NCS programme. The new Chair will lead NCS through a period of organisational change, so it is vital that we find the right candidate for the job.

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# News story: South West has the potential to become the UK's start-up hub

Technology firms developing driverless car technology and 5G mobile networks are among the companies helping to make the South West one of Britain's start up hubs, according to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury Elizabeth Truss.

Latest figures show the economy in the South West is now worth more than £127 billion and is the second fastest growing economy of UK nations and regions with year-on-year growth of more than 4%.

Meeting fast growing, high tech firms including Ultrahaptics in Bristol the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Elizabeth Truss, will say:

Technology firms, like the ones I am meeting today in Bristol, help power Britain's future.

The government is giving enterprise the freedom it needs to succeed. From Cornwall to Christchurch, The South West is buzzing with ambition and attracting interest and investment from around the world.

The Chief Secretary is visiting Ultrahaptics and tour its facilities. The firm develops virtual reality technology and has raised more than £30 million in investment.

Among the businesses meeting the Chief Secretary are Bristol-based BluWireless which has attracted investment to help them develop and distribute 5G mobile networks through Britain.

The government is investing more than £2 billion in the Strategic Road Network in the South West which will transform the A303/A30/A358 corridor, fund construction of a new junction on the M49 and improve sections of the A30 in Cornwall into a dual carriageway.

More than £80 million is also being invested to ease congestion around key cities such as Bristol and improve roads.