

## **Press release: Tivvy Skips Ltd prosecuted for burning waste in Devon**

A Devon skip company has been ordered to pay £5,500 in fines and costs for illegally burning waste. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

Tivvy Skips Ltd runs a small waste transfer station near Tiverton and operates under an environmental permit. On 6 January 2017 the site was inspected and waste was seen being placed in a dumper truck, before being transferred into a skip and burned.

The condition of the skip and debris found around it indicated the burning of waste was a 'routine occurrence'. Alan Hutchings, the site manager at Tivvy Skips, blamed the illegal burning on a member of staff who he claimed was doing it without his knowledge.

A court heard the Environment Agency had previously warned the company about burning waste, but it had ignored the warnings.

Richard Tugwell, of the Environment Agency, said:

Burning waste is illegal and poses a serious risk to the environment and human health. The motive is nearly always financial as it reduces the amount of waste a company has to legally dispose of.

Courts take these offences seriously and where we have evidence, we won't hesitate to prosecute.

Appearing before Exeter magistrates, Tivvy Skips Ltd was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay £2,500 costs after being found guilty of breaching Regulation 38 of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016.

Since the offence, the company has introduced new management procedures and was found to be compliant during a recent inspection.

---

## **Press release: River pollution costs Devon farmer £9,500 for leaky silage**

## cLamp

A farmer has been ordered to pay £9,500 in fines and costs for polluting a tributary of the River Exe in Devon. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

On 16 July 2015, Environment Agency officers visited Cleave Farm, Templeton near Tiverton following a report of pollution. They found a tributary heavily contaminated with sewage fungus for 100 metres before it entered a larger stream that was also contaminated with sewage fungus.

The pollution was traced to a silage clamp at Cleave Farm. The farmer, Winston Reed, told officers the silage effluent should have been directed to a slurry store, but was leaking into a watercourse from a surface water ditch. Officers were told a drain in the farm yard had been blocked off, but cracked concrete around the drain had allowed effluent to escape into the surface water system.

Silage effluent is an acidic liquid produced by the silage making process which is a serious pollutant if it enters a watercourse.

Exeter Crown Court heard that Winston Reed either by himself or his company, Reed Farms Ltd, which is currently in administration, is a persistent polluter. In 2006 Winston Reed was cautioned for allowing slurry to enter a stream. Then Reed Farms Ltd caused significant pollution incidents in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012, which resulted in the company being either prosecuted or cautioned.

Since 2012, Officers had tried to work with Mr Reed to bring about changes at the farm to improve infrastructure, including visits from the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme.

Mischka Hewins of the Environment Agency said:

We always prefer to work in partnership with farmers to achieve compliance through advice and guidance. It's disappointing when this fails and our only option to change behaviour and prevent pollution is to prosecute.

Anyone concerned about pollution to water or land can call the Environment Agency's free 24-hour incident line on 0800 807060.

## **Notes to editors**

On 15 December 2017, Winston Kenneth Reed pleaded guilty to causing a water discharge activity without an environmental permit, namely the discharge of silage effluent, which is polluting matter, from Cleave Farm, Templeton, Tiverton, Devon into inland freshwaters contrary to Regulations 12(1)(b) and

38(1)(a) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. Fined £2,000 plus £120 victim surcharge. Ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £7,500

The term 'sewage fungus' describes a group of micro-organisms, which contain filamentous bacteria, fungi and/or stalked protozoa. Their presence is an indication of organic/nutrient pollution in a watercourse.

---

## [Press release: River pollution costs Devon farmer £9,500 for leaky silage clamp](#)

Silage effluent is an acidic liquid produced by the silage making process which is a serious pollutant if it enters a watercourse.

A farmer has been ordered to pay £9,500 in fines and costs for polluting a tributary of the River Exe in Devon. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

On 16 July 2015, Environment Agency officers visited Cleave Farm, Templeton near Tiverton following a report of pollution. They found a tributary heavily contaminated with sewage fungus for 100 metres before it entered a larger stream that was also contaminated with sewage fungus.

The pollution was traced to a silage clamp at Cleave Farm. The farmer, Winston Reed, told officers the silage effluent should have been directed to a slurry store, but was leaking into a watercourse from a surface water ditch. Officers were told a drain in the farm yard had been blocked off, but cracked concrete around the drain had allowed effluent to escape into the surface water system.

Silage effluent is an acidic liquid produced by the silage making process which is a serious pollutant if it enters a watercourse.

Exeter Crown Court heard that Winston Reed either by himself or his company, Reed Farms Ltd, which is currently in administration, is a persistent polluter. In 2006 Winston Reed was cautioned for allowing slurry to enter a stream. Then Reed Farms Ltd caused significant pollution incidents in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012, which resulted in the company being either prosecuted or cautioned.

Since 2012, Officers had tried to work with Mr Reed to bring about changes at the farm to improve infrastructure, including visits from the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme.

Mischka Hewins of the Environment Agency said:

We always prefer to work in partnership with farmers to achieve compliance through advice and guidance. It's disappointing when this fails and our only option to change behaviour and prevent pollution is to prosecute.

Anyone concerned about pollution to water or land can call the Environment Agency's free 24-hour incident line on 0800 807060.

On 15 December 2017, Winston Kenneth Reed pleaded guilty to causing a water discharge activity without an environmental permit, namely the discharge of silage effluent, which is polluting matter, from Cleave Farm, Templeton, Tiverton, Devon into inland freshwaters contrary to Regulations 12(1)(b) and 38(1)(a) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. Fined £2,000 plus £120 victim surcharge. Ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £7,500

The term 'sewage fungus' describes a group of micro-organisms, which contain filamentous bacteria, fungi and/or stalked protozoa. Their presence is an indication of organic/nutrient pollution in a watercourse.

---

## [News story: Government to clamp down on unsafe lasers](#)

The government has announced new measures to tackle the sale of unsafe laser pointers, including strengthening safeguards to stop high-powered lasers entering the country.

In a [response to a call for evidence](#) launched last year following a recent increase in the number of incidents involving lasers, the government today (8 January 2018) pledged additional support to local authority ports and borders teams to stop high-powered laser pointers entering the UK.

This includes supporting local authority teams to carry out increased checks at the border, including testing products to ensure they are safe. The support will also ensure local authority teams have access to the necessary scientific, technical and testing expertise.

The government will work with manufacturers and retailers to improve laser pointer labelling, indicating that they must not be pointed at eyes or at vehicles and must state the power level of the product. The policing of online laser pointer sales will also be improved by working with online retailers including eBay.

More than 150 incidents of eye injuries involving laser pointers were reported since 2013, the vast majority of these involving children. As in many of these cases neither children nor their parents have known the danger involved, the government will also work to raise awareness of the risks associated with laser pointers.

In 2016, the Civil Aviation Authority received reports of 1,258 laser incidents, with Heathrow the most frequent location for reports of the devices being used recklessly.

Laser beam attacks against the rail network are also a concern. Records from the British Transport Police show that between 1 April 2011 and 30 November 2017, a total of 578 laser incidents were recorded. This equates to approximately 96 incidents per year.

Margot James, Consumer Minister, said:

The government has listened to concerns from pilots, health professionals and safety experts, which is why we are going further than ever before to crack down on the sale of unsafe devices.

Public safety is of the utmost importance and we are working to increase the public's knowledge of the potential dangers associated with these devices and strengthening the penalties for when they are misused.

Professor John O'Hagan, of PHE's Laser and Optical Radiation Dosimetry Group, said:

Over time we have become increasingly concerned about the dangers of growing numbers of unlabelled and incorrectly labelled high power laser pointers being bought by the public.

It is tragic that we continue to see eye injuries, especially in children. Laser safety experts at Public Health England have worked closely with local authorities in stopping large numbers of these lasers reaching UK consumers.

The extra protections proposed should help even further – if you have a laser and you don't need it, remove the batteries and get rid of it.

Brian Strutton, General Secretary of the British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA), said:

This is more welcome news from the government on lasers and shows that it is taking this important issue seriously.

The Department for Transport recently [announced the introduction of](#)

[new tougher laws](#) for those who shine lasers at aircraft. Now the tougher restrictions on importation should hopefully stop high-powered lasers reaching the hands of those with ill-intentions in the first place.

Shining a laser at an aircraft is extremely dangerous and has the potential to cause a crash that could be fatal to not only those on board, but people on the ground too.

Today's measures build on tough new penalties in the [Laser Misuse \(Vehicles\) Bill](#), which was introduced by the Department for Transport last year. The Bill expands the list of vehicles it is an offence to target with lasers. It also makes it easier to prosecute offenders by removing the need to prove an intention to endanger a vehicle. People who shine laser devices at transport operators could be jailed for up to 5 years.

1. Rehman Chishti MP introduced a private members bill to Parliament to control dangerous laser pens and this was followed by the government's call for evidence to address the inappropriate use of these devices.
2. The Laser Misuse (Vehicles) Bill introduced by the Department for Transport, which has its second reading on Tuesday 9 January, will expand the list of vehicles, beyond just planes, which it is an offence to target with lasers.
3. The increased investment for local authority ports and border teams will support increased checks at the border, including the testing of products to ensure they are safe, and great enforcement action. BEIS will also ensure local authority teams have access to the necessary scientific, technical and testing expertise.

---

## [\*\*Press release: Drivers in Wales and SW England set to save as VAT lifted on Severn tolls\*\*](#)

Commuters, drivers and businesses across South Wales and the South West of England are set to make major savings from today (8 January), when the UK Government reduces the charges to cross the Severn bridges.

From 00:01 on 8 January, all vehicles will be exempt from VAT, meaning car drivers will pocket an extra £1.10 as the charge for individual crossings

reduces from £6.70 to £5.60. This change will also lift an administrative burden for business users, who will no longer need to claim back VAT.

This move is expected to save regular motorists around £1,400 per year, making it far cheaper to commute Cardiff, Newport or Bristol. Businesses across the area will also benefit by not paying over £16 for lorries to cross the Severn – the abolition will boost the Welsh economy by over £100 million a year.

The reduction comes as the crossings return to public ownership, with Highways England, a UK-Government owned body, taking over responsibility for the bridges' operation and management from Severn River Crossing PLC.

Drivers are set to benefit further when the UK Government abolishes the charges completely by the end of 2018.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will discuss the potential joint working and trade opportunities generated by the removal of charges with organisations from both sides of the border at a summit at the Celtic Manor in Newport on 22 January.

### **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

In less than a year we will see the biggest economic stimulus for south Wales and the valleys for decades. This important move taken by the Prime Minister and the UK Government in regard to the Severn Crossings represents a clear symbol of breaking down the economic and historic barriers which have hindered Wales' prosperity – whilst supporting the union of the United Kingdom.

My number one priority as Secretary of State was to remove the tolls, which will not only make journeys cheaper for commuters and tourists, but will also create exciting opportunities for businesses and investors looking to make their mark in Wales.

This will boost Welsh employment and establish lasting relationships between the economies and communities of South Wales and South West England, creating the most natural growth corridor spanning from Cardiff through Newport to Bristol. It is time to make politics fit business, not business fit politics in Wales.

I look forward to discussing these opportunities further with hundreds of attendees from both sides of the border at the Severn Growth Summit later this month.

### **James Durie, Executive Director of Business West said:**

There are already strong economic and other linkages between Bristol & the West of England and Cardiff & South Wales (as set out in the Great Western Cities report of 2016) and these are set to

only increase further through the UK Government's decision to reduce and remove the Severn Bridge tolls. Whilst there will be some challenges in the short term to address, businesses welcome the removal of any costs and barriers to trade – and also this opportunity to work with the Secretary of State for Wales and the UK Government via the forthcoming growth summit.

Bristol & the West of England operates globally, enjoying the best performing economy outside of London, but also recognises the absolute need to look at broader regional economic collaboration and working – particularly in the context of the challenges that Brexit is posing. At a time when the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine have got considerable national traction and attention, we need to explore how we can best collaborate together to unlock opportunities and profile for the West of the UK.

We cannot afford to stand still and look forward to working closer to improve this part of the country as a great place to live, work, study and visit.

Highways England have informed all TAG ticket holders of the new arrangements, and remind those who pay by top-up with a Trip TAG through online banking to update their payment details to Highways England's account from 8 January 2018. Account holders will still be able to pay through the website or phone.

Drivers paying by direct debit will not need to take any action – their accounts and balances will be transferred automatically and their payments adjusted to reflect the new charges.

After 8 January the crossings will operate as normal with just a few small changes to signs at the toll plazas.

Staff currently employed with Severn Crossing PLC have all been offered employment with Highways England.

Details of the changes and actions necessary are available on the Severn Crossings website [www.severnbridge.co.uk](http://www.severnbridge.co.uk). TAG holders with any queries can also the TAG helpline on 01454 633 522.

**ENDS**

**Further information:**

Severn Bridges daily charges after January 8 2018:

- Category 1 (Cars and other vehicles up to 9 seats): £5.60
- Category 2 (Goods vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes, small buses): £11.20
- Category 3 (Goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, large buses): £16.70



## Severn Bridges (M4 and M48) monthly charges after January 8 2018:

- Category 1: £5.60, with the Season/Shared TAG at £98.56 (20% discount based on 22 trips per month).
- Category: 2 £11.20, with the Season/Shared TAG at £197.12 (20% discount based on 22 trips per month).
- Category 3: £16.70, with the Season/Shared TAG at £330.66 (10% discount based on 22 trips per month).
- The abolition is set to benefit the Welsh economy by around £100m a year, according to Welsh Government: The Impact of the Severn Tolls on the Welsh Economy, 30 May 2012.
- Regular motorists are set to save over £1,400 per year based on a monthly tag charge of £117.92 over 12 months.
- The Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns has announced that he will host the first cross-border, Severn Growth business summit on 22 January 2018 at the Celtic Manor Resort. Businesses can sign up to attend the summit [via Eventbrite](#).
- On 13 January, the Government launched a consultation, setting out a series of proposals designed to deliver improvements at the Crossings. This consultation ran for eight weeks until 10 March. The consultation response can be found [here](#).
- The Severn Bridge was built in 1966 and a second crossing was completed 30 years later. When the bridges come under public ownership, they will be run by Highways England. Previously it has been run by Severn River Crossing plc.
- The first Severn Bridge was opened in September 1966, providing a direct link from the M4 motorway into Wales, with a toll in place for use of the bridge to pay for the cost of construction. It continually operated above capacity and in 1986 the then Government stated that a second bridge would be constructed.
- In 1988 it was announced that tenders would be invited from private consortia to fund, build and operate the second bridge and take over the operation of the first bridge. In 1990 the concession was awarded to Severn River Crossing PLC ("SRC"). Construction work also started in April 1992 and the second bridge was opened in June 1996.