

## **News story: HM Courts & Tribunals Service advice to debtors on unpaid historic fines**

From:

First published:

1 February 2017

HMCTS provides advice to debtors who may receive a letter for unpaid historic fines.

In September 2016 HMCTS set up the Historic Debt Project to tackle outstanding debt which has accumulated over the years from unpaid criminal fines and financial orders where debtors could not previously be traced.

With the benefit of new intelligence and tracing tools, outstanding debts up to 10 years old are being pursued by a dedicated team in the HMCTS National Compliance and Enforcement Service.

Since the project commenced in September debtors across England and Wales have received letters and text messages from the Historic Debt Team about payment of fines and impositions for past offences. To date significant sums have been collected, including compensation owed to victims of crime.

The team will continue over the coming months to identify and enforce unpaid historic fines. If you have received a letter you should make immediate payment. If you have any concerns about a letter you have received please contact the Historic Debt Team who will be able to assist further. Information on how you can pay your fine will be included with the fines notice.

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## **Press release: Pollution of brook costs Evesham food processing company over £59,000**

Walsh Mushrooms, a mushroom packaging and distribution company operating at the Vale Park industrial estate in Evesham, appeared in Cheltenham Magistrates' Court yesterday (31 January 2017) and pleaded guilty to an

offence of polluting the nearby Battleton Brook with the effluent of rotting mushrooms.

The company was fined £50,000, ordered to pay costs of £8,888.16, along with a £170 victim surcharge.

The prosecution was brought by the Environment Agency, following reports of pollution of the brook in April and May in 2015. The company was charged with one offence contrary to Regulations 12 (1) (b) and 38 (1) (a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

On 24 April 2015, an Environment Agency officer visited the Battleton Brook in Evesham following a report it had turned black with a foul odour. The officer found the brook heavily polluted with organic matter, causing low levels of oxygen. Some frogs and a significant number of invertebrates downstream of Vale Park had been killed as a result of the pollution incident.

Officers, along with staff from Severn Trent Water Limited, identified the source of the pollution as a skip full of decomposing mushrooms on the Walsh Mushroom site, which was leaking into a surface water drain. Investigations of the drainage system suggested this had been ongoing for a number of days. Walsh Mushrooms were advised to remove the skip, undertake a cleaning operation, and conduct a full inspection of the site drainage system.

The Environment Agency stated that the company had failed to carry out the site drainage survey within a reasonable time after 24 April 2015. As a result, on 14 May 2015, officers attended the premises of Walsh Mushrooms again to examine the site drainage system and discovered that similar effluent was continuing to flow into it.

A representative of the company was interviewed and accepted that no training had been given to staff regarding the function or maintenance of the site drainage. No training had been given to staff regarding pollution risks associated with storing waste on the site. The company had failed to carry out any environmental risk assessments since it began operating at Vale Park in 2000.

The company, which had no previous convictions, expressed remorse for the incident. It acknowledged its failure to carry out environmental risk assessments or give appropriate training to company staff. The company stated that it had co-operated with the Environment Agency's investigation and taken steps to remedy the issues at the site. These included the monthly sampling of fluids from the on-site inceptor, the training of staff and the storage of waste mushrooms in leak-proof containers.

Following the outcome of court proceedings, an Environment Agency spokesperson said:

Walsh Mushrooms failed to conduct any assessments of the risks their operations posed to the environment. They did not understand or maintain their drainage system and they failed to provide any

training for staff on how to recognise or deal with pollution incidents. As a result of these failings, they caused significant damage to the brook. We will always seek to take action against those whose actions results in pollution of our rivers.

Many companies in the food processing industry fail to appreciate that food wastes can be highly polluting and cause serious damage to the environment. By following sensible environmental management procedures businesses will be better placed to comply with relevant legislation and reduce the risks damaging our stream and rivers.

If members of the public notice any signs of pollution in a river, stream or lake please report it to our Incident Hotline 0870 80 70 60.

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## [News story: Defence Minister meets poppy producing veterans going for gold](#)

The Poppy Factory employs 27 disabled veterans in Richmond to produce poppies and wreaths for the Royal Family and the Royal British Legion, but not content with making 12.5 million poppies last year, they are now looking to gold-plate their award-winning employment scheme.

They are also the country's leading employability organisation for disabled military veterans, providing a free service to veterans with a medical condition or impairment across England and Wales to get back into work.

Having helped almost 700 people into employment since 2010, the charity won the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Silver Award last year for demonstrating great support to the Armed Forces community, and one of Deirdre Mills' key goals in her new role is to go for gold this year.

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, which the government enshrined in law as a promise from the nation to ensure that the Armed Forces community are not at a disadvantage, the annual Defence Employer Recognition Scheme encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same – and the Poppy Factory is certainly doing that.

Defence Minister Earl Howe said:

From helping veterans across the country overcome adversity and get back into work, to empowering those who have inspired me here in Richmond today to contribute to such an honourable cause, the magnificent work of the Poppy Factory is a credit to the Armed Forces Covenant and I'm thrilled to see Deirdre is driving for even more success.

Earl Howe with Poppy Factory CEO Deirdre Mills.

Their new CEO Deirdre Mills enjoyed a successful career in the British Army herself before getting involved in charity work.

She said:

Our support is really making a difference, whether it be providing career advice or meeting the more complex needs of some of the hardest-to-help individuals in society. There is also a growing number of disabled veterans who are being referred to us by other organisations; this is both testament to the quality of our work and indicative of the growing number of military charities that are now working together to produce the best results.

We are working hard to accommodate and champion the needs of disabled people and a Gold Award will really help us demonstrate this to our donors and the public – we need to secure over £2m in sustainable funding each year to provide our life-changing service.

Earl Howe met Gary Lock, an ex Serviceman from 4 Battalion Royal Regiment of Wales.

Amongst those who Earl Howe met today was Gary Lock, an ex Serviceman from 4 Battalion Royal Regiment of Wales, who has been working at the factory since September. Suffering from a serious hip injury, Gary got in touch with the Poppy Factory looking for employment.

He said:

I really enjoy coming to work, and it's great to have a laugh and a joke while you're doing something that's making a difference.

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## **Research and analysis: Habitats**

# Regulations Assessments – North East North West South East South West Marine Plans

Under the EC Habitats Directive, all marine plans must have a Habitats Regulation Assessment.

The Habitats Regulation Assessment looks at what impact a plan could have on the objectives of a European conservation site. It includes:

- pre-screening review
- screening review
- an appropriate assessment information report

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## News story: Combinex Oral Suspension – Product defect recall alert

From:

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Product defect recall alert for Combinex Oral Suspension manufactured by Elanco Animal Health.

We wish to make wholesalers and veterinary surgeons aware that the VMD has been notified that Elanco Animal Health has issued a recall of certain batches of its combination fluke/wormer Combinex Oral Suspension for Sheep (Vm 00879/4084).

When the product is used in conjunction with a product applicator gun, the applicator gun fails to operate, causing no product to pass through the gun and be administered to the animal.

Batches affected and expiry dates:

- C608040 (Exp 04/2019)
- C608744 (Exp 04/2019)
- C608747 (Exp 04/2019)
- C614045 (Exp 05/2019)

Should you have any queries in relation to the recall of these batches,  
please contact ElancoVets:

Email: [elancovets@elanco.com](mailto:elancovets@elanco.com) Tel: + 44 (0) 1256 353131 Option 1