

# Press release: Doncaster teens take lead on environmental improvements

The children at XP Secondary School have been working with experts from the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to research and improve how surface water drains away from the land.

Their findings have helped with the installation of a new sustainable drainage system (SUD) on the school's grounds, designed to mimic nature in the way it allows water to soak away.

Dave Newborough from the Environment Agency said:

SUDs help slow down the flow of surface water, giving it time to soak into the ground and for pollutants to be naturally filtered out before entering local watercourses.

In doing so, they help reduce the risk of flooding and improve water quality, as well as enhance the environment for people and wildlife.

XP's students carefully studied their school grounds, carrying out environmental experiments to determine how a SUD would work best. They presented their findings to a panel of experts, including Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, before helping to plant hedges that form an important part of the new drainage system.

The project has given the kids a real sense of ownership in their local water environment, which they can pass on to their family and friends," says Dave.

They've also learnt first hand how the water cycle works and how it can be affected by urbanisation and pollution. And they've had the opportunity to explore local wetland at Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Potteric Carr Nature Reserve, discovering its importance for biodiversity and for managing flood risk.

The work at XP Secondary School is part of Inspiring Water Action in the Torne (iWAIT), an Environment Agency led project restoring almost 50 hectares of rare wet woodland priority habitats at 7 sites in Doncaster.

Around 450 children and young people across 7 schools, each linked with one of the woodland sites, are using the project to learn about flood risk, water quality and management, and ecology.

Three of the schools, including XP, will have SUDs fitted to manage the quantity and quality of surface water feeding the restored wetlands, as well as helping to involve young people in environmental activities and learning.

iWAIT is a Torne Catchment Partnership project led by the Environment Agency and involving Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Natural England and local communities.

ENDS

## Notes for editors

- The iWAIT project is turning 46.5ha of non-priority habitat into priority habitat – this is 11% of the Environment Agency's nationwide target 400ha for habitat creation.
- A priority habitat is one identified as being the most threatened and requires conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Wet woodland is a biodiversity habitat, important for animals and plants. It supports a large number of species, many of which are now rare in the UK.
- For more information on the iWAIT project, see this [previous news release](#).
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is a local charity which works to create a Yorkshire rich in wildlife for the benefit of everyone. Our goal is nature's recovery, on land and at sea. We stand up for Yorkshire's wildlife wherever it is under threat, and work with others to find solutions that benefit both wildlife and people. We inspire thousands of children, families and others every year, reconnecting them with their local environment and wildlife. With the support of these people, we are restoring and recreating a habitats in Yorkshire and raising awareness of, and fighting for, Yorkshire's seas.

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## [Press release: Man fined for running illegal waste site](#)

A Gateshead man has been fined and ordered to pay thousands of pounds in compensation after he illegally stored waste at a site and then abandoned it.

John James Armstrong, 52, of Park Lane, Winlaton Mill, appeared at North Tyneside Magistrates' Court on Friday 7 April.

He pleaded guilty to one offence of operating a waste site without a permit.

He was fined £1,000, ordered to pay compensation of £7,069.49 to the landowner to cover the costs they paid to clear the site, and £1,591.26 costs.

Armstrong was Director of Canterhall Builders Limited, a construction company which dissolved on 23 May 2016.

Prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency, Simon Crowder told the court that on 20 April, 2016, two Environment Agency officers attended the unit at Unit 1 Felling Business Centre, Green Lane.

They saw the site was covered in construction waste, including bricks, broken concrete, wood, plaster board, insulations, pallets, old kitchen units, benches and electrical waste. There was also a skip full of building waste.

Enquiries revealed that Canterhall were tenants at the site but had abandoned it earlier in the month.

On 16 May a letter requesting removal of the waste was given to the landowner.

On 23 May Environment Agency officers traced the defendant to a site in Swalwell, where he was given a letter inviting him to be interviewed.

Two days later the site at Felling was cleared by the landowners, at a total cost to them of more than £7,000.

The defendant has no previous convictions and was co-operative during the investigation.

During an interview on 2 June he said that if it was not cost effective to hire a skip to remove waste from carrying out construction work, then he would instead transport the waste back to the unit. When there was enough waste at the unit he would then order a skip to have it removed.

He said in January 2016 more and more waste was deposited at the unit and due to financial problems he could not afford skips to get the waste removed. He said he left the unit on 10 April and had made no attempts to clear the waste.

He added he was unaware of the need for an environmental permit or registered exemptions.

The Environment Agency's Paul Whitehill said:

We take waste crime very seriously. It can cause serious pollution to the environment, put communities at risk and undermine local businesses.

The defended flouted the law for financial gain – he cut costs by not hiring skips at the sites where work was taking place to ensure disposal of the waste.

He also avoided the cost of an environmental permit and annual subsistence fees. Illegal waste activities that avoid regulatory controls don't have the appropriate infrastructure to protect the environment, and can have a detrimental impact on local

communities.

The sentence follows calls from the Environment Agency warning landowners about criminals looking to profit by dumping waste illegally on their land.

Landowners can often find their property filled with waste and abandoned by tenants, leaving owners with an expensive clean-up bill. The Environment Agency is cracking down on waste crime and taking tough action to deal with this behaviour.

This ruling demonstrates that people can be made to pay for the cost of clearing the mess they leave behind.

Information and advice about environmental permits can be found on the Environment Agency website. To report illegal waste activity contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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## [The government's approach to making working more worthwhile for families](#)

I have been sent a reminder of changes coming in this April:

There are a number of welfare reforms and tax changes that come into effect in April. These reforms are about building a stronger economy and a fairer society. We want to support people in work, as well as ensure the welfare system works as a safety net for those who need it.

The measures include:

- A further increase in the Personal Allowance to £11,500; an increase of over 70% since 2010. Since the start of this Parliament we have cut income tax for 31m people and taken 1.3m of the lowest paid out of income tax altogether.
- Increasing support for low earners by raising the National Living Wage to £7.50. This marks a £1,400 a year increase in earnings for a full-time worker on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) since the introduction of the NLW in April 2016. – a pay-rise for one million people.
- Helping working parents with childcare costs by launching Tax Free Childcare from 28 April – saving working parents up to £2000 per year for each child under the age of 12.
- Increasing income for 3 million households by reducing the Universal Credit taper rate from 65 per cent to 63 per cent.

□ Ensuring young people are always better off in work by delivering the manifesto commitment to end automatic entitlement to housing support for 18 to 21-year-olds who can safely live at home for new claims to full service Universal Credit.

□ Investing £330m in practical employment support to help disabled people back into work, and aligning the rate paid to new claimants who are placed in the ESA work-related activity group or the Universal Credit limited capability for work group with the job-seeking equivalent in both benefits.

□ Tackling worklessness by ensuring that those in receipt of Universal Credit will be expected to prepare for employment when their youngest child turns 2 and to look for work when their youngest child turns 3.

□ Aligning the benefits system between those in work and those out of work by limiting Child Tax Credits and the child element of Universal Credit to 2 children (new awards will not be made for third or subsequent children born on or after 6 April).

□ Removing the higher rate of child element for the first child in Universal Credit and the family element in tax credits for claims where the eldest child is born on or after 6 April.

□ Widening help so that more bereaved people get the support they need by introducing the Bereavement Support Payment on 6 April. This will replace Bereavement Allowance, Widowed Parent's Allowance and the Bereavement Payment for those who lose a spouse or civil partner on or after this date.

Helping savers with the launch of a new NS&I bond offering a market-leading interest rate of 2.2% and increasing the annual ISA limit to £20,000.

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## Labour launches Pensioners' Pledge Card

Speaking today (Wednesday 12 April) on a visit to an arts and crafts exhibition at Age UK Coventry's Craft and Computer Centre, the Shadow Chancellor and Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, will launch Labour's Pensioners' Pledge Card.

The Pensioners' Pledge Card lays out Labour's four promises to protect older people in our communities:

- Protect pensioner incomes by legislating to keep the Triple-Lock on state pensions up to 2025
- End Tory unfairness on the women's pension age, compensating those worst affected

- Protect the pensions of UK citizens living overseas
- Keep the Winter Fuel Allowance and free bus passes for pensioners

Alongside the pledge card, Labour will publish new analysis from the House of Commons Library showing pensioners will be at least £650 better off by the end of the next parliament from keeping the triple-lock.

Highlighting an increase in pensioner poverty over the last year, Labour will also commit to compensating women worst affected by the Government's speeding-up of the state pension age; protecting pensioner benefits and protecting the pensions of UK citizens living abroad.

**John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, will say:**

"I am delighted to be launching this pledge card that will inform many elderly people in our communities that Labour is not only promising to stand up for pensioners; but is determined to ensure they keep the hard-won entitlements they currently hold.

"It's a national scandal that pensioner poverty is rising and the Tories are refusing to commit to keeping the triple-lock or compensate women worst affected by the speeding up in the state pension age.

"Only a Labour Government will stand up for pensioners and protect them throughout the next parliament."

## LABOUR'S PROMISE TO PENSIONERS

- ✓ Protect pensioner incomes by legislating to keep the Triple-Lock on state pensions up to 2025.
- ✓ End Tory unfairness on the women's pension age, compensating those worst affected.
- ✓ Protect the pensions of UK citizens living overseas.
- ✓ Keep the Winter Fuel Allowance and free bus passes for pensioners.



STANDING UP  
FOR YOU

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## News story: Defence minister meets teenagers taking part in pilot Army supercamp

The 60 teenagers mainly from local communities in Yorkshire were taking part in a pilot scheme to allow teenagers to learn about Army life by participating in a variety of fun but challenging tasks, including camouflage techniques and assault courses.

Defence Minister Earl Howe, who met students from Keighley University Academy and Bradford Youth Services Group, said:

These camps will educate young people and help the Army build close and long lasting ties with local communities.

An incredible amount of work is being done to ensure these 'Supercamps' are a success and I look forward to seeing more of them taking place across the country.



The teenagers from local communities in Yorkshire were taking part in a pilot scheme to allow teenagers to learn about Army life. Crown Copyright

The two week pilot, which includes 290 students, is being run by 4th Infantry

Brigade, the regional brigade for Yorkshire and the North East.

Lt Col Mark Hunter, who is overseeing the camp, said:

This supercamp brings together people from all communities around Yorkshire, providing them with positive skills to take home leadership and team working skills.

It also provides them with an opportunity to learn about the different things that the Army does, and to know more about the Armed Forces.

Towards the end of his visit Lord Howe presented special certificates to students who took part in the supercamp and also met many of the course instructors.