

# Press release: Wood fire man to pay £6,491

Waste company director Lee Reynolds has been fined £1,356 for the illegal storage of wood which went up in flames at Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire. He was also ordered to pay £5,000 costs and a victim surcharge of £135.

In just 2 months 3,000 tonnes of processed mixed waste wood was stashed in a warehouse at Lattersey Hill Industrial Estate before being abandoned some time before March 2015. A month later, the first of 3 significant fires broke out.

Reynolds, aged 36, formerly of Eye Road, Peterborough, was the sole director of Biomass Products UK Ltd which owned the illegal business.

Biomass Products UK Ltd was unlawfully operating the site without an Environmental Permit. In pleading guilty at Peterborough Magistrates' Court (14 February 2018), Reynolds accepted that the offence was due to his consent, connivance or attributable to his neglect as a director of the company.

Miss Wendy Foster, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court Reynolds had a 'flagrant disregard for the law' and had deliberately run the site illegally or allowed it to be run illegally. She said:

From January 2015 there can be no doubt that Reynolds was expressly aware that the activities were illegal and posed a significant fire risk.

She told the court that the site, a steel framed warehouse, was leased by Reynolds in October 2014 for 5 years from a pensions' holding company. The building's use was restricted to warehousing or workshop use, with a specific condition of the lease that no waste should be stored there. On the same day, Reynolds opened a business bank account stating he would use the building for storage, chipping and onward sale of waste wood.

Miss Foster said that deliveries were made only in the evening or at weekends and soon neighbours noticed a bad smell coming through the wall, which was reported to the landlord. The Environment Agency was alerted to the site in December 2014 and gained access early in January 2015 when it was found that the unit had been stacked from floor to ceiling with processed mixed treated wood. The unit was 7 metres high.

Reynolds was told he was operating without an environmental permit and was potentially committing an offence and that operations should stop immediately and the waste be removed. Waste transfer notes were also requested. The waste was not moved and no transfer notes handed over.

At a site meeting 2 weeks later temperature readings in the waste pile were

so high that Reynolds was told the site was a fire risk and the waste needed to be removed imminently, but despite a following enforcement notice nothing was done and the site abandoned.

Following a fire, a multi-agency emergency action plan, put together two months before, was put into action and two-thirds of the waste wood was removed from the building, co-ordinated by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and paid for by the Environment Agency. Four fire service appliances remained at the site for 12 more days leading to significant financial and logistical demands on the fire service.

Miss Foster said the building was structurally damaged and the remaining third of the wood inside had to be cleared by the landlord at their cost. The adjoining building was also damaged.

Reynolds told investigating officers that he had made all the decisions about the operation, had no experience of waste and had only intended to store the wood until it could be shipped abroad.

He claimed he had not been paid to take the wood and a man he had met in a coffee shop said he could buy it off him and ship it abroad for power supply.

He said he did not know he needed an environmental permit, hadn't looked at waste transfer notes and handed the keys back to the landlord before the first fire assuming they would deal with the waste.

He said he had been an estate agent for 10 years before starting the business.

Miss Foster said:

Research carried out by Mr Reynolds before starting the business was grossly inadequate and the activities that followed were reckless, if not a flagrant disregard for the law.

She said the failure to retain transfer notes for the wood was 'highly suspicious'.

After the hearing Environment Agency officer Emma D'Avilar said:

This individual has put his own gains before the environment, and the businesses and people who have to live and work on the industrial estate. His story does not add up and the court has seen through his fabricated story.

Companies that deal in waste are governed by extensive legislation and controls so that situations like these do not occur. It was a sham operation from the outset that had to be cleared up by the Environment Agency, Fire and Rescue Service and the landlord which put great pressure on already limited resources.

Reynolds pleaded guilty to:

Between 1 October 2014 and 12 March 2015 on land at Unit 1, Unit B1, Lattersey Hill Industrial Estate, Benwick Road, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire, Biowood Products UK Limited did operate a regulated facility, namely a waste operation for the deposit and storage of waste, without being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 13 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 and that offence was due to your consent, connivance or attributable to your neglect as a director.

Contrary to Regulation 12(1)(a), 38(1)(a) and 41(1)(a) and (b) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

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## [Apply now for the 2018 Transformative Action Award](#)

The award celebrates the ambition of cities and municipalities to create sustainable communities

The 2018 Transformative Action Award is now open. The competition rewards current or concluded actions that use the pathways of the [Basque Declaration](#) related to three categories: socio-cultural transformation, socio-economic transformation and technological transformation.

The Basque Declaration was adopted in Bilbao in April 2016 with the presence of Markku Markkula, former CoR president and now first vice-president.

The Basque Declaration includes 15 pathways to meet current economic, environmental and social challenges through the implementation of sustainable solutions that create value for local populations, be that through clean energy systems, low-emission mobility patterns or projects targeting biodiversity protection.

The competition is open to any local or regional authority and civil society organisation located in an EU Member State, EEA country or EU candidate or accession country that has endorsed the Basque Declaration. The applicant must be behind the implementation of a Transformative Action which must have been in place for at least three months, but no longer than five years, at the time of submission.

With the presence of **President Karl-Heinz Lambertz** and the **chair of the ENVE commission Cor Lamers**, [the CoR hosted the 2017 ceremony of the Transformative Action Award on 22 November.](#)

“The Transformative Action Award celebrates the ambition of cities and

municipalities to create sustainable communities. It sends a clear message that local democracy and citizen engagement are the driving force for a sustainable future”, said **President Lambertz**.

**Cor Lamers (NL/EPP)** is once again part of the jury for this 2018 edition. “The Transformative Action Award gives Europe-wide recognition to cities that are leading the way in terms of sustainability. Actions that reduce our environmental impact are urgently needed and this initiative is an invaluable tool to make those actions happen”, says the Mayor of Sheridan.

The award is organised by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the Basque Country and the City of Aalborg (Denmark) and has the support of the European Committee of the Regions. EU’s assembly of local and regional authorities will host the award ceremony on 22 November 2018.

[Please click here to apply](#)

#### **TIMELINE**

**Submission opens:** 28 February 2018

**Closing date:** 30 June 2018

**Shortlisted candidates revealed:** September 2018

**Transformative Action Award ceremony:**

November 2018

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## **[News story: Home Office announces new round of funding to tackle knife crime](#)**

As part of a new step-change to tackle the threat of violent behaviour, the Community Fund – which supports community projects to work with young people about the dangers of carrying knives – will have its funding increased to up to £1 million.

Over 40 charities, including the Ben Kinsella Trust, have already benefited by receiving grants of up to £20,000 through the first round of the Community Fund which was launched in October 2017.

In addition, further funding has been secured for Young People’s Advocates until at least the end of March 2019, to provide support for vulnerable women and girls at risk of exploitation by gangs.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

Knife crime has devastating consequences for families and local communities and I am determined to provide necessary support for those most at risk.

Tackling this crime needs a change in young people's attitudes so they are not tempted to carry a knife and understand that they risk inflicting serious injury or even a tragic loss of life if they do.

This new funding will allow communities to work with young people so they do not want to carry knives. This will be a commitment in the forthcoming Serious Violence Strategy which will be published later this spring, in which there will be a strong emphasis on early intervention.

The Home Office has already provided around £2.5 million of funding for 13 Young People's Advocates over 6 years (April 2012 to March 2018) in London, Manchester and Birmingham. In recognition of the important services these professionals deliver to vulnerable women and girls affected by gangs, funding will continue in order to ensure effective delivery of these services.

Early intervention and prevention will be one of the main messages in the new Serious Violence Strategy to be published later this spring. It will place a new emphasis on steering young people away from crime, while continuing to promote the strongest possible law enforcement approach.

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## [Company fined £1million after delivery driver killed](#)

A plastic product manufacturer has been fined £1million after a delivery driver was fatally injured.

Cambridge Crown Court heard how Gareth Wilson, a delivery driver for Mark Doel Transport Ltd, was fatally injured when he was struck by a fork lift truck which had large coils suspended from the forks.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Glynwed Pipe Systems Ltd failed to properly manage workplace transport in the yard area where employees and members of the public were exposed to the risk of being hit. The investigation also found that the systems of work in place were not, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe.

Glynwed Pipe Systems Ltd of St Peter's Road, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and have been fined £1million and ordered to pay costs

of £27,942.57

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Roxanne Barker said: “There are more than 5,000 accidents involving transport in the workplace every year, and, like in this case, sadly some of which are fatal.

“The HSE investigation found the yard was not organised to allow safe circulation of people and traffic as appropriate routes were not identified and therefore insufficient in number. A properly implemented Traffic Management Plan should have identified sufficient measures for the separation of vehicles and people including protected walkways, clear signage and barriers.”

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/) and [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg136.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg136.htm)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

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## **[Our action on STEM education and training](#)**

Research suggests that 65 per cent of children in preschool today will work in jobs or careers that don’t yet exist.

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