

Convicted waste crime offender ordered to pay £2.1 million

- Defendant given 3 months to pay under Proceeds of Crime Act
- Judge says Bruce is a career criminal
- One of the biggest orders gained by Environment Agency

A convicted waste crime offender has been ordered to pay £2,101,708 following a confiscation case brought by the Environment Agency at Worcester Crown Court which concluded on Tuesday 22 December 2020.

Judge Nicholas Cole ordered that John Bruce, aged 48 of Tilesford Park, Pershore, should pay the amount following a case brought by the Environment Agency under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Judge Cole imposed the order on Bruce, who had received a 26-month custodial sentence in May 2018 for operating an illegal waste site at Ridgeway Park Farm, Throckmorton Airfield near Pershore in Worcestershire between 2011 and 2014.

Bruce has been given 3 months to pay or he faces 7 years in jail if he fails to do so.

He was initially prosecuted for 6 offences where waste totalling about 25,000 cubic metres was either dumped, buried or burned at the farm.

The court heard that the defendant had grown his business and had invested in various properties, land and cars. He also owned a large selection of expensive items of heavy plant hire which he hired, bought and resold.

Judge Cole ruled that a Trust set up by the defendant was a sham and that money held in a bank account operated by the Trust, along with a property, formed part of his criminal benefit.

Judge Cole also determined that Bruce had used a bank account operated by a proxy company to hide his ongoing unlawful activity and used it as he would his own business accounts.

James Puzey, the prosecuting counsel for the Environment Agency, said:

The defendant is a dedicated career criminal who has ignored planning and environmental law to run a waste haulage and processing business.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

This is one of the biggest orders the Environment Agency has gained.

The case shows that we're not just content to prosecute those who run illegal waste sites, we'll also come after them to get back the profits they made from their illegal activities and to recoup taxpayers' money spent on pursuing them.

Waste crime can have a serious environmental impact which puts communities at risk and undermines legitimate business and the investment and economic growth that go with it.

We support legitimate businesses and we are proactively supporting them by disrupting and stopping the criminal element backed up by the threat of tough enforcement as in this case.

We continue to use intelligence-led approaches to target the most serious crimes and evaluate which interventions are most effective.

If you see or suspect waste crime is being committed we urge you to report it immediately to CrimeStoppers on 0800 555 111.