

East Midlands builder put environment at risk

A Northamptonshire building contractor and its managing director have been convicted of storing waste illegally.

Martyn Parratt, of Newnham, and the business he runs were twice investigated by the Environment Agency after receiving a report he was operating on land next to a busy road near Daventry.

The Environment Agency responded to a complaint in June 2017 about waste dumped off the A361 at Badby.

Investigators sent to the site were greeted by insulation waste, mixed wood and plasterboard. Parratt was told to apply for a permit or stop processing the material.

Those warnings appeared to work, as by August, Parratt had all-but-cleared the land. Neither Parratt nor the business had permission from the Environment Agency to carry out the work within strict limits to protect the area from pollution.

However, when crime officers went back in May 2019, they found a myriad of discarded items not meant to be there without a permit.

Builders' waste, more wood and plastic and a skip full of plasterboard were all on site. None of it there legitimately. Investigators also came across two ovens and a couple of refrigerators – all left illegally.

The 60-year-old Parratt blamed fly-tippers for the fridges and the ovens. He said his nephew, James, also a builder, was responsible for some of the new waste. Parratt senior only admitted his own company left some of the wood and plastic by the roadside.

Despite those investigating the case finding the remnants of a fire beneath the rubbish, Martyn Parratt denied lighting any. He said the pair didn't get on, so hadn't spoken to his nephew about clearing the site.

Paul Salter, the Environment Agency waste crime officer investigating Parratt and his company, said:

Operations like Parratt's are damaging in many ways. The potential or actual harm caused to the environment by storing outside of the law; the unsightliness of piles and piles of waste for communities; and the financial effect on businesses who follow the rules, pay their way and protect the environment.

Despite warnings from the Environment Agency to stop, Parratt and his company continued bringing waste onto the site, and ultimately

paid the price with fines and costs approaching £9,000.

My message to operators like Parratt is get a permit, get legal and stay legal.

It was only after more pressure from the Environment Agency the land was again clear. This was in July 2019, more than two years after the first investigation into illegal activity at the site.

Wellingborough magistrates' court fined MJ Parratt and Son Ltd, based in Queensbridge, Northampton, £3,500, and Martyn Parratt, of The Green, Newnham, £1,467. The Environment Agency's costs were split between them, with the company and Parratt paying £1,765.24 each.

The hearing on 18 January also awarded victim surcharges of £170 and £146 against MJ Parratt and Son Ltd and the managing director respectively.

MJ Parratt and Son Ltd pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to dumping and storing waste illegally, breaching regulation 13, contrary to regulations 12 and 38 (1) (a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

As a company director, Parratt admitted allowing the business to operate illegally, in breach of the same regulations.

The Environment Agency investigated Martyn Parratt's claims his nephew dumped some of the waste beside the A361. James Parratt, 32, of The Paddock, Welton, Northamptonshire, was given a formal caution for breaching environmental law.