

Press release: Water company fined for pollution incidents

Northumbrian Water Ltd (NWL) has been ordered to pay over £33,600 in fines and costs for three separate pollution incidents, including pollution of a Tyne Valley burn with untreated sewage effluent, which bypassed the local sewage treatment works.

The company was sentenced on Monday 23 July at South Tyneside Magistrates' Court after admitting one charge of causing a discharge of untreated sewage into Smithy Burn at Broomley on 19 August 2016.

Two other similar offences were taken into consideration as part of this case following unpermitted discharges of sewage effluent on 26 June 2015 at both Summerhouse & Killerby Sewage Treatment Works (STW), both near Darlington.

The pollution at Broomley originated from a storm overflow channel. These allow rainwater and sewage effluent to bypass a sewage treatment works in times of heavy rainfall, to avoid the works' capacity being exceeded. To be lawful, storm overflows should be incorporated into the works' environmental permit.

According to the Environment Agency, this was not the case at Broomley, since Northumbrian Water's environmental permit clearly states that discharges to Smithy Burn should consist only of treated sewage effluent.

Silt build-up

Chris Bunting, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that investigations found a build-up of silt had prevented flow from reaching the works, and instead diverted it to the storm overflow. Northumbrian Water's maintenance inspections hadn't included a requirement to check a manhole chamber where the blockage would likely have been discovered.

Formal samples were taken from the burn and an ecological survey revealed a thick sewage fungus affecting the watercourse for 100m downstream of the outfall, which had starved the water of oxygen and resulted in the death of freshwater shrimp and midge larvae.

At Summerhouse & Killerby STW's, the Environment Agency's inspections found both to be in a poor state of repair with faulty equipment. Rather than discharging treated sewage effluent, at Killerby sampling showed effluent leaving the works was more polluted than where it arrived.

Malcolm Galloway, appearing for NWL told the court that staff were to blame for the faults as they hadn't followed the company's inspection procedures, and that NWL has a good compliance record. He also maintained that the storm overflow at Broomley had been permitted because it was included in the permit application made back in 1989.

In sentencing, District Judge Roger Elsey ruled that the company's culpability was low, but that the additional offences meant the fine had to be increased.

Environment Agency Area Environment Manager, Fiona Morris said:

The incident at Broomley had a significant impact on the ecology of Smithy Burn. This case demonstrates how important it is that water companies and wider regulated industries understand and comply with the conditions by which they are permitted to operate.

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Guidance: Storing and drying waste wood before burning in a Part B co-incinerator: RPS 213

If you follow the conditions in this regulatory position statement (RPS) you can store and dry waste wood before burning as fuel in a standalone Part B co-incinerator without an environmental permit.

Version 1

Corporate report: The Marine Management Organisation annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018

Annual report and accounts cover the financial year 2017/18. This paper was laid before Parliament in response to a legislative requirement or as a return to an address and was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons.

News story: Michael Gove celebrates the best of Welsh at the Royal Show

Environment Secretary Michael Gove joined Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns at the Royal Welsh Show in Llanelwedd today, 24 July, experiencing the very best of Welsh food, farming and rural life.

They met with the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths AM, as well as representatives from the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, Farmers Union Wales and NFU Cymru, to discuss future farming policy once we leave the EU.

Earlier this month the Secretary of State welcomed the proposals from the Welsh Government to replace the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and make the most of the new freedoms provided by Brexit.

He also reiterated the need for Defra and the Welsh Government to work closely to reduce the bureaucracy faced by farms on the Wales-England border, addressing some of the points raised in response to Defra's public consultation.

Later in the afternoon he visited the Food Hall – sponsored by Food is GREAT – which celebrates fantastic local produce including:

- Snowdonia Cheese – The Snowdonia Cheese Company was established in 2001 and has created a luxury range of cheeses from around the lakes and mountains of North Wales
- Anglesey Sea Salt – the finest sea salt from the clean waters that surround Anglesey, produced by food company Halen Môn and used in some of the best restaurants worldwide
- Lochmeyer Farm Ice Cream – a family dairy farm making ice cream from its 350 free-range cows, with flavours including blackberry, ginger and Pembrokeshire salted caramel
- Blodyn Aur – translated as 'Golden Flower', this is Welsh rapeseed oil

- grown and pressed on a farm near the village of Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr
- Apple County Cider – award-winning ciders from orchards on the Monmouthshire hills

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

It is a pleasure to be here in this beautiful part of Wales for one of the biggest and best agricultural events of the year.

As we leave the EU we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform our food, farming and environmental policies. We expect to see more powers than ever before being granted to the Welsh government, and we are continuing to work closely to deliver a Brexit that will benefit Welsh farmers and consumers.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I am delighted to welcome the Environment Secretary to the Royal Welsh Show once again. It's a wonderful showcase for the quality of our livestock, food and drink and farm produce, highlighted by the hundreds of thousands of visitors who flock to Builth Wells year upon year to experience this showpiece event.

From multi-million pound investments in superfast broadband to supporting innovation in the agri-tech sector through our modern Industrial Strategy, we are delivering the measures needed to support the agricultural industry in Wales. As we move into the final stages of EU exit negotiations, we are stepping up our engagement to make sure the voices of the sector are heard.

To find out more about the Royal Welsh Show, which runs until 26 July, please see [here](#)