

Press release: Scrapyard permit dodger claims end-of-life vehicles were for resale

The owner of an Exeter scrapyard has been given a suspended prison sentence for operating an illegal vehicle dismantling business.

Max Newbery was also ordered to pay £8,470 costs at the end of a 2-day trial before Exeter magistrates. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

The court heard that in March 2014, the Environment Agency suspended the defendant's environmental permit after he failed to pay the site's annual permitting fee over a period of 5 years.

The scrapyard, at Barley Villas Yard, Redhills, Exeter, continued to accept vehicles despite it no longer being a permitted facility. Between 27 March 2014 and 25 February 2016 a minimum of 51 vehicles were accepted at the scrapyard.

When questioned, Newbery claimed he bought the vehicles with the intention of selling them on. He refused to accept they were waste as defined by the 2008 Waste Framework Directive which states that waste is 'any substance or object which the owner discards or intends or is required to discard'.

Two women who took cars to the defendant's scrapyard both said they were disposing of their vehicles. One described her's as 'Scrap, not a goer' and the other, 'Nobody would buy it.' An Environment Agency officer, who visited the site, said in his professional opinion, all the cars brought to the scrapyard were end-of-life vehicles.

When questioned about the poor condition of some of the vehicles, Newbery claimed they had been 'vandalised by children', yet there was no CCTV at the site and little in the way of security to safeguard the vehicles he insisted were suitable for re-sale.

In addition to suspending his permit, the Environment Agency served Newbery with an Enforcement Notice requiring him to carry out improvements to the infrastructure of the scrapyard to minimise the risk of pollution and protect human health. Newbery said complying with the notice would be 'expensive' and it was therefore 'unreasonable' of the Agency to expect him to do so.

Magistrates were told the defendant's business had an annual turnover of more than £50,000 and that he had recently obtained planning permission for the site. This had increased its value to around £600,000 and had prompted Newbery to try to sell it.

Jacob Hess of the Environment Agency said:

Scrapyard operators are required by law to put in place appropriate environmental safeguards to protect human health and the environment. The defendant continued running his scrapyard without making any of the legally required infrastructural improvements.

He avoided investing in the business as this would eat into his profits and continued making money from an illegal site.

Appearing before Exeter magistrates, Max Newbery, of Barley Villas Yard, Redhills, Exeter

received a 24-week prison sentence, suspended for 2 years, and was ordered to pay £8,470 costs after being found guilty of operating a regulated waste facility without a permit and failing to comply with an enforcement notice in contravention of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Editor's notes

Environmental permits are necessary to minimise the risk of pollution or harm to human health from operations at waste sites such as scrapyards. There are set procedures for de-polluting and dismantling of end-of-life vehicles that contain potentially hazardous substances including engine oil, clutch fluid, coolant, brake fluid, gearbox oil, lead acid batteries, power steering fluid, screen wash, fuels, CFC's and lead wheel balancing weights.

[Press release: Plymouth Skip Hire boss nearly jailed for dumping rubble](#)

A judge has told a Plymouth man he escaped prison 'by the skin of his teeth' in a case brought by the Environment Agency.

Connor Calam fly-tipped waste on the edge of Dartmoor while subject to a suspended prison sentence for driving offences. The custodial sentence was very nearly activated by Exeter Crown Court.

The court heard a farmer found a large quantity of rubble and other waste deposited across a track near Pudson Farm, Okehampton in January 2017. The waste blocked access to three of his fields. The farmer reported the incident to the Environment Agency and local council and was told he would have to pay for its removal and safe disposal.

Enquiries by the Environment Agency traced the waste back to Plymouth Skip Hire in Stonehouse, Plymouth operated by Connor Calam, also known as Riley James.

The building waste came from insurance repairs carried out on a property in Plymouth by a local company that paid the defendant £245 to remove the material on the understanding he was a registered waste carrier.

Plymouth Skip Hire ceased trading in April 2017. Zenith Construction Ltd, whose waste was illegally tipped by the defendant, later paid for its removal as a goodwill gesture to the farmer.

Phil Butterworth of the Environment Agency said:

This prosecution is a timely reminder to businesses and home owners to ask three simple questions when getting someone in to dispose of their waste.

Is the person registered with the Environment Agency as a waste carrier – ‘ask for proof’? Where do they intend to take the waste and can they provide a receipt? If they can’t provide satisfactory answers to these questions, don’t hand over your waste.

Appearing before Exeter Crown Court for sentencing on Tuesday 6 March 2018, Connor Calam, of Seaview Avenue, Lipson, Plymouth was fined £2,000 for breaching a suspended prison sentence and ordered to pay £2,500 costs. He was also made the subject of a 12-month community order, ordered to pay £260 compensation to Zenith Construction Ltd plus an £85.00 victim surcharge.

His Honour Judge Ralls QC said ‘Fly-tipping in a beautiful part of the country is a serious matter’ and warned the defendant he’d escaped being sent to prison ‘by the skin of his teeth.’

The sentencing followed an earlier hearing where the defendant was found guilty of disposing of controlled waste on land at Pudson Farm, Okehampton between 10 and 27 February 2017 without an environmental permit contrary to Section 33 of the Environment Protection Act 1990.

[Press release: 20 years after the Northamptonshire Easter floods](#)

The Environment Agency and its partners are calling on people to take steps to prepare for flooding and keep themselves and their families safe, 20 years after the Easter floods of 1998 caused devastation in Northamptonshire.

In 1998, an unusually wet spring led to severe flooding, with thousands of homes across the county affected. Two people lost their lives and over 150 people were hospitalised.

Northamptonshire County Council, Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, Northamptonshire Police and the Environment Agency worked together both over the course of the floods and during the recovery process. In the 20 years since Easter 1998, great strides have been made to help protect over 7,000 properties that are at risk of flooding in the county.

The EA has invested £12 million in flood risk management in Northamptonshire over the last 2 decades. This investment contributed towards the completion of a number of works, including the construction of a flood storage reservoir at Weedon and significant improvements on the flood defences at Far Cotton and St James.

The EA is planning with its partners to invest a further £1.8 million by 2021 to reduce flood risk to even more people and properties across the county.

In addition to this investment, the EA has also made progress by using modern technology to improve the way it can warn people when flooding is possible. Over 4,500 properties in Northamptonshire are now signed up to receive flood warnings via their landlines, mobile phones or email addresses through the EA's free flood warning service.

Although the EA and its partners work around the clock to protect people and their property from flooding, the risk can never be completely eliminated. A third of properties at risk are still not registered to receive flood warnings, as residents have not signed up to the EA's free flood warning service. The EA urges people to prepare themselves and their loved ones for flooding by signing up now.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Flooding is always devastating for those affected, and I know this has been the case for people and businesses in Northamptonshire.

That is why we have invested almost £12m in Northamptonshire flood defences in the past 20 years with a further £1.8m planned by 2021 to reduce the risk even further for home owners and businesses.

Environment Agency Area Flood Risk Manager Ben Thornely said:

Although we can reflect on 20 years of progress being made since the significant floods of 1998, we also recognise that flooding remains a risk to local communities across Northamptonshire. Our staff and our partners work around the clock to protect people and their properties from flooding, but we can never stop the risk completely.

This is why our free flood warning service is so important. Flood warnings give people valuable time to prepare for flooding – time that allows them to move themselves, their families and precious

items to safety. Our flood warnings save lives and enable the emergency services to prepare and help communities.

I'd urge residents across the county to check whether they are at risk of flooding and to sign up for flood warnings, by visiting www.gov.uk/flood or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

Cllr Ian Morris, county council cabinet member for transport, highways and environment, said:

Working with partners as the Lead Local Flood Authority for the County, an enormous amount of work has been done in the past two decades to tackle local flood risks.

The Pathfinder projects have empowered communities to tailor-make measures for their local areas, while the award-winning Flood Toolkit provides an online resource which acts as a central point of information for all flood-related issues.

However, we cannot be complacent and we recognise that we must continue to work together with the people of Northamptonshire to further reduce flood risk.

Cllr Mike Hallam, Northampton Borough Council's Cabinet member for environment, said:

Such events can be disastrous and it can take an age to recover from the devastation they leave in their wake.

A huge amount of work has been done in the past 2 decades to minimise the risk of such an awful event occurring again in Northampton but we remain ready to offer whatever support is needed in the event that it does.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's Deputy Chief Fire Officer David Harding, who served during the flooding 20 years ago, said:

As in 1998, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is there to help and protect people.

Advances in both training and equipment mean we are well prepared and equipped to respond to all emergency incidents requiring our services, including flooding, but our aim is to help prevent incidents before life is at risk. In this respect I urge everyone to help themselves and be prepared by signing up to the flood warning system.

[Press release: Work starts on multi-million pound North East flood scheme](#)

Work has started on site on a £2.5million project which will help protect around 100 homes and businesses in a South Tyneside community from flooding.

Monkton flood alleviation scheme will also see a section of the Bede Burn running underground opened up – known as ‘daylighting’ – and green space created for the community to enjoy.

The scheme is being delivered by South Tyneside Council and its partners at the Environment Agency and Tyne Rivers Trust. It’s expected to be completed in the winter.

It will tackle surface water flooding, which happens when rainwater does not drain away or soak into the ground, but lies or flows over the ground instead.



Communities better protected

Councillor Moira Smith, Lead Member for Area Management and Community Safety at South Tyneside Council, said:

We are delighted to see work get underway to reduce the risk of flooding to properties which have been badly affected in the past.

It is never possible to guarantee that an area will be flood free. However by working with our partners we can certainly help to increase the level of protection and reassurance by delivering long-term sustainable schemes such as this.

These measures will go a long way to controlling the flow of surface water and diverting it away from local residents and businesses. Once complete, communities will be better protected with the added benefit of an enhanced local environment.



Wider social and environmental benefits

The scheme involves managing surface water where problems have been identified around the Monkton Burn, Lukes Lane Estate and Leam Lane area, Mill Lane, Lilac Walk/College Road, Devon Road, Campbell Park Road/ Thirlmere Court and Mountbatten Avenue areas.

The plan includes improved drainage and landscaping next to Toner Avenue School and as part of uncovering the Bede Burn an attenuation basin to store run-off water during storms will be created.

The scheme will have wider social and environmental benefit, encouraging local people and children involved in creating valuable new habitat.

The scheme is largely funded by the Environment Agency, as well as a contribution from the local levy – which is money raised by local authorities for flood projects.

Leila Huntington, Flood Risk Manager for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

This is an excellent example of partners working together to not only develop a scheme which reduces the risk of surface water flooding but also creates valuable habitat and a space for the community to enjoy.

We've been working with the council and Tyne Rivers Trust to raise awareness of the importance of understanding flood risk and taking care of their environment and there'll be opportunities for the community to get involved. This is something they really can be proud of.

Liz Walters, Project Manager at Tyne Rivers Trust added:

This is a great example of using environmentally friendly ways to reduce the risk of flooding. As part of the project we'll be working with the local community and schools to create a green space for local residents to enjoy as well as creating new habitats for wildlife.

Anyone who'd like to volunteer to help with planting at Bede Burn should get in touch with Tyne Rivers Trust on 01434 636904.

The latest information on the scheme can be found at the [Monkton Flood Alleviation Scheme website](#)

Press release: Waste vehicle seized from gang

A vehicle belonging to an organised gang operating in South East England has been seized by the Environment Agency and Thames Valley Police, as part of an ongoing waste crime investigation. The vehicle is believed to be linked to the operation of an illegal waste site in the Maidenhead area.

The seizure, which took place last week, comes as the Environment Agency and the police move forward in their investigation to capture those responsible for occupying land unlawfully and accepting tonnes of waste, often from

unsuspecting sources, leaving behind the rubbish to be cleared at the expense of the landowner or taxpayer.

Illegal waste crime drains the UK economy of £1 billion each year in clean-up costs and lost tax revenues. It has a devastating effect on the environment and local communities with pest infestations and fires, which could lead to water and land contamination plus air pollution from smoke.

Nick Daykin, Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader, said:

This is a great result in an ongoing investigation with Thames Valley Police to apprehend a group of unscrupulous individuals. The power to seize vehicles is a relatively new and is now an important weapon in our armoury for disrupting this type of criminal activity. This is a big message to the criminal fraternity: you set up site yesterday, we will have one of your vehicles off the road today and we will do it again tomorrow!

Using illegal waste dealers may seem tempting in terms of cost, but it can help fund organised crime. Everyone has a responsibility for their own waste and if your waste is found at an illegal site you could be facing fines of up to £5,000. To avoid this, we encourage members of the public and local businesses to ask their waste carrier for proof of their Waste Carrier's Registration and to ask to see a 'waste transfer note' and if possible take a photo of it on their phone.

Contact

All press enquiries: 0800 141 2743