

# 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

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# Press release: Skip-It Torbay to pay thousands for skipping on asbestos removal

A South Devon waste processing company has been ordered to pay £16,404 in fines and costs for failing to remove thousands of tonnes of hazardous waste from two sites in Torbay.

The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

Armabridge Ltd, trading as Skip-It Torbay, operates from a waste transfer station at Barton Hill Way, Torquay. In June 2015 an Environment Agency officer discovered asbestos contamination in a pile of approximately 3,200 tonnes of residual waste at the site. In March 2016, following a lack of progress in dealing with the waste, the Environment Agency served an enforcement notice on the company to formalise the removal of the asbestos-affected material.

The company appealed against the enforcement notice, but the appeal was later dismissed by a planning inspector, who in January 2017 upheld the enforcement notice and gave the company 3 months to comply with its requirements.

In May 2017 an environment officer returned to the site and saw the pile of waste was still present. No significant progress had been made to remove it and as a result the company had breached its enforcement notice.

In January 2016, Armabridge Ltd was prosecuted for illegally depositing approximately 2,000 tonnes of asbestos contaminated waste at a second site, Kerswell Gardens, Torquay. In February 2017, following a lack of progress in clearing the waste, the Environment Agency served an enforcement notice requiring that the waste be removed.

In July 2017 an Environment Agency officer returned to the Kerswell Gardens site and found the hazardous waste was still present and that the enforcement notice had been breached.

Jacob Hess, for the Environment Agency, said:

This case emphasises the importance of robust waste acceptance procedures. Failure to segregate wastes appropriately can lead to complex and costly remediation at a later date.

We have recently run a campaign with local roofing businesses and waste operators to raise awareness of asbestos containing materials and how to correctly dispose of them.

Armabridge Ltd was fined a total of £13,334 and ordered to pay £3,070 costs

by Plymouth magistrates after pleading guilty to 2 offences of failing to comply with enforcement notices relating to Barton Hill Way and Kerswell Gardens, Torquay contrary to Regulation 38(3) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. The company has been given until 30 September 2018 to safely dispose of waste from both sites.

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## **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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## **[Press release: Sandwell Valley Park remains open during construction works](#)**

Access preparation for the construction of phase 2 of the Environment Agency's Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme started late January and will continue for the next couple of months. The main construction for the scheme will begin late spring/early summer and will reduce the risk of flooding to 1,400 properties in the area.

Over the next few weeks park visitors will see tree felling operations and some movement of HGVs through the access routes by Forge Mill Farm and the railway bridge by the RSPB centre. Any HGV movement will be carried out within normal working hours Monday to Friday. Priority will be given to park users, to keep disruption to a minimum. Both Forge Mill Farm and the RSPB will remain open during construction, and a path between the 2 buildings will remain available throughout the construction of the scheme. Handsworth Golf Course will be modified to support the scheme, but it will remain open as usual.

Recent Environment Agency drop-in sessions updated the public about progress of works, and received valuable feedback from local community members and

representatives of user groups in the park. Another drop-in session is being planned in the near future. Staff will be on hand to answer questions and confirm information such as timescales, footpath closures and traffic management. Attendees will also be able to view the plans and get an overview of the programme as a whole.

Rachel Kelly, Environment Agency project lead for the scheme said:

This is a very exciting scheme that is going to reduce the risk of flooding for 1,400 properties in the area. We have been working closely with our partners and the local community to ensure that we minimise disruption to the park users and keep the community informed as we progress through the construction phase.

Councillor David Hosell, cabinet member for highways and the environment, said:

Council officers have worked hard with the Environment Agency to ensure that the scheme has minimal effect on visitors to the Valley.

We are delighted that part of the scheme and work in the Country Park will include new fencing for improved animal pens at Forge Mill Farm, extending it as a visitor attraction. There will also be improvements to the entrance into the park for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders entering from the Old Newton Road.

More information about the Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme is available [online](#). Alternatively contact the Environment Agency project team at [witton.frms@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:witton.frms@environment-agency.gov.uk).

Along with flood defences and flood management schemes, knowing your flood risk is also important when protecting your family and property from flooding. People can check their risk and register to receive free flood warnings by visiting the Environment Agency's [flood information pages](#) or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

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## **[Press release: Worksop waste company fined £15,000 for operating illegally](#)**

A Nottinghamshire company has been fined £15,000 for operating an illegal waste site on land adjacent to Sandy Lane in Worksop. The company was also ordered to pay costs of £7,200 and a victim surcharge of £120.

The case against Yorkshire Waste Services Ltd. of Gateford Road, Worksop, was proven in the absence of a company representative at the trial on Friday 2 March 2018 at Mansfield Magistrates' Court.

Officers from the Environment Agency told the court that the site had been previously used by a company called Trent Valley Recycling Ltd. The site itself is one with a high fire risk due to the waste operations conducted by the previous owners.

This company did have an environmental permit for the site, however this was disclaimed once the company went into liquidation.

Officers discovered that Yorkshire Waste were storing a significant quantity of baled textile waste on the site between April and June last year.

A search of the public register confirmed that a number of companies had registered exemptions for waste activity on the site.

In light of that, and the fact that there was a high fire risk associated with the site, the exemptions were de-registered.

An enforcement notice was served on Yorkshire Waste giving them 21 days to clear the site of illegal waste. However, the waste remained on the site and no attempt was made to clear it.

In passing sentence, the Magistrates said that the company had flagrantly disregarded the law in committing the offences. They noted that the offences took place close to a high risk fire site.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

Yorkshire Waste Services has repeatedly put the environment at risk by deliberately ignoring the law for financial gain.

Illegal waste activity such as this has a detrimental impact on the community and environment, as well as undermining legitimate businesses.

The Environment Agency will continue to work hard to ensure enforcement action is taken against those who flout the law.

Anyone who suspects waste is being disposed of on an illegal site should report the matter to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

## **The charges**

- On 15 June 2017 Yorkshire Waste Services Ltd failed, without reasonable excuse, to comply with a notice dated 22 June 2017 pursuant to section 59(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, in that it failed to remove controlled waste from land at Sandy Lane, Worksop. Contrary to

section 59(5) Environmental Protection Act 1990.

- Between 9 April 2017 and 15 June 2017 at a site adjacent to Sandy Lane, Worksop, Yorkshire Waste Services Ltd did operate a regulated facility, namely a waste operation for the deposit, treatment and storage of waste, except under and to the extent authorised by an environmental permit Contrary to Regulations 12 and 38(1)(a) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.