

## [Press release: Illegal Newcastle scrapyards charged with £7k fine](#)

A Newcastle man has been fined for operating a vehicle scrapyards without a permit in a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency.

Ronald Coulson Vincent Grieveson, 23, of Forest Hall, appeared at Newcastle Magistrates' Court on Friday, February 23.

He pleaded guilty to illegally storing and treating waste vehicles and parts without a permit. He was fined £3,628, and ordered to pay costs of £3,273.58 and a victim surcharge of £362.

Acting on behalf of the Environment Agency, solicitor Chris Bunting told the court Grieveson had been operating an illegal waste site at Unit C, Grieveson Industrial Estate, Byker, without an environmental permit.

Environment Agency officers visited the site on 16 November 2016 and saw oil seeping from loose car engines onto the concrete and into a combined sewer system nearby. Grieveson was told to stop illegal activities and stop oil leaking off site.

On a further visit a month later, Environment Officers found oil continued to leak off site from engines left on the concrete surface. More car engines were stored in a red skip and various car parts and tyres were stored elsewhere on the site.

Grieveson was issued with a legal notice warning him to stop all illegal activity on site and remove all waste by 16 January 2017. Yet, when officers returned again on 27 February 2017 they found little had changed.

In court solicitor, Jack Lovell, in mitigation stated that Mr Grieveson realised he had been naïve and foolishly thought he could operate legally with just a waste carrier's licence. Mr Grieveson produced photographs to show the site is now cleared of waste.

Jamie Fletcher, Area Environment Manager, Environment Agency, said:

It is important that waste materials are stored, handled and disposed of correctly to protect the environment and safeguard human health. The defendant in this case continued to operate outside the law despite numerous warnings, and by handling un-depolluted vehicles and parts, he caused pollution.

Anyone who has information about waste crimes can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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## [Press release: Planting the seeds for a flood resilient future](#)

A Sunderland school is more prepared for flooding after a rain garden planter was installed and the school's pupils created a flood plan as part of the Environment Agency's 'Flood Weeks'.

Community Engagement Officer Taryn Al-Mashgari helped the youngsters at Springwell Village Primary School develop a flood plan and 'grab bag' so they are prepared in the event of a flood.

And partners at Northumbrian Water installed a rain planter – which captures and stores rainfall from the school's roof – as part of its Rainwise initiative.

Youngsters at the school helped put flowers into the planter in an event on Friday 23 February and then 'tagged' the school with a flood warden logo designed by a pupil from Hetton Lyons Primary School.

This was done using Rainworks – an invisible spray which will only show the logo when it rains. It will remind pupils during key times to be aware of their flood resilience learning.

### **Initiative helps schools be prepared for flooding**

A workshop held by the Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water and Northern Powergrid then also took place for parents and local councillors to see what the children have been learning and to see them demonstrate their newly-created flood plan.

It's part of an Environment Agency initiative to help schools across the North East be better prepared for flooding. Taryn works with children in all year groups to help them understand different types of flooding and how it happens.

They learn what to do before and during a flood, and what the flood warning symbols used by the Environment Agency mean. Taryn said:

It's important that younger people understand what flooding is, how it happens and what the different organisations that deal with flooding do.

We also teach them how to prepare for and what to do during a flood in a series of interactive sessions where they design their own flood protection and describe how they would keep their favourite possessions safe.

It's absolutely devastating to be flooded and that's why we are working with schools and our partners to educate our future generations about what they can do to keep themselves and their valuables safe.



## **Spreading the word about managing rainfall**

Northumbrian Water's Rainwise initiative aims to spread the word about how managing rainfall better can help increase capacity in the sewer network and encourages residents to make small changes around their homes and gardens.

Rain garden planters help reduce the risk of flooding by reducing the amount of water directly entering the sewer network, as well as slowing the amount of water that does.

Northumbrian Water's Project Manager, Chris Bond, said:

The Environment Agency's flood week gave us a real opportunity to work with the school to raise awareness of our Rainwise initiative and how it's important for families to manage rainfall better around their home to help reduce flood risk.

The planter captures rainwater from the roof of the school, which is then absorbed by the soil and plants and helps to take some of the pressure off our sewer network. It's been great working with the children to put in these plants, which builds their knowledge

of flooding and creating new natural habitats.

For more information on Rainwise, visit [Northumbrian Water's website](#)

The Environment Agency is urging people to 'Prepare, Act, Survive' by visiting the [Floods Destroy website](#) and do three things to prepare for flooding.

- check your postcode and find out if you are at risk of flooding
- sign-up for free flood warnings if you are at risk
- view and save the 3-point flood plan so you know how to 'Prepare, Act, Survive' in a flood

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## [Press release: Water quality returns to 'safe' following Heanor chemical spill](#)

Tests carried out by the Environment Agency on the water quality of numerous ponds in Shipley Country Park have revealed the water has now returned to a safe drinking water quality and signs to stay out of the 2 affected ponds have now been removed.

Drinking water quality does not mean it is recommended to drink the pond water; it means the concentrations of cyanide currently monitored are below these standards.

Environment Agency officers have continued to investigate and monitor the impact on the local environment of an accidental spillage of around 400 litres of liquid cyanide from a lorry delivering to an industrial unit in Heanor on Tuesday 6 February, some of which leaked into the nearby Adam's Pond.

Since the incident occurred, the Environment Agency has been regularly collecting samples from numerous ponds on the site and sharing the results with Derbyshire County Council, which owns the park, and Public Health England. The results have determined what actions were required to minimise the impact of the contaminants in the watercourse and ponds.

Greg Oakes, Area Duty Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Samples have regularly been taken to monitor the cyanide levels in the water and the results of the latest samples show the water is now at a drinking water quality, which is an excellent result. However, we would stress, drinking water standards does not mean we

would recommend drinking the pond water, it is just that the concentrations of cyanide currently monitored are below these standards.

Our officers have been working to minimise the effects of the spillage on the environment and wildlife in the area. The contamination was largely contained to Adam's Pond, which unfortunately resulted in a number of dead fish being found in the pond but, due to the level of contamination, our staff were unable to enter the water to carry out a netting activity to capture them. Whilst our monitoring showed there was some discharge to the nearby Osbourne's pond, this did not result in any dead fish being found there.

We placed bags of activated carbon downstream of Osbourne's pond to help filter cyanide out of the water and prevent it from leaking down the watercourse into the further ponds but the best course of action, minimising risk to people and the environment, was to wait for it to break down naturally.

In light of the latest results, rather than continuing with monitoring on site, we will now put a recovery plan in place. Adam's Pond is still closed to fishing to allow the water life to recover and the Environment Agency will meet with the county council and the local fishing club next month to discuss a management plan for the pond.

We will also be investigating the source of the pollution and take appropriate action against those found to be responsible.

A report by the Environment Agency's National Centre for Environmental Toxicology confirmed there was no significant risk to other wildlife which may have eaten dead fish from Adam's Pond.

ShIPLEY Country Park has remained open and safe to use following the chemical spillage incident but visitors to the park were advised by Derbyshire County Council not to enter the water or let their dogs enter the water in Adam's Pond and Osbourne's Pond.

Councillor Simon Spencer, Derbyshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure, said:

ShIPLEY is a much-loved park and the damage caused to Adam's Pond is extremely distressing. But we're relieved that there appears to have been no damage to Osbourne's Pond and pleased that the water in both ponds has now returned to safe drinking water quality.

This must not be allowed to happen again and we're pleased there will be an investigation and action taken against those responsible to send a clear message to businesses that they need to take their environmental responsibilities seriously.

The Environment Agency plans to visit businesses on the industrial estate next to the park to identify any potential pollution risks. We're grateful for any help and advice they can give about measures businesses can put in place to prevent further incidents like this happening at the park in the future.

Environment Agency staff work 24/7 to protect people and wildlife from pollution incidents. If you see pollution in your local river or watercourse, please call their incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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## **Press release: 'Flood and Coast' conference to tackle the big questions facing flood and coastal erosion management**

Now in its third year, the annual event brings together experts from across the globe to share ideas and opportunities to work together to tackle the risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

Flood & Coast takes place at the Telford International Centre from 20-22 March and registration is live on the event's website: [www.floodandcoast.com](http://www.floodandcoast.com)

Other topics including infrastructure resilience, partnership working, community collaboration and incident response will also be debated at the 3 day event.

Speakers this year include the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan, the Chief Executive of the Met Office, Rob Varley, and Baroness Brown of Cambridge, Chair of the Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Committee on Climate Change.

Other speakers include Jeff Lindner, a Director and meteorologist with the Harris County Flood Control District in Houston, Texas, who will share his experiences from Hurricane Harvey last August.

Clare Dinnis, Deputy Director of the Environment Agency, said:

Climate change is one of the biggest global threats we face. Intense storms are becoming more frequent and climate change will also raise sea levels. So this year we're focussing on how partnerships between attendees can help us be better prepared to respond to future challenges like climate change.

Experts from the UK and across the globe will discuss their experiences so we can learn from each other and improve how we manage flood risk and coastal erosion in the UK.

Paul Cobbing, Chief Executive of the National Flood Forum charity, said:

The Flood & Coast Conference is a great chance to network – bringing together a rich concentration of flooding and coastal erosion experts with a diverse mix of backgrounds – commercial companies, product manufacturers, public organisations, community representatives and academics.

Bringing these people together in a shared space provides a fantastic opportunity to explore how we can work together to reduce flood risk and manage coastal erosion more effectively in the UK.

More than 200 speakers will talk at the event, and 80 exhibitors will showcase the latest in flood risk management technology and innovation.

The full conference programme is now available on the website:  
[www.floodandcoast.com](http://www.floodandcoast.com)

Notes to editors

- Delegates include representatives from the Environment Agency, local authorities, risk management authorities, water companies, research academics, businesses, manufacturers and communities at risk of flooding.
- The winners of this year's Environment Agency Project Excellence Awards will be announced during the conference. The awards celebrate best practice in project areas such as programme and project delivery, partnership working, asset management, innovation, value for money, sustainability and community leadership.
- Flood & Coast's association partners include the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), the National Flood Forum, the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) and the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA).
- Flood & Coast is kindly sponsored by Van Oord, Black & Veatch, Jacobs, Flood Modeller, AECOM and VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and Atkins (VBA).

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**[News story: Peatlands to be restored](#)**

## in the North West

Work is underway to restore peatlands to their natural state across Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire after £160,000 of funding was secured through the Department Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Environment Agency will be working with a number of partners including Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Warrington Borough Council and United Utilities at six sites.

### **Restoring peatland to their natural state**

The funding will be used to restore upland and lowland peatlands to their natural state by increasing their capacity to prevent carbon entering the atmosphere, reduce flood risk by slowing the flow of rain water and creating habitats for vulnerable wildlife.

Natural England has been advising the partners about the best design for the schemes, and approving methods used on the Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

By blocking drainage ditches, building peat bunds and working with the local topography, the work will help keep water on the sites, encouraging the typical bog plant species and discouraging the dry-loving grasses and birch.

### **They provide 70% of our drinking water**

Peatlands cover 11% of England's landscape and they provide a great habitat for a wide range of wildlife and birds including merlin, dunlin and golden plover. They also provide 70% of our drinking water and reduce greenhouse gases by locking away at least 3.2 billion tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup>.

There are six projects across the Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire that have secured this funding, part of a Defra peatlands restoration pot of £500,000, with further projects around the country.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Well-maintained peatlands are an iconic aspect of the English landscape and are a vital part of the natural ecosystem. They provide key habitats for wildlife, supply us with clean water and reduce carbon emissions.

This scheme will help fulfil our ambition to be the first generation to leave the natural environment in a better state while returning thousands of hectares of peatland to their natural state.



Lisa Whelan, Environment Programme Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Peatlands are a fantastic resource and these restoration projects have multiple benefits to the environment. Work at the sites will include creating fire breaks and peat bunds, introduce new plant species, block ditches along with further initiatives to restore the peatlands.

Some projects will also serve as study sites for trials of innovative new restoration techniques. As well as having > a huge environmental benefit such as reducing greenhouse gases it will enhance habitats for wildlife.

Work is underway at six sites across Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire

Risley Moss, Cheshire – working with Warrington Borough Council (funding of £20,000)

Danes Moss, Cheshire – working with Cheshire Wildlife Trust (funding of £15,000)

Holcroft Moss, Cheshire – working with Cheshire Wildlife Trust (funding of £46,000)

Goyt's Moss Bridge, Peak District – working with United Utilities (funding of £16,000)

Peak Naze and Sykes Moor, Peak District – working with United Utilities (funding of £36,300)

Crompton Moor, Greater Manchester – working with City of Trees (funding of £30,000)

Total funding is £163,300