

Press release: Environment Agency issues permit to Southern Water for Bewl reservoir

The Environment Agency has issued a temporary winter drought permit to Southern Water Services Limited, to help refill Bewl Water reservoir in East Sussex.

The water company made an application on 5 January stating it needed to take more water from the River Medway to help refill Bewl Water, which was only 42% full at the start of the year.

Despite a wet December, the autumn was very dry. There was also lower-than-average rainfall across south east England during the previous winter. This prolonged dry period across the region has left many groundwater supplies and some reservoirs lower than normal for the time of year.

Bewl Water is the largest reservoir in the south east of England and can hold 31,000 million litres of water. It is an important source for Southern Water, which manages the supply of water to over 2.5 million customers across south and south east England. Southern Water already routinely takes water from the River Medway to fill the reservoir. The change to the permit will allow the company to abstract additional water until the end of March.

The change will mean Southern Water can take water when river levels are lower than the previous limit. The water company has requested the change as part of its plan to secure public water supplies for the upcoming summer.

In determining the drought permit application, the Environment Agency has taken into account the very low rainfall, the impact this has had on water supplies, as well as considering the response to the recent public consultation.

Julie Foley, Environment Agency Area Director, said:

Although it has been wet over the past few weeks, overall this winter across south east England there has been lower-than-average amounts of rain. Consequently, we now need above average rainfall for the remainder of the winter to replenish our water resources.

The Environment Agency has to balance the water needs of people, businesses and wildlife so we have carefully considered Southern Water's application. We have decided to grant this temporary change to the existing licence, helping the company to refill the reservoir at a time of year when there will be less impact on the environment. We will carefully monitor any effects and take action

if needed to ensure the environment is protected.

We encourage people to follow advice from their water company about saving water. Using water efficiently will help ensure we have enough water for people, businesses and the environment.

All media enquiries: 0800 141 2743. Or email southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk.

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[Press release: Contractors fined over diesel leak at Christchurch Hospital](#)

Kier Construction Limited (KIER), and their sub-contractor BKP Waste Recycling Limited (BKP), were sentenced at Bournemouth Crown Court on 12 January 2018 after earlier pleading guilty to an offence under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Kier Construction was commissioned by The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to carry out re-development work at Christchurch Hospital in February 2012. KIER appointed BKP Waste Recycling Limited to drain and remove oil from an oil supply line in the hospital grounds.

Oil escaped from a poorly-made connection in the oil supply pipework, which failed during routine testing of heating systems at the hospital in November 2014. The spillage polluted groundwater.

The case was brought by the Environment Agency at the end of a lengthy investigation that uncovered negligence on the part of both contractors.

Ian Withers of the Environment Agency said:

This pollution incident had the potential to cause serious harm to the environment and was entirely avoidable. The 2 companies failed to understand the extent of the work required and mitigate the risks. Construction companies must adhere to environmental permitting regulations to prevent their activities from affecting the local environment.

KIER was fined £100,000 with £30,301 costs for causing groundwater activity

under regulation 38 (1) (a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. BKP was fined £10,200 for the same offence with £42,851 costs.

If you are concerned about pollution to water or land, contact our 24-hour incident line on 0800 807060.

Press release: Angler faces fine of nearly £2,500 for multiple angling offences

Greg Henshaw, 35, has been fined £2,416 after being caught by an Environment Agency bailiff for multiple fishing offences, including obstructing a fishery bailiff and using an illegal bait at Ripple on the River Severn in Tewkesbury.

Henshaw was found guilty by Cheltenham Magistrates' Court on Friday 12 January for 5 offences; using an unlicensed rod and line, failing to state his name and address when asked by a Water Bailiff, fishing for fresh water in the closed season, wilfully obstructing an officer on duty and illegally using hook and bait during the prohibited close season.

Henshaw, of Wychwood Crescent in Birmingham did not appear in court. In his absence magistrates found him guilty of all charges. For each charge he was given a fine of £440, totalling £2,200, and Henshaw was also ordered to pay £172.61 and a victim surcharge of £44.

Andrew Eardley of the Environment Agency said:

This penalty for 1 angler is amongst the highest I've ever seen, and it's good to see that the courts take instances of obstruction against enforcement officers seriously and that offenders are prosecuted.

An annual fishing licence costs just £30, yet a small number of anglers continue to flout the law and risk prosecution for fishing without a licence. Fishing licence money is invested into England's fisheries and rivers; improving the sport of angling. So it's fellow anglers that being cheated by those who choose to fish without a licence.

Environment Agency officers are checking licences regularly throughout the

year. A licence costs just £30 and now lasts for 12 months from the day you buy it.

Money from fishing licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease, restoring fish stocks through re-stocking, eradicating invasive species, and fish habitat improvements. Fishing licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing, to encourage participation in the sport and to manage a voluntary bailiff scheme.

Children under 12 fish for free. Anyone aged 12 to 16 also fish for free, but do need to have a valid Environment Agency fishing licence. Anyone over 16 must pay for an Environment Agency fishing licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline, 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

[Press release: Colne man sentenced for running illegal landfill](#)

John Leslie Allison (72) of Southfield Lane, Colne, Lancashire, was sentenced on Friday 5 January 2018 at Preston Crown Court having pleaded guilty and been convicted on 7 July 2017 to the offence of operating an unpermitted waste facility. He was also ordered to pay the Environment Agency's investigation costs of £9,190.64 in full.

Sentencing was postponed whilst the Court directed investigations into Mr Allison's means.

In September the Court heard how Mr Allison had deliberately, over a 10-month period, between 20 September 2015 and 15 June 2016, been seen to repeatedly dispose of waste on land previously used for grazing livestock. This activity had continued despite a number of verbal and written warnings from the Environment Agency and a formal notice requiring him to clear waste from the land.

Sites where waste is disposed of by burying require an environmental permit from the Environment Agency and are subject to strict conditions and considerable investment in infrastructure to manage risks to the environment.

The illegal operation of this site has caused considerable concern to a number of local residents and potential harm to the environment.

The Environment Agency had sought to work with Mr Allison to bring about a change in his behaviour and had provided him with a number of opportunities to take action to remove waste from the land off Delves Lane.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

Mr Allison has entirely failed to respond to our efforts and, even following an interview under caution, continued to import waste to the land without regard to warnings given by the Environment Agency.

Waste crime is a serious offence, which can damage the environment, undermine legitimate business and cause misery for local residents.

The Environment Agency is determined to make life hard for criminals. Our specialist crime unit uses intelligence to track and prosecute those involved in illegal waste activity and we rely on information from the public to bring those responsible to justice.

People can report waste crime 24/7 to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Press release: Waste company fined for permit breaches

A north east waste management company has been fined thousands of pounds for breaching environmental laws leading to a fly infestation which blighted the local community.

Niramax Group Limited appeared at Teesside Crown Court on Monday 15 January where it pleaded guilty to breaching its environmental permit, leading to a fly infestation at its site at Monument Park, Washington.

It also pleaded guilty to failing to comply with an enforcement notice by not removing waste as required at its site at Tofts Farm in Hartlepool after large amounts of waste tyres created a potential fire hazard.

The prosecution follows an investigation by the Environment Agency. They were fined a total of £16,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.



Flies on the waste at the Washington site

Fly infestation

Lee Fish, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that at the Washington site a pre-arranged audit took place on 2 April 2015 where Environment Agency officers discovered a fly infestation.

Two of the bay doors to the waste shed were not operating satisfactorily which caused problems with pest control measures. Waste was not sufficiently divided between the four bays.

A second visit on 9 April saw the flies still present both outside and inside the waste storage shed. Efforts had been made to empty the waste from the bays. A visit on 12 April saw the site and issues had been cleared.

During the investigation Environment Agency officers spoke with neighbouring businesses and residents which confirmed the impact of the infestation.

Excessive tyre storage

At Hartlepool, where Niramax treats waste tyres, the Environment Agency originally attended the site in June 2015 after receiving complaints about dust.

On 28 July an Action Plan was signed by the operator to resolve a number of permit breaches, which included a dust management plan. And the large amounts of waste tyres on site were to be stored within bays in accordance with permit conditions and fire prevention guidance.

The operator agreed to return the site to compliance by 30 November 2015.

In February 2016, Environment Agency officers attended the site to assess its compliance with its permit. It was noted the site was still operating as it was in June the previous year and the bays were still buried under piles of waste tyres.

An enforcement notice was served on the company to clear the site of tyres by 14 June, 2016. On 15 June the Environment Agency visited the site, and while the amount of shredded tyre waste had reduced permit breaches were still evident – waste was not contained in the bays and no fire breaks were noted.

The bays were capable of storing 1490.4m³ and the contents were measured to be 2461.71m³.



Piles of waste tyres at the Hartlepool site.

'Negative impact on local areas'

The company told the court that they had been caught out by an unseasonably sharp rise in temperature. This meant their fly suppression methods proved inadequate.

At the tyre site they suffered when a fluctuation in the market made it more difficult to remove the shredded tyres from the site. They said they had done everything in their power to comply with the enforcement notice.

Rachael Caldwell, Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency in the north east, said:

Environmental laws exist for a reason – to protect the environment and communities – so it is vital that waste operators meet the conditions of their permits.

In both of these cases there was a negative impact on the local areas, which is extremely unpleasant and unacceptable and not something communities should have to endure.

We always treat operators fairly and ensure they understand the potential impact their activities can have, and work together with them to help bring sites into compliance.

At Hartlepool we gave Niramax ample opportunity to bring their site back into compliance, and at Washington we gave them five days to act on what was a serious fly infestation.

But they repeatedly showed little regard for the detrimental impact on their neighbours and the environment. And during our investigation they even described our actions – to protect the environment and the community – as ‘nit picking’.

I hope this case reassures our communities that we will do everything possible to ensure operators comply with their permit, and take enforcement action when they don't.