

Press release: Waste criminals dump £750,000 clean-up bill on landowners

Criminals who illegally dump thousands of tonnes of baled waste have cost land and property owners in the North East an estimated £750,000 in the last year, according to the Environment Agency.

The figure, which relates to the cost of removing waste dumped in fields and empty commercial properties lawfully, could be even higher if land is contaminated or insurance premiums rise as a result. Dumped waste is also a major fire risk.

In a bid to stop waste criminals in their tracks, the Environment Agency is reaching out to property and land owners, commercial property agents, trade associations and local authorities. Their aim is to warn of the dangers posed by waste criminals and advise them, their clients and their members how they can better protect themselves.

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

Waste criminals operate throughout the country, offering to remove waste cheaply and then dumping it in fields or empty warehouses. They tend to move to new areas as enforcement agencies become wise to their activities. We know it's only a matter of time before they target us again so we're sending out a strong message: Waste criminals are not welcome here and we're doing everything in our power to deter and catch them.

We can't do it alone. We work closely with partners to share intelligence on illegal waste activity. And we're encouraging everyone to do their bit: for property and land owners to be vigilant and better protect themselves and for all businesses, organisations and individuals to manage their waste responsibly, preventing it from getting into criminal hands in the first place.

Land and property owners are advised to:

- Check any empty land and property regularly and make sure it is secure.
- Carry out rigorous checks on prospective and new tenants. Land and property owners have a responsibility to ensure anyone leasing their land/property complies with regulations. They may be committing an offence by allowing waste to be stored on land or property without the relevant permissions and could leave them liable to prosecution
- Be vigilant and report any unusual behaviour.



Advice for businesses

There are around 4,000 commercial properties across the North East thought to be empty, which are owned by up to 1,500 businesses and organisations, including fund management companies and local authorities.

The Environment Agency is also advising businesses and organisations of their responsibility to ensure their waste is managed appropriately. Anyone who produces, stores and manages waste is obligated to ensure waste does not cause harm to human health or pollution to the environment under waste under Duty of Care legislation.

Waste crime diverts as much as £1 billion per annum from legitimate business and the treasury. Since April 2011 the Environment Agency has invested £65.2 million nationally to address it. Its specialist crime unit uses intelligence to track and prosecute organised crime gangs involved in illegal waste activity and to ensure any necessary action is taken against them.

The Environment Agency also works with partners to share intelligence on illegal waste activity and to put in place contingency plans to reduce the risk from a small number of abandoned sites at risk of fire.

Anyone who sees waste crime taking place is advised not to approach as these people can be dangerous. Report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Press release: Barriers at the ready in 'Broadchurch'

Visitors to West Bay, near Bridport, will see up to 60 metres of temporary coastal defence barriers deployed in East Beach car park in preparation for any future tidal incidents.

The barriers – one of 4 types used by the Environment Agency – are large, self-supporting, recyclable containers filled with aggregate. They are covered with an impenetrable membrane which prevents water from getting through. They are also fitted with a lid to prevent loss of fill material during over-topping and extreme weather conditions.

Exercise organiser and engineer Dan Hooper said:

West Bay is a high risk flood area because of strong south westerly winds, high tides and the close proximity of properties to the sea and nearby River Brit, so it's essential we are 'incident-ready' by carrying out exercises like this.

These barriers are relatively new to the Environment Agency so this exercise provides us with an opportunity to get to grips with them. We are learning how we open, connect and fill them using a stockpile of beach materials already located on site.

Sharpening our practical skills and knowledge means we can better protect homes, businesses and the environment quickly and safely should a major incident be expected in West Bay or anywhere along the Dorset coast.

Partner agencies have been invited to observe the exercise, including representatives from the British Army, Dorset Local Resilience Forum (local authorities, Dorset Fire and Rescue Service, Dorset Police, Civil Contingencies Unit) and the West Bay Harbourmaster.

One of the Environment Agency's new Incident Command Units (ICU) will also be on site recording footage of the exercise. The WiFi-enabled ICU acts as a mobile incident room and a temporary headquarters for staff out in the field, enabling better site management, situational awareness and visibility in flood risk communities.

Part of the car park will be cordoned off, but vehicle users will still be able to access the remainder of the car park and beach.

Notes for editors

West Bay is a designated World Heritage Site and situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Environment Agency is currently working with West Dorset District Council, co-ordinated by the Dorset Coast Forum, to identify and improve the coastal defences in West Bay and make the beaches more resistant to storm damage, while also preserving the iconic views and amenities.

The 'Jackbox' flood defence barriers are made by Hesco. They are easy to store and transport and can be deployed quickly by 2 people and a machine. They can be filled with earth, sand, gravel, crushed rock or other granular materials and are easily removed.

Media opportunity

Members of the media are invited to observe the exercise from 11am. Interviews with Dan Hooper will be available at 12pm. Please confirm your attendance with the press office (telephone 0800 917 9271).

Attendees should be appropriately dressed and will be asked to sign in on arrival/given high-visibility clothing and hard hats (if crossing the cordoned off area).

The nearest available alternative car park will be at:

Station Road car park

Station Rd

West Bay

Bridport

DT6 4EW

[News story: £4.5 million flood alleviation scheme to open in Cannington](#)

Somerset's newest flood alleviation scheme will be officially opened by the chair of the Environment Agency next week.

The chance of flooding has been cut for 200 homes in Cannington thanks to a

jointly funded £4.5 million scheme which will be opened by chair Emma Howard Boyd on Wednesday 27 September.

This is a result of a partnership with the Environment Agency, EDF, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset Rivers Authority, Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Wessex Water and Cannington Parish Council.

To avoid a repeat of more than 40 homes and businesses flooded twice in November 2012, a new flood alleviation channel has been created after the old brook, built in 1984, was deemed unfit to cope with present and future flood flows. All the fish have since been moved.

Disruption to motorists on the A39 was kept to a minimum in April this year when 4 culverts were installed under the road. Inside each one is a hydrobrake. These cone-shaped funnels accept large volumes of water, swirl it to reduce its speed, before releasing it.

By the time reseeding ends next month, more than 57,000 hours of work will have been put into the award-winning project.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

From the recovery after the 2012 flood to the development of this scheme, it's been great to see Cannington's community and the Environment Agency working together in partnership.

To better protect over 200 properties in Cannington, 45,000 cubic metres of earth was moved. This uncovered some fascinating archaeological discoveries about the history of flooding in Cannington, dating back to the Roman period.

Thank you to all the partners for making this possible.

David Jenkins, chairman of the Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, said:

This is an excellent example of what can be achieved, when so many people and organisations work together with a shared sense of purpose.

David Eccles, EDF Energy's head of stakeholder engagement for Hinkley Point C, said:

Cannington residents have long suffered real issues from flooding so we were pleased to contribute £500,000 to support this vital flood defence scheme.

The funding is part of our wider commitment to support local communities and services through agreements, worth almost £100

million, to build Hinkley Point C.

Of that, some £865,000 has been specifically allocated for environmental schemes, including other flood defences in Bridgwater and Stolford.

Councillor Anne Fraser, Sedgemoor District Council's Portfolio holder for Economic Growth said:

I am delighted that this work has been completed. Not only will it save residents' homes from potential future flooding but enable road users in the area to benefit from the scheme.

Sedgemoor District Council were pleased to make a financial contribution which, along with other partners, enabled the scheme to go forward.

Councillor John Osman, Chair of Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA), said:

This Cannington scheme met all the objectives of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan, which is overseen by the SRA, so we were delighted to give the final £300,000 that meant this Environment Agency scheme could go ahead. It's good for people, property, business, road users and the environment.

Archaeological findings during construction revealed that Cannington's history with water problems extended further than first thought. Four skeletons were unearthed and the works revealed intensive activity dating back to the Roman period (AD43-AD410), including part of a square enclosure and human burials.

The first phase of Roman features was sealed by alluvial layers, which strongly suggests that the area was flooded in the Roman period. At some point after this flooding episode, the Romans returned to the site, and there was a second phase of Roman activity cut into the top of the alluvial layers.

Editor's notes

The Cannington flood alleviation scheme won a Green Apple award and was shortlisted for the 2017 BIG Biodiversity Challenge Awards.

Press release: Man who dumped chemical barrels caught out by GPS in hire van

A man was caught out after GPS data was seized from the rental van he had used to illegally dump waste and he has now been sentenced at Nottingham Magistrates Court.

Kirk McRoberts, of Waterloo Promenade in Nottingham, pleaded guilty on Tuesday 19 September and was fined £900. He was also ordered to contribute £500 towards the cost of prosecution and had to pay a £45 government surcharge.

McRoberts was charged with illegally depositing waste in Long Eaton in Derbyshire and Cossall in Nottinghamshire. The judge described the illegal deposit of the waste as “a scourge” and remarked that these offences were serious.

The judge gave McRoberts full credit for his early guilty plea and noted that he had no previous convictions for breaches of environmental legislation.

Between 4 and 7 April 2016, McRoberts deposited twenty-three barrels filled with adhesive at Lock Lane in Long Eaton and at Cossall Road in Cossall. Running a firm called ‘No Need for a Skip Ltd’, McRoberts used a hired vehicle which was fitted with a GPS tracker. Data recorded by the GPS tracker clearly shows the van stopping at both locations. CCTV footage from one of the sites also showed the barrels being dumped.

The company that hired Mr McRoberts to remove the waste has been issued with a warning for not making the necessary checks as to where the waste would be going and that the company used was registered as a waste carrier.

The Environment Agency estimates that McRoberts avoided costs of around £900 by disposing of the waste illegally.

Commenting, Peter Haslock, enforcement team leader with the Environment Agency said:

The acts of illegal waste carriers like McRoberts can have seriously damaging effects on the environment. They also undermine legitimate businesses operating within the confines of the law.

We will continue to work tirelessly to bring those responsible for illegal waste dumping to justice. We’d also like to remind people to check their waste carrier is licensed by the Environment Agency. You are required by law to make sure your waste goes to a site licenced to take it, and could end up with a hefty fine if you fail to do so.

[Press release: Leeds flood defence plans on show](#)

Proposals for the second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme are going on show this month to communities upstream of the city centre.

A series of drop in events are being held in Kirkstall, Horsforth, Rodley and Apperley Bridge areas of Leeds, giving residents the opportunity to view options to reduce the risk of flooding to their homes and businesses.

An eight week consultation runs from today, Thursday 21 September until 16 November.

Members of the project team will be available at the following events to explain the options, answer any questions and seek views. Residents and business owners are invited to stop by within the following times to find out what is proposed:

- Monday 2 October, 3pm to 7pm, Horsforth Community Hub, Town Street, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 5BL
- Thursday 12 October, 3pm to 7pm, Radio Aire, 51 Burley Road, Leeds, LS3 1LR
- Thursday 19 October, 10am to 1pm, George & Dragon pub (car park), Apperley Rd, Bradford BD10 0PU
- Thursday 19 October, 2.30pm to 5.30pm, The Church (car park), Wesley Street, Rodley, LS13 1JH
- Saturday 28 October, 9am to 1pm, Kirkstall Leisure Centre, Kirkstall Ln, Leeds LS5 3BE
- Sunday 29 October, 12pm to 3pm, Kirkstall Abbey Deli Market, Abbey Rd, Leeds LS5 3EH

With the £50 million first phase of the scheme, which has introduced state-of-the-art new flood protection for the city centre, Holbeck and downstream at Woodlesford set to be completed next month, Leeds City Council working with the Environment Agency, BMM jV Limited, Thomas Mackay and Arup, have released details of the further measures required for phase two.

The proposals for phase two represent the outcome of an extensive survey and feasibility study of the river catchment carried out by Leeds City Council and the Environment Agency following the devastating impact of Storm Eva at Christmas 2015, to determine the level of future protection needed to provide vital reassurance to residents and businesses.

They include measures further upstream including the Kirkstall corridor which was badly hit by the floods as well as Stourton, an industrial area that was badly affected on Boxing Day 2015.

Phase two will also look at areas beyond the city boundary to further reduce the possibility of the river flooding in Leeds, as well as additional measures to offer protection for the South Bank area of the city centre which is a key future economic driver for Leeds.

The range of measures proposed are a mixture of natural flood management and new infrastructure including:

- Creating new woodland areas by planting hundreds of thousands of tree saplings.
- Where possible, using sites in Leeds to retain flood waters when levels are high. Control gates would be used to fill and then release water from the stores back into river when safe to do so.
- A new 700-metre long flood defence at Stourton with new walls and surface water interventions similar to those installed at Woodlesford as part of phase one.
- Removing existing obstructions along the river to help reduce water levels, along with also lowering the riverbed in places to improve its capacity and flow.
- Improving riverbank protection measures along the river catchment in Craven and Pendle along with enhanced woodland areas and installing debris dams.
- Constructing raised defences along with landscaping, terracing, embankments and walls, but due to the range of natural measures the height of any engineered defences will not need to be as high as previously projected.

Leeds City Council executive member for regeneration, transport and planning Councillor Richard Lewis said:

The response to these plans when they were released last week was very positive, especially the use of new trees and natural flood management measures along the catchment to help provide essential protection for communities in Leeds.

It is now vitally important we hear the views of residents and businesses so I would encourage as many people as possible to take part in the consultation and attend these drop-in sessions.

Following an extensive study agreed with the government and other agencies these are the measures identified as being necessary to offer the level of protection needed which the government said it would provide, so we look forward to seeing these plans develop as soon as possible.

The impact of Storm Eva in Leeds at Christmas 2015 affected 3,355 properties in Leeds, of which 672 were commercial businesses. The direct cost to the city was an estimated £36.8 million, with the cost to the wider city region

being more than £500 million.

Following the flooding in December 2015, the government committed £35 million between now and 2021 to a new scheme to further enhance flood protection in Leeds.