

Press release: John Millen jailed for 8 months for illegal waste operation

The operator of a waste site in Sittingbourne, Kent has been imprisoned for 8 months for the illegal disposal, sorting and treatment of construction demolition waste.

John Millen, 50, trading as K.M. Millen Grab Hire, received the custodial sentence today (Wednesday 12 April) at Maidstone Crown Court after pleading guilty to using the Gas Road site for illegal waste transfer activities.

The Environment Agency brought charges against Mr Millen following an investigation in December 2014 which established over 40,000 tonnes of waste had been illegally deposited on the site.

Mr Millen was subsequently provided with clear guidance on the action he was required to take and an Enforcement Notice to clear the waste from the site by the end of March 2015 was issued. However, after the three months had expired it was clear that none of the waste had been removed and he continued to crush, treat and deposit waste.

The activities being undertaken by Mr Millen were in clear breach of environmental legislation and would have required an Environmental Permit. Mr Millen did not apply for an appropriate Environmental Permit and continued to operate, avoiding significant costs to his business.

Alan Cansdale, Environment Manager at the Environment Agency said:

Mr Millen was fully aware that he was not allowed to store that amount of waste on the site, but continued to accept more construction and demolition waste whilst ignoring the advice and guidance issued to him by Environment Agency Officers. His actions put the environment at risk.

Waste crime can undermine legitimate businesses, so we work closely with businesses to help them comply with the law. In cases like this, where illegal operations are connected to licensed businesses, we have no hesitation in prosecuting those involved. We want to make sure that waste crime doesn't pay.

Whilst passing sentence, Judge St. John-Stevens said that Mr Millen was the "controlling mind of the business" and he ignored all advice offered from the Environment Agency regarding his business operations

Press release: Waste scam now sees Boston targeted

Another farmer has now been scammed by unscrupulous waste criminals in Lincolnshire

This time a Boston farmer faces the cleanup bill for 250 tonnes of waste after being approached and asked if he wanted tarmac road planings that can be used to repair roads and farmyards on their land.

The Environment Agency issued a [warning last week](#) after 2 farmers in the Grantham area suffered the same fate, with one of them facing an estimated bill of £300,000 to dispose of the waste after they found baled rubbish on their land instead of the promised tarmac road planings.

In the recent Boston case, a neighbour made the farmer aware of the scam warnings issued last week after the initial 250 tonnes of waste were left, and this ensured that no further waste was dumped on the site.

The Environment Agency is urging all landowners to be wary and not become the next victim of illegal waste disposal and dumping.

Advice from the Environment Agency includes:

- use reputable agents and brokers
- carry out suitable checks and due diligence, i.e. get the individuals details, vehicle registration, ask where the waste is coming from (address, permit number, waste carriers registration)
- inform them you'll be contacting the Environment Agency or call us whilst they are there
- don't agree to accept any waste until you have carried out some checks and had a cooling off period to fully consider the offer

Peter Stark, Senior Enforcement Officer, said:

Waste criminals can be very convincing and persuasive, sometimes offering £1000s in cash up front. Don't be tempted by quick money because you could end up with not only a massive disposal bill but also harm to the environment, flies, polluting liquids running out of bales of waste and increased risk of fire.

We will investigate the illegal waste incidents fully and take enforcement action where necessary. The recent case shows that farmers in the region are particularly at risk of this scam.

However, the landowners may have to pay significant sums to remove the waste legally. Waste crime is a serious issue diverting as much as £1 billion per annum from legitimate businesses and Treasury.

Although these specific incidents occurred in Lincolnshire, we want landowners and farmers everywhere to be vigilant.

The Environment Agency provides impartial advice to customers, individuals and businesses to help them grow. Our local officers will be happy to talk to you, can make public register checks whilst you are on the phone or you can make checks on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) for free, or you can call the Environment Agency's customer contact centre on 03708 506 506.

The Highways Agency and county council's highways department and their contractors will always use legitimate waste carriers and sites for the reuse or disposal of waste. They may approach farmers and landowners to see if they want to reuse tarmac road planings or crushed rubble and concrete to repair road and yard areas, but farmers need to register the [U1 waste exemption](#) with the Environment Agency and abide by the rules.

The vast majority of waste sites that the Environment Agency regulate are well run and provide essential waste management services. The Environment Agency are there to help the legitimate businesses.

Waste stored inappropriately can create issues for neighbours like smells and pests. It can also have a detrimental effect on the environment and impact on rivers and streams. There is a high risk of waste fires due to the waste not being stored in the correct manner.

Everybody has a part to play to help solve the waste crime problem and make sure waste is managed responsibly. If you see or suspect illegal waste activities, report it anonymously to [Crimestoppers](#) or call 0800 555 111.

[Press release: 4 anglers face combined fines of over £2,400 for fishing illegally in Gloucestershire](#)

On the 10 April, Cheltenham Magistrates' Court heard how 4 anglers were caught fishing without a rod licence by Environment Agency officers out on patrol last year. The offences were proved in absence and the 4 fishermen didn't appear in front of magistrates. Each face fines and fees totalling £611.47. And with an annual fishing licence now costing £30 these individuals are probably wishing they'd chosen the cheaper option.

Raymond Cole of Meadowleaze in Gloucester, Tomasz Mizera of The Bailey Lea in Coventry, Matthew Gooding of Garn Road in Nantyglo and Darren Edwards of Verwey Road in Nantyglo were all found guilty for fishing without a licence under Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Magistrates heard that Environment Agency enforcement officers found these anglers fishing without a rod licence at pools in Hartpury, and along the River Severn at Tewkesbury.

Stuart Gamble of the Environment Agency said:

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence. With anglers now being able to buy a licence online for a number of rods to cover any 12 month period it seems ridiculous the minority still risk a fine like these we've seen here.

The minority of anglers that fail to buy a rod licence are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport. Fishing licence cheats risk a criminal conviction, a significant fine and could lose their fishing equipment.

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 (including illegal elver patrols), pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency rod licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England. Buying a rod licence is easy, simply visit www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence

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: Doncaster teens take lead on environmental improvements

The children at XP Secondary School have been working with experts from the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to research and improve how surface water drains away from the land.

Their findings have helped with the installation of a new sustainable drainage system (SUD) on the school's grounds, designed to mimic nature in the way it allows water to soak away.

Dave Newborough from the Environment Agency said:

SUDs help slow down the flow of surface water, giving it time to soak into the ground and for pollutants to be naturally filtered out before entering local watercourses.

In doing so, they help reduce the risk of flooding and improve water quality, as well as enhance the environment for people and wildlife.

XP's students carefully studied their school grounds, carrying out environmental experiments to determine how a SUD would work best. They presented their findings to a panel of experts, including Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, before helping to plant hedges that form an important part of the new drainage system.

The project has given the kids a real sense of ownership in their local water environment, which they can pass on to their family and friends," says Dave.

They've also learnt first hand how the water cycle works and how it can be affected by urbanisation and pollution. And they've had the opportunity to explore local wetland at Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Potteric Carr Nature Reserve, discovering its importance for biodiversity and for managing flood risk.

The work at XP Secondary School is part of Inspiring Water Action in the Torne (iWAIT), an Environment Agency led project restoring almost 50 hectares of rare wet woodland priority habitats at 7 sites in Doncaster.

Around 450 children and young people across 7 schools, each linked with one of the woodland sites, are using the project to learn about flood risk, water quality and management, and ecology.

Three of the schools, including XP, will have SUDs fitted to manage the quantity and quality of surface water feeding the restored wetlands, as well as helping to involve young people in environmental activities and learning.

iWAIT is a Torne Catchment Partnership project led by the Environment Agency and involving Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Natural England and local communities.

ENDS

Notes for editors

- The iWAIT project is turning 46.5ha of non-priority habitat into priority habitat – this is 11% of the Environment Agency's nationwide

target 400ha for habitat creation.

- A priority habitat is one identified as being the most threatened and requires conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Wet woodland is a biodiversity habitat, important for animals and plants. It supports a large number of species, many of which are now rare in the UK.
- For more information on the iWAIT project, see this [previous news release](#).
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is a local charity which works to create a Yorkshire rich in wildlife for the benefit of everyone. Our goal is nature's recovery, on land and at sea. We stand up for Yorkshire's wildlife wherever it is under threat, and work with others to find solutions that benefit both wildlife and people. We inspire thousands of children, families and others every year, reconnecting them with their local environment and wildlife. With the support of these people, we are restoring and recreating a habitats in Yorkshire and raising awareness of, and fighting for, Yorkshire's seas.

[Press release: Man fined for running illegal waste site](#)

A Gateshead man has been fined and ordered to pay thousands of pounds in compensation after he illegally stored waste at a site and then abandoned it.

John James Armstrong, 52, of Park Lane, Winlaton Mill, appeared at North Tyneside Magistrates' Court on Friday 7 April.

He pleaded guilty to one offence of operating a waste site without a permit.

He was fined £1,000, ordered to pay compensation of £7,069.49 to the landowner to cover the costs they paid to clear the site, and £1,591.26 costs.

Armstrong was Director of Canterhall Builders Limited, a construction company which dissolved on 23 May 2016.

Prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency, Simon Crowder told the court that on 20 April, 2016, two Environment Agency officers attended the unit at Unit 1 Felling Business Centre, Green Lane.

They saw the site was covered in construction waste, including bricks, broken concrete, wood, plaster board, insulations, pallets, old kitchen units, benches and electrical waste. There was also a skip full of building waste.

Enquiries revealed that Canterhall were tenants at the site but had abandoned it earlier in the month.

On 16 May a letter requesting removal of the waste was given to the landowner.

On 23 May Environment Agency officers traced the defendant to a site in Swalwell, where he was given a letter inviting him to be interviewed.

Two days later the site at Felling was cleared by the landowners, at a total cost to them of more than £7,000.

The defendant has no previous convictions and was co-operative during the investigation.

During an interview on 2 June he said that if it was not cost effective to hire a skip to remove waste from carrying out construction work, then he would instead transport the waste back to the unit. When there was enough waste at the unit he would then order a skip to have it removed.

He said in January 2016 more and more waste was deposited at the unit and due to financial problems he could not afford skips to get the waste removed. He said he left the unit on 10 April and had made no attempts to clear the waste.

He added he was unaware of the need for an environmental permit or registered exemptions.

The Environment Agency's Paul Whitehill said:

We take waste crime very seriously. It can cause serious pollution to the environment, put communities at risk and undermine local businesses.

The defendant flouted the law for financial gain – he cut costs by not hiring skips at the sites where work was taking place to ensure disposal of the waste.

He also avoided the cost of an environmental permit and annual subsistence fees. Illegal waste activities that avoid regulatory controls don't have the appropriate infrastructure to protect the environment, and can have a detrimental impact on local communities.

The sentence follows calls from the Environment Agency warning landowners about criminals looking to profit by dumping waste illegally on their land.

Landowners can often find their property filled with waste and abandoned by tenants, leaving owners with an expensive clean-up bill. The Environment Agency is cracking down on waste crime and taking tough action to deal with this behaviour.

This ruling demonstrates that people can be made to pay for the cost of clearing the mess they leave behind.

Information and advice about environmental permits can be found on the Environment Agency website. To report illegal waste activity contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.