

[Press release: Yorkshire waste criminals ordered to pay back cash](#)

Two Barnsley men have been handed suspended prison sentences and ordered to pay back cash after an Environment Agency investigation.

[Press release: Ivory Alliance 2024: Political leaders, conservationists and celebrities join forces to tackle ivory demand](#)

UK Environment Secretary Michael Gove has announced a coalition of political leaders, conservationists and celebrities dedicated to defeating the illegal trade in ivory.

At the start of the fourth international [Illegal Wildlife Trade conference](#) in London today (Thursday), the first members of the newly formed Ivory Alliance 2024 have been confirmed.

Members include political leaders from around the world and the alliance is also supported by famous faces from a number of countries where the trade is particularly active.

The Ivory Alliance 2024 will tackle ivory demand and lobby for domestic market closure, and stronger enforcement of bans or other ivory legislation in key demand and transit markets. This will complement the Africa-based work of the [Elephant Protection Initiative \(EPI\)](#) founded by Gabon, Chad, Tanzania, Botswana and Ethiopia in 2014 and now comprising 19 African countries.

UK Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:

I am delighted to be chairing a new initiative, the Ivory Alliance 2024, to bring together political and cultural leaders from across the world to tackle ivory demand and close domestic ivory markets.

I am extremely grateful to the panel members who will join me in making a significant contribution to elephant conservation. We must all do more to ensure the survival of these majestic animals for future generations.

This week's conference, bringing together a record number of delegates from more than 80 countries, can play a huge part in helping us end the insidious illegal wildlife trade once and for all.

Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand said:

I am delighted to see the UK's domestic ivory ban progressing through Parliament and to be part of the Secretary of State's Ivory Alliance 2024, which will tackle the demand side of the severe poaching crisis we have seen in the past decade. This crucial agenda has my strong support, and I look forward to playing my part by engaging government leaders on strong legislation and enforcement.

This show of leadership from the UK comes at a crucial time for wildlife conservation internationally– and will go a long way towards influencing countries, including New Zealand and Australia, on movement towards their own bans.

Ivory Alliance political members:

- Chair: Michael Gove, UK Environment Secretary
- Rt Hon Helen Clark, former UN Development Programme Administrator and New Zealand Prime Minister
- Hon Josephine Ramirez-Sato, member of the House of Representatives, Philippines
- Hon Elizabeth Quat, Member of the Legislative Council, Hong Kong
- Professor Ephraim Kamuntu, Honourable Minister for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda
- Toni Atkins, California Senate President pro Tempore Leader, US Govt

Ivory Alliance supporters:

- Alexandra Bounxouei – musician and performer from Laos
- Bella Lack – a youth blogger for Born Free Foundation
- Adrian Pang – actor from Singapore

The Ivory Alliance 2024 will work with partners globally to secure at least 30 new commitments to domestic ivory bans by the end of 2020 and for tougher enforcement against those caught breaking the law. The UK has already set itself as a global leader on this issue, with a domestic ivory ban announced in April 2018.

Environmental Crime, which includes the illegal wildlife trade and illegal logging, is the fifth most lucrative serious organised crime and is estimated to be worth up to £17billion a year.

The two-day conference in London (11/12 October) will bring together international political leaders, conservation organisations and individuals

interested in closing down the vile trade in wildlife.

[Press release: Environment Agency to remove wrecks from River Thames at West Molesey](#)

The boats at Cherry Orchard gardens in West Molesey, Surrey, have all been served with formal 'wreck' notices which, under Section 16 of the Thames Conservancy Act 1932, gives the Environment Agency the power to remove and destroy the boats – by blowing them up if necessary!

However, tomorrow's operation will see the boats lifted out by a barge-mounted crane, crushed and removed to the Environment Agency's depot at Sunbury for disposal. An Environment Agency patrol launch will also be on hand to manage river traffic.

Barry Russell, the Environment Agency's Waterways Manager for the non-tidal River Thames, said:

Irresponsible owners have allowed a number of boats to sink in this location. They then walked away from their responsibility to raise and remove them themselves, leaving the rest of the River Thames boating community to cover the costs through the boat registration fees they pay us, and which funds our service.

To maximise the cost-effectiveness of the operation, the River Thames Waterways team has secured the services of the barge-mounted crane and its crew from the Environment Agency's Operations Management team. It is normally used to support engineering projects such as the creation of flood defences. This represents a considerable saving compared to using external contractors. It will also seek to remove as many wrecks as possible until the barge is required for other duties elsewhere on the river.

Barry continues:

The boats we are removing are not a pollution risk, and are not obstructing the main navigation. These are the two criteria which would see us intervene as a matter of urgency. But they are an eyesore and have blighted the local riverscape for some considerable time, and enough is enough.

Despite our best efforts to trace and encourage the owners to do the right thing themselves, they clearly have no intention of doing

so. Consequently, having followed due legal process, we are taking charge of the situation.

Where we can, we will seek to recover our costs from the owners. They can expect a hefty bill which, if they had maintained their boats properly and not allowed them to sink in the first place, they would have avoided.

[Press release: Environment Agency to remove wrecks from River Thames at West Molesey](#)

The River Thames Waterways team is carrying out an operation to remove a number of abandoned and sunken 'eyesore' wrecks from the River Thames.

[Correspondence: eAlert: 9 October 2018 – Drought, Woodland Creation and Felling Licence Online](#)

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