

SRUC welcomes new head of SAC Consulting Solutions

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Andrew Lacey as the new Head of SAC Consulting Solutions.

Press release: Angler to pay £1,800 after unsuccessful appeal

On 29 September 2017 at North Staffordshire Justice Centre, George Holland of Coppice Gardens, Stone, was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £1,855.81 after a successful prosecution by the Environment Agency. Mr Holland was fined £660 for threatening behaviour, ordered to pay costs of £1,129.81 and a victim surcharge of £66.

Mr Holland was originally called to court on 24 April 2017 and was proved guilty in absence for 4 offences. However, the case was reopened under a statutory declaration application from the defendant where he proceeded to enter a not guilty plea.

Mr Holland faced charges of wilfully obstructing a constable in the execution of his duty, fishing without a rod licence, failing to state his name when addressed by an Environment Agency enforcement officer and using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour causing that person to believe that imminent violence will be used against him.

Magistrates heard the case and again found Mr Holland guilty of all charges and issued a fine of £660 for threatening behaviour. While found guilty, he did not receive a further penalty for the additional charges. Mr Holland did not attend court on 29 September, so was again proved guilty in absence.

The offences took place on 23 August 2016 at Isaak Walton Fishery, Chebsey.

Andrew Eardley of the Environment Agency said:

It's good to see the courts taking instances of threatening behaviour against enforcement officers seriously and offenders being prosecuted. Thankfully cases where an angler is threatening are very rare; most anglers found without a licence, while not happy, admit they have been caught out.

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence.

With an annual licence costing £30 it seems ridiculous that anglers risk a significant fine, and the very small minority feel it acceptable to threaten an enforcement officer.

Money from rod 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. 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.

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

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[Press release: Views sought on reward and return schemes for drinks containers](#)

Updated: On 27 October 2017 this page was edited to take into account the extension of the deadline of the call for evidence until 20 November 2017.

The government today [invited views](#) on how reward and return schemes for drinks containers could work in England by issuing a call for evidence.

More than eight million tonnes of plastic are discarded into the world's oceans each year, putting marine wildlife under serious threat.

Up to 80% of this is estimated to have been originally lost or discarded on land before washing out to sea, and plastic bottles are a particular concern – with figures showing just 57% of those sold in the UK in 2016 collected for recycling.

This compares to a record 90% of deposit-marked cans and bottles that were returned to dedicated recycling facilities in Denmark, and a return rate of almost 80% of beverage containers in South Australia, both of which have a form of deposit return scheme.

To improve these numbers and increase recycling, Environment Secretary Michael Gove has asked organisations and individuals to share their views with the government on the advantages and disadvantages of different types of reward and return schemes for plastic, metal and glass drinks containers that could help reduce the number of bottles entering our waterways.

The call for evidence opened on 2 October for four weeks. On 27 October this was extended by three weeks to close on 20 November. This will allow as many people as possible to feed in their views on this important inquiry. Ministers have asked the Voluntary and Economic Incentives Working Group, set up as part of the [Litter Strategy](#), to accelerate its work and report back early in the New Year – this timetable has not been altered.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

We must protect our oceans and marine life from plastic waste if we are to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we found it.

That means tackling the rise in plastic bottles entering our waters by making it simpler and easier to recycle and dispose of them appropriately.

Today we are launching a call for evidence to help us understand how reward and return schemes for plastic bottles and other drinks containers could work in England.

This approach has already seen great success in other countries such as Denmark in curbing plastic pollution and we want to hear people's ideas on how we could make it work in England.

This adds to the progress we have already made in cleaning up our oceans by significantly reducing plastic bag use and drawing up one of the world's toughest bans on plastic microbeads.

The evidence submitted will be examined by the government's working group which includes brand and retail giants such as Coca Cola and Tesco.

This builds on successful waste initiatives already launched by the government, including the [5p plastic bag charge](#) which has seen enormous success in changing consumer behaviour by reducing use by 83 per cent.

Some nine billion fewer carrier bags have been distributed since the charge was introduced, with more than £95million raised donated to environmental, educational and other good causes.

In addition, legislation for the government's [ban on microbeads](#) – welcomed by campaigners as one of the toughest in the world – will be introduced later this year and we are now assessing how best to tackle other sources of microplastics from polluting the seas.

Consultation outcome: Drinks containers – reducing litter and increasing recycling: call for evidence

Updated: Voluntary & Economics Incentives Working Group Report, which summarises the responses to this call for evidence and the working group's recommendations, added.

We are seeking views and evidence on ways to reduce littering and improve recycling and reuse of drinks containers. In particular, we want to know what evidence there is on the benefits and disadvantages of different types of deposit and reward and return schemes (DRS).

Your responses will be used by the independent Voluntary and Economic Incentives Working Group to give advice to government. This forms part of government's commitment to its [Litter Strategy for England](#).

If any commercially sensitive information is submitted to us in response to the call for evidence, we will remove details which could identify those who wrote it, before we share it with the Working Group.