

Press release: Hefty fines for anglers fishing without a licence

The Environment Agency is reminding anglers of the importance of having a rod licence after three men were handed hefty fines for fishing illegally in separate offences.

They were caught during targeted patrols by Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers.

- On 16 April this year, Adrian Faife, 59, of Gairloch Road, Camberwell, London, was found fishing for eels or freshwater fish at Aldin Fishing Lakes, Durham without a licence.
- On 30 April 2017, Sylwester Michneiwick, 37, of Roker Avenue, Sunderland, was caught trout fishing at Derwent Reservoir, Consett, without a license.
- On 1 May this year, Jordan Mark Aldworth, 22, of St Johns Walk, Escomb, Bishop Auckland, was found fishing for trout at Grassholme Reservoir, Middleton In Teesdale.

Each was fined a total of £611, ordered to pay costs of £127 and a victim surcharge of £44.

The offences were all proved in absence at County Durham and Darlington Magistrates' Court on 13 September.

The Environment Agency's Fisheries Technical Specialist for the North East, Kevin Summerson, said:

It is wrong for anglers to think they can avoid paying for a licence. Those that do are cheating their fellow anglers.

Environment Agency Fisheries Officers are out checking licences almost every day of the year at all times of day. It's just not worth it to fish without the appropriate licence. The most a coarse and trout licence costs is £45, which would cover an angler for one year from the date of purchase and, where conditions permit, allow the angler to fish with up to three rods.

With what it has cost these anglers in fines, costs and victim surcharge they could have fished legally for over 10 years.

All income from rod licence sales is used to fund Environment Agency work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, including improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Buying a rod licence is quick and easy – you can buy them online at the Post

Office.

The Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal fishing by calling 0800 80 70 60.

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BGS communications dashboard for August 2017

Here is a round up of metrics for August 2017. For all social media, the item shown is the most popular this month.

Press release: Government pledges £500,000 for new action group to grow future of public parks

Parks and Green Spaces Minister Marcus Jones today (19 September 2017) launched a new Parks Action Group to help England's public parks and green spaces meet the needs of communities now and in the future.

The new Parks Action Group will include experts from the world of horticulture, leisure, heritage and tourism, and will be tasked with bringing forward proposals to address some of the issues faced by public parks and other green spaces across England. To support them, government is providing £500,000 funding to kick start their work.

The action group will propose what steps can be taken in line with the government response to the recent House of Common's Communities and Local Government Select Committee report into the future of parks and green spaces.

Parks and Green Spaces Minister Marcus Jones said:

We recognise the value of parks and green spaces to local

communities – including reducing loneliness, increasing wellbeing, and revitalising town and city centres.

But we need to do more to make sure future generations are continuing to enjoy their benefits. That is why we have announced a new expert-led Parks Action Group to work closely with the sector to find the right solutions.

This latest development builds on action the government has taken to date to encourage more people to make better use of parks including:

- In December 2015, the government published the “[Sporting future: a new strategy for an active nation](#)” which set out the importance of sport and physical activity. The [first annual report](#) on the implementation of “sporting future” was published with a specific focus on the themes of central government, local government and outdoor recreation.
- In [February 2016](#) the government awarded over £1 million to improve 87 small pockets of unloved, undeveloped or derelict land to transform them into 87 green spaces that the whole community can enjoy.
- The government has [announced](#) that is to continue the Green Flag Awards license for making sure that Britain’s best parks and green spaces will continue to be recognised for another 5 years. For 20 years, the [Green Flag Awards](#) have been recognising the best of green outdoor spaces in the UK, for people to enjoy and setting standards for park managers across the country to try to emulate. Many parks have won the award, but winners also include more unusual spaces such as social housing developments, cemeteries, canals, and shopping centres.

Parks research

Research published today from the charity Fields in Trust shows that living close to and visiting parks and green spaces can increase people’s wellbeing and improve their health. The research also highlights the importance of parks as spaces for neighbours to socialise away, helping to reduce the risk of loneliness.

Fields in Trust’s report, among others, will be fundamental to the Parks Action Group’s work moving forward.

Helen Griffiths, chief executive Fields in Trust said:

I welcome the ministers response to the CLG Parliamentary Committee and Fields in Trust’s appointment to the newly established Parks Action Group at this pivotal moment for the future of parks and green spaces.

Our ongoing research recognises how these spaces help to address significant public policy issues including health and wellbeing and community integration.

We are looking forward to furthering our work with colleagues across the sector to ensure that we value parks and green spaces and take account of the vital contribution they make to local communities.

Graham Duxbury, chief executive of Groundwork said:

Making sure that all communities and all sections of society are able to enjoy the benefits of good green spaces is vital. Joining a local group can help young people develop their skills and older people overcome loneliness.

Well managed green spaces can also help whole neighbourhoods cope with the costly impacts of climate change. We look forward to helping the action group unlock more practical support so that local communities and local authorities can maximise these social and economic benefits.

Matthew Bradbury, Parks Alliance's chief executive said:

Having been involved in lobbying for an inquiry, The Parks Alliance wholeheartedly welcomes the publication of the minister's response to the Local Government Select Committee inquiry into the Future of Public Parks and particularly the creation of a cross governmental and sector supported, Parks Action Group.

The Parks Alliance is very much looking forward to working with the minister, government and the wider sector to secure the future of public parks for the communities that they serve.

Further information

The House of Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee report: "the future of public parks" published in February 2017, made 17 recommendations that are addressed in full in the [government's response](#) published today (19 September 2017).

The direction of the Parks Action Group will be determined by park sector experts in co-operation with officials from a number of government departments. The Action Group will consider the recommendations from the government's response to the report and propose new projects and actions that will help our parks and green spaces thrive.

Members of the Parks Action Group

Parks and Green Spaces Minister Marcus Jones will chair the inaugural meeting.

The members of the Parks Action Group are:

- Drew Bennellick, Head of Landscape & Natural Heritage UK, Heritage Lottery Fund
- Matthew Bradbury, CEO, Parks Alliance
- Graham Duxbury, CEO, Groundwork
- Helen Griffiths, CEO, Fields In Trust
- Ian Leete, Senior Advisor on Culture, Tourism and Sport, Local Government Association
- Dave Morris, Chair, National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces
- Paul O'Brien, CEO, Association of Public Service Excellence
- Ellie Robinson, Assistant Director, National Trust
- Dave Solly, Natural England

The government has taken steps to encourage more people to make better use of parks. In December 2015, the government published the "[sporting future: a new strategy for an active nation](#)" which set out the importance of sport and physical activity. The first annual report on the implementation of "sporting future" was published with a specific focus on the themes of central government, local government and outdoor recreation.

87 Pocket Parks were awarded £1.05 million in 2016.

The government has supported the Green Flag Awards for 20 years and has recently announced that it is to extend the licence for another 5 years.

The Parks Action Group's recommendations will be implemented through a cross-government group bringing together the relevant government departments including:

- Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Department of Health (DH)
- Department for Education (DfE)
- Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)
- Home Office (HO)
- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

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[Press release: No waste permit costs driver](#)

Caught driving a tipper truck full of waste without being registered with the Environment Agency has today (Mon 18/9) cost Patrick Egan £965.

Egan of Grange Road, Grays was convicted in his absence by Basildon magistrates of driving the truck without being registered as a waste carrier nor being employed by a registered waste carrier.

The court fined him £660 and ordered that as well as the fine he should pay a victim surcharge of £66, Environment Agency costs of £85 and compensation of £154.

The tipper truck was stopped by police in Gumley Road, Grays in the course of an investigation into fly-tipping.

When the vehicle was stopped in January this year it was loaded with rubble, bricks and plasterboard.

Don't ignore advice

Egan told them the vehicle belonged to a friend called James whom he sometimes did favours for, such as driving lorries, and was paid £100 to drive it.

He said he did not check the load.

After the hearing an Environment Agency officer spokesperson said: "People driving tipper trucks such as Mr Egan drove have a responsibility to check the load and to be properly permitted by the Environment Agency. It is not good enough to ignore this advice as the court decision has shown today."

The cost of registering with the Environment Agency in 2017 is £154. The registration is valid for 3 years.