

# Press release: Sutton Coldfield angler fined for fishing illegally

On 4 July 2017 at Nuneaton Magistrates' Court, Matthew Hitches of Harvest Fields Way, Sutton Coldfield was fined £220 for fishing without a licence. Hitches was also ordered to pay costs of £580.17 and a victim surcharge of £30 following a prosecution by the Environment Agency.

The offence took place on 17 September 2016 at Kingsbury Water Park.

At his initial hearing on 25 April, Hitches, aged 40, entered a plea of not guilty which forced the case to go to trial. This accounted for the high costs awarded in this case. Hitches failed to attend the court for his trial and the case against him was proved in his absence.

Andrew Eardley from the Environment Agency said:

The majority of anglers fish legally. The minority of anglers that fail to buy a fishing licence are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport.

An annual licence costs just £30. It seems ridiculous that anglers risk significant fines and costs, a criminal conviction and the loss of their fishing equipment for such a small fee.

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, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. 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 [buy a rod licence](#) on GOV.UK.

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.

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# Press release: Flood defence improvement plans shared at Burton regatta

On 9 July 2017, visitors to Burton's famous regatta had an opportunity to find out about the planned £17 million improvement works to the town's flood defences. Staff from the Environment Agency were at the event to discuss the scheme and also spread awareness about being more flood resilient.

Burton has flooded regularly over the centuries. Ten years ago during summer the defences were put to the test when England and Wales suffered its worst ever flooding, with 414mm (16 inches) of rain between May to July, the most since records began in 1766.

The planned works to the Burton flood defences will see improvements to the 9km of existing defences that already protect more than 7,000 homes and businesses in the town, with a further 3,358 properties set to benefit. The work, due to start in October 2018, with a completion date of March 2020, will enable further transformation of the town centre to allow it to become more sustainable.

Mark Swain, who heads the Environment Agency's Staffordshire flood risk team, said:

Burton is a major transport and business centre. The defences have prevented flooding for 100 days in the last 30 years. The cost to families and businesses if those defences had not been there would have been astronomical.

But we can't afford to rest on our laurels; we're working with our partners and the people of Burton to protect thousands more homes and businesses for the future.

That's why it was so important for us to be at the regatta, explaining our plans and how everyone can do their bit to reduce flood risk.

As well as the plans for the new works and how to become more resilient, visitors to the regatta were also able to find out how the Environment Agency's remote-control survey boats work and what is being done across Staffordshire to protect people and properties from flooding.

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## **Notice: Loveden Estates Limited: application made to abstract water**

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

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## **Official Statistics: Public Opinion of Forestry 2017: UK and England**

This release presents results from the latest survey of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues across the UK. Topics covered include woodland recreation, importance of forestry, engagement with forest issues, climate change, tree health, urban woodlands and accessibility.