

Press release: No profit for waste couple

The operator and the landowner of an illegal waste site in an Essex village have been ordered to pay a total of £66,493

Chelmsford Magistrates' Court heard that 14,700 tonnes of inert waste was stored on land behind a residential address known as Gean Tree in Great Horkesley north of Colchester 'grossly' breaching a waste exemption and planning rules.

George Nicholas James Dench pleaded guilty to running the illegal site and failing to comply with an enforcement notice to remove the waste. He was ordered to pay a total of £32,895 in fines and costs by Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on Monday (6 Mar).

Annette Ismay Williams, who owned the land pleaded guilty to allowing the illegal waste site to run and to failing to clear the land under an enforcement notice and has to pay a total of £33,598 fines and costs.

Mrs Miriam Tordoff, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court the waste had been deposited there over 2.5 years.

Williams lives at the address with her partner and their son George Dench who sought out companies to dump the waste there. He was paid £64,704.

Mrs Tordoff said only certain relatively low risk activities can be covered by an exemption which sets out conditions that must be met at all times. These include not risking human health nor the environment, not causing a nuisance with noise or odours and not adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest.

The exemption registered by Williams allowed the use of certain types of inert waste in construction and the limit for waste soils and stones was 1,000 tonnes in any 3 years. That target was reached in the first month.

A further exemption allowed the treatment of up to 5,000 tonnes of waste in any 3 years, providing it was also used on the same site and only stored for a year.

Dench told investigating officers he had brought the soils to the site to repair the bank of a lake there. Williams said she just did the admin work. Both said they did not know how many tonnes the exemption allowed for.

Dench said he had not taken in the soils for financial gain as he was now bankrupt and he had not taken in any more since.

Mrs Tordoff told magistrates that Environment Agency officers had advised and written to the 2 saying the site needed to be cleared and operated properly.

Between September 2012 and March 2015 the Agency received 34 complaints about activities at the site.

After the hearing Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader Lesley Robertson said:

We advised the defendants several times against accepting any more soils at the site but they continued to take it.

The site is in a village close to other homes and operations there affected people living nearby.

Councillor Simon Walsh, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste, said:

This case is an example to show landowners that risk taking is not acceptable, whether it is a risk that concerns human health or the environment.

Owning a piece of land means accepting a responsibility to the surrounding area and all that resides there, be it business, homes or wildlife.

Notes for Editors:

Breakdown of costs and fines:

Dench: EA offence – fined £14,353 plus £8,103 (a share of the full costs)
ECC offence – fined £9,568 plus £750 costs

Williams: EA offence – fined £14,775 plus £8,103 (a share of the full costs)
ECC offence – fined £9,850 plus £750 costs

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Survey highlights issues faced by those experiencing mental ill health in rural Scotland

Of the men and women completing a survey of mental health issues in rural Scotland 67% reported suffering depression and 22% admitted to suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Hidden groundwater resource under pressure in southern England

The UK has had less rainfall than usual over the winter, and the south and south-east have been particularly dry meaning that the risk of a drought is increased. New maps published by the BGS illustrate that people in the south and south-east of England are especially reliant on groundwater for their water supply and this provides some resilience to drought.

[News story: South West characterisation disposal project: New site announced](#)

The MMO facilitated the process of the designation of the new site by the funding partners including Associated British Ports (ABP), Cattewater, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas).

Consultation

The designation of a new site involved considering and balancing a variety of views from the fisheries, business, defence and scientific communities as well as from local residents.

The MMO asked for people to share their views regarding a potential new marine disposal site in the South West from 29 November 2016 until 23 December 2016. This consultation period was extended to 6 January 2017 to allow for detailed representations.

Fisheries

Representations were received from the commercial fisheries sector. These were considered as part of the consultation process. The [Site Characterisation Report](#) was published on the MMO's website, and direct consultation was undertaken with 8 organisations related to commercial fisheries.

Decision

After considering all available information, the MMO concluded that the proposed area is the optimal, sustainable alternative disposal site for dredged material.

Plymouth Deep is now open for marine licence applications for the disposal of dredged material.

All activities relating to the disposal of dredged material at sea are required to apply for a marine licence. As part of the licensing process, the MMO is required to assess various contaminants, to assess the suitability of the material for disposal at sea and in the proposed location. The MMO is content that any material disposed at the site will be suitable for disposal to sea.

Rame Head

It is important to note that the Rame Head South designated disposal site remains an open disposal site. Its status will change after 5 years to 'disused' and then to "closed" after 10 years.

The MMO has produced an evaluation report which details the conclusions drawn from a review of the evidence submitted, and the representations received during the consultation period. The evaluation report can be viewed on the [Marine Selected Cases](#) of the website.