

Press release: Businessman jailed for running three illegal waste sites

Following an Environment Agency prosecution at Worcester Crown court yesterday, Nicholls, 57, of Stanford House, Stanford Bridge, Worcester, pleaded guilty to three charges relating to the illegal operation of waste sites. Nicholls operated under the trading names of UKBF Group Ltd and Plastics Recycling Centre Ltd, at the car park for Smethwick Drop Forge Ltd (SDF) in Kidderminster, land and units at the Gemini Business Park (GEMINI) in Kidderminster, and Cherry Tree Farm in Stanford Bridge.

The defendant deliberately and over a prolonged period, accepted waste onto each of the three sites. He did so without the necessary environmental permits and in breach of the registered waste exemptions required to ensure that there was no risk to human health or the environment. Nicholls avoided costs relating to the waste activity and failed to produce waste records as required by law. Large well known companies were among Nicholls' customers, the court was told.

When Environment Agency officers visited the sites, they found large amounts of assorted types of waste, including hazardous waste, being illegally stored and treated. Large quantities of plastics, contaminated with dairy and wine products, were found at the Gemini and SDF sites, with no measures in place to prevent the liquids from polluting the nearby Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal and River Severn. The quantities found could have caused significant harm to the environment, including to fish and invertebrates.

Complaints were received by the Environment Agency about rat, fly and odour problems at the Gemini site caused by large amounts of food waste waiting being stored and processed on site. The SDF and Gemini sites were also deemed to be at high risk of fire by a Fire Community Risk Manager, who accompanied the officers on their visits to the sites.

Nicholls gave Environment Agency officers repeated assurances that he would remove the high risk waste types and apply for the necessary Environmental Permit, in response to warnings and to an enforcement notice that was issued. Waste was moved between the SDF and Gemini sites, and after Nicholls and his companies were evicted from the Gemini site, on to Cherry Tree Farm.

Nicholls eventually abandoned the waste filled sites. The landowners are continuing to work with the Environment Agency, and the companies from where the waste originated, to clear the site.

Speaking after the case, an Environment Agency spokesperson said:

Waste crime is a serious offence with tough penalties as it can damage the environment, blight local communities and undermine those who operate legally. This case sends out a clear message that

we will not hesitate to take action to ensure the protection of the environment and avoid harm to health. Businesses can support us with this by carrying out their Duty of Care and Due Diligence checks to ensure that they are using legitimate companies to deal with their wastes and not criminals like Mr Nicholls.

To find out how to responsibly manage any waste your business produces or visit our [website](#). We can all play a part in helping to prevent waste getting into the hands of criminals. If you suspect that a company is doing something wrong, you can call the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60 or report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.