

Press release: Illegally dumped waste at Redbrook Lane cleared

Environment Agency and partners have worked to enable a new landowner to safely remove over 2,500 bales of illegally dumped waste from the former AMI Blaymires site at Redbrook Lane, Rugeley.

In 2013, in a matter of days, baled waste was illegally deposited without the warehouse owner's knowledge. Sadly this type of organised waste crime has a devastating effect: warehouses are filled very quickly and landowners are left with the responsibility and costs of disposing of the waste dumped on their land. These costs can be astronomical. At Redbrook Lane, the Environment Agency has estimated the clear up costs to be in the region of £400,000.

The site is now owned by South Staffordshire Commercials Limited, after Environment Agency action to persuade creditors to write off any debt associated with the site. This has meant that the land could be sold to new owners with the means to safely remove the waste and bring the site back into business use.

Adam Lines, Staffordshire Environment Manager said:

This is very good news. Working with partners and with compassion for the victims of this crime we've worked tirelessly to address the challenges of clearing illegally deposited and abandoned waste from the site.

The Environment Agency take every action we can to clear sites and bring those responsible to account. Unfortunately, as long as there is profit to be made from managing waste illegally there will always be people who are prepared to break the law in pursuit of that profit. We are going hard after that criminal minority.

Since the crime, the Environment Agency has worked in partnership with Cannock Chase District Council, Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service to get the site cleared, to reduce issues with flies, increase security and to reduce the risk of fire at the site. Cannock Chase District Council provided funding to supply shutters and regularly carried out pest control work. Staffordshire Fire & Rescue has also carried out regular site visits and maintained an active plan on how to tackle and contain a fire at the site.

Councillor John Preece, Cannock Chase Council's Portfolio Holder for Environment said:

We are pleased to see the waste removed because it's been a blight

on the local area and a potential hazard to the local community.

Whilst it has been a long time coming, it is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the staff of all organisations involved. It represents an excellent example of how agencies can work together productively.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) Director of Response, Tim Hyde said:

SFRS is fully involved in managing the risks of identified illicit waste sites around the county, regularly monitoring sites and feeding into the county's multi-agency work to tackle the issue.

The news that this site has been cleared is very welcome. Sites like this are a blight on the community and are becoming an increasing problem both locally and nationally. Getting them cleared can be difficult and expensive but we will continue to work with our partners to reduce the risks of fire while they try to achieve this.

Everyone has a part to play to help crack down on waste crime. If you suspect someone is disposing of your waste illegally, or you want to alert us to other illegal waste operations, call our incident hotline on 0800 70 60 50 or Crimestoppers anonymously on: 0800 555 111, or alternatively use the online form at www.crimestoppers-uk.org