

Press release: Jail for pair of serial Home Counties fly-tippers

Third man gets suspended sentence and night curfew following waste crime convictions.



Abbey Road in Barking, one of several locations targeted by the brazen trio before the law caught up with them

A trio of waste criminals have been given prison sentences and told to pay back nearly a quarter of a million pounds after fly-tipping a court heard was “on a commercial scale.”

The men, from east London or Essex, were convicted of dumping hundreds of tonnes of waste at several locations across Barking, Havering, Hertfordshire and Essex between 2012 and 2014.

Sites used by the group included a yard in Waltham Cross owned by Network Rail.

Investigators from the Environment Agency first discovered the men had broken into a yard in Choats Road in Barking in October 2012. CCTV showed William Jones, Glenn Harper and Sean Collard dumping a mix of household waste, wood and textiles from a lorry with false number plates. There was so much waste on board, it was spilling out onto the ground.

Once more captured on CCTV, the gang struck the following month at a printing works at Thurrock in Essex. Over several nights, they used an articulated lorry to tip 640 tonnes of aggregate – stones, rubble, earth, clay and chalk – at the site in Oliver Road, costing the landowners more than £120,000 to clear.

At New Year 2013, Jones rented a yard from Network Rail a stone’s throw from the M25, at Waltham Cross in Hertfordshire. Environment Agency officers later found the site in Bryanstone Road was filled with rotting waste. This highly-organised criminality saw the waste wrapped in bales of black plastic.

There has never been any suggestion Network Rail knew anything about the criminal activity on their land.

It would be almost a year before the gang struck again and back in Barking. In October 2013, Environment Agency investigators pursued a lorry driven by Collard between addresses either side of the A13. He was seen dumping more aggregate at a building site in Abbey Road, soon joined by Jones and Harper in a Citroen van.

The criminals were arrested by Essex Police back on the A13, at the Environment Agency's request. Collard told police he was just test-driving the lorry.

The final act in the gang's 18-month spree of dumping waste illegally took place with a series of visits to a former landfill site at Rainham in Essex in May 2014. The men were identified by Environment Agency officers at the facility, using a lorry to move concrete blocks designed to prevent access. Collard was seen dumping mixed waste there on multiple occasions.

Emma Viner, area enforcement manager for the Environment Agency, said:

Jones, Harper and Collard had no concern for the cost to the landowners or taxpayers, less still, the harm dumping hundreds of tonnes of waste would have on the environment. This highly-organised operation broke the law on a commercial scale, but that same law caught up with them in the end.

The prison sentences laid down in court by the judge show crime does not pay, also proven by more than £200,000 recovered from the men in a proceeds of crime order or court costs.

Sitting at Snaresbrook Crown court on 22 May 2019, Judge Patricia Lees said the trio's criminal behaviour was motivated by money, with a financial cost to landowners, residents and the public purse, as well as causing environmental damage. She sentenced Jones, 39, of Jack Clow Road, Stratford, to 13 months in prison, ordering him to pay back £80,000 in proceeds of crime inside 12 weeks, or have his jail term extended by 18 months.

Harper, 33, of Arterial Road, Wickford, Essex, was given a custodial sentence of 12 months, and has to pay back £146,755 within 12 weeks, or face an additional 24 months in prison.

The court may increase the proceeds of crime orders against Jones and Harper, as they benefitted financially by more than £700,000.

Collard, 53, of New Road, Rainham, was sentenced to 8 months in prison, suspended for 2 years, 200 hours of unpaid work and a curfew between 7.30pm and 5.30am, in force for 12 weeks. The Environment Agency was awarded costs against Collard of £10,000.

Jones, Harper and Collard pleaded guilty to a combination of counts of

breaching environmental law.