

Press release: Jailed business owner loses environmental licence

A jailed Tyne & Wear business owner has had the environmental permit for his scrapyards revoked.

The Environment Agency took the action against Peter Wallace, owner of a scrapyards in Barmoor Quarry in Ryton, following a series of breaches of permit conditions on the site after he was jailed in 2013 for drug offences.

Wallace had his permit taken away on 20 June 2016 but then appealed against the decision.

The Planning Inspectorate has now dismissed the appeal on the grounds that he was no longer in control of the facility. The decision means that Barmoor Quarry is no longer authorised to accept and treat waste metals.

Environmental permits ensure the protection of the environment and local communities from the risk of pollution caused through the carrying out of waste activities.

Under the regulations, the permit must be in the name of the person who has overall control of the facility. The permit for Barmoor Quarry scrapyards was in the name of its owner, Peter Wallace, yet Director Mr Birkett of Ryton Breakers has managed the day to day running of the business since 2008.

In January 2014, a few months after the permit holder was imprisoned, a site visit by the Environment Agency identified eight permit breaches including oil spillages and storage of salvage vehicles containing brake fluid and oil were stored on unprotected land.

While many of the breaches were addressed by Mr Birkett, a further eight breaches were identified in September 2015. At the time, Mr Birkett was advised regarding the transfer of the environmental permit to his name, however, no application was made and it was clear that as the permit holder, Peter Wallace, no longer had control over the site.

Wallace has until 8 March 2017 to clear all waste from the site. If he does not comply, he may face the prospect of further legal action.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

The Environment Agency has revoked the environmental permit for Barmoor Quarry to protect the environment and ensure a level playing field for legitimate businesses. It is clear that the permit holder is no longer in a position to ensure compliance with permit conditions.

It is vital that waste companies comply with the law so that

communities and the environment are not put at risk.

We work with operators to help them meet their obligations, but where significant or repeated breaches occur, we will take appropriate action to protect the environment.

On 11 January, the Planning Inspectorate dismissed Peter Wallace's appeal and found in favour of the Environment Agency, bringing into effect the permit revocation.

Anyone who experiences problems from this or any other waste site is urged to report the matter to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 807060 or CrimeStoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.