

Press release: Plymouth Skip Hire boss nearly jailed for dumping rubble

A judge has told a Plymouth man he escaped prison 'by the skin of his teeth' in a case brought by the Environment Agency.

Connor Calam fly-tipped waste on the edge of Dartmoor while subject to a suspended prison sentence for driving offences. The custodial sentence was very nearly activated by Exeter Crown Court.

The court heard a farmer found a large quantity of rubble and other waste deposited across a track near Pudson Farm, Okehampton in January 2017. The waste blocked access to three of his fields. The farmer reported the incident to the Environment Agency and local council and was told he would have to pay for its removal and safe disposal.

Enquiries by the Environment Agency traced the waste back to Plymouth Skip Hire in Stonehouse, Plymouth operated by Connor Calam, also known as Riley James.

The building waste came from insurance repairs carried out on a property in Plymouth by a local company that paid the defendant £245 to remove the material on the understanding he was a registered waste carrier.

Plymouth Skip Hire ceased trading in April 2017. Zenith Construction Ltd, whose waste was illegally tipped by the defendant, later paid for its removal as a goodwill gesture to the farmer.

Phil Butterworth of the Environment Agency said:

This prosecution is a timely reminder to businesses and home owners to ask three simple questions when getting someone in to dispose of their waste.

Is the person registered with the Environment Agency as a waste carrier – 'ask for proof'? Where do they intend to take the waste and can they provide a receipt? If they can't provide satisfactory answers to these questions, don't hand over your waste.

Appearing before Exeter Crown Court for sentencing on Tuesday 6 March 2018, Connor Calam, of Seaview Avenue, Lipson, Plymouth was fined £2,000 for breaching a suspended prison sentence and ordered to pay £2,500 costs. He was also made the subject of a 12-month community order, ordered to pay £260 compensation to Zenith Construction Ltd plus an £85.00 victim surcharge.

His Honour Judge Ralls QC said 'Fly-tipping in a beautiful part of the country is a serious matter' and warned the defendant he'd escaped being sent to prison 'by the skin of his teeth.'

The sentencing followed an earlier hearing where the defendant was found guilty of disposing of controlled waste on land at Pudson Farm, Okehampton between 10 and 27 February 2017 without an environmental permit contrary to Section 33 of the Environment Protection Act 1990.