

Press release: Ruthless fly-tipper jailed

A fly-tipper who left a trail of waste across the Devon countryside was finally brought to justice today when he was sentenced to 20 months in prison.

Martin McDonagh, 23, failed to turn up at Plymouth Crown Court and was made the subject of a European Arrest Warrant following the sentencing hearing. Judge Ian Lawrie described him as a 'persistent offender who showed a ruthless determination to dump waste wherever it suited.'

McDonagh, who is believed to have fled to the Republic of Ireland, was also ordered to pay a total of £7,000 costs for illegally depositing commercial and household waste at numerous sites in South and West Devon. The court also issued a Criminal Behaviour Order that prohibits McDonagh from being involved in any business enterprise involving the collection, carrying or transport of waste.

The van used during his crime spree was seized and destroyed by the Environment Agency. It is the first time, in the South West, that the agency has ordered the destruction of a vehicle used to commit waste crimes.

The defendant was caught following a joint investigation led by the Environment Agency, with support from Teignbridge District Council, Plymouth City Council, West Devon District Council, South Hams District Council and Devon and Cornwall Police.

Adrian Evans, senior environment crime officer for the Devon and Cornwall area, said:

This case serves as a reminder for people to be vigilant when transferring waste for disposal. Any person who collects and disposes of commercial or household waste must be a registered waste carrier, authorised by the Environment Agency.

Everyone has a duty of care to ensure their waste is disposed of safely and doesn't harm the environment. You should ask to see an operator's waste carrier licence and whether your waste is being taken to an authorised site. Do not let your waste be removed if you are in any doubt. These simple steps can stop rogue fly-tippers in their tracks.

The illegal disposal of waste in the countryside and local beauty spots causes annoyance and upset to local people and visitors. The serial fly-tipper in this case was caught as a result of agencies working closely together, sharing intelligence and resources to protect our environment.

McDonagh cold-called people across Devon offering to take waste away for cash. He told them the waste would be taken to a local tip, but instead he dumped it in the surrounding countryside, including local beauty spots.

Several witnesses said they felt pressured into giving him their waste. One woman, who was at home with a sick child, described the defendant as 'extremely pushy' and said she felt 'increasingly uneasy'. She only agreed to pay for him to take her waste to 'get rid of him'.

Another householder, in Exeter, became suspicious and told McDonagh she didn't want him to fly-tip her waste. McDonagh laughed and replied, 'of course not.'

Sometimes the defendant would ask for more cash after he'd loaded waste onto his van. One woman paid him £75. He returned after she had done some more clearing and tidying of her property and asked for £125 to take the rest of the waste claiming he was 'out of pocket' for the first lot he'd taken to the tip.

Victims of his scam were traced using documents and paperwork found in the fly-tipped waste. Most said they'd been approached by a man driving a 'tatty' blue van.

Up to 40 bags of mixed household waste were deposited at a time at numerous locations. Teignbridge sites included a car park on Little Haldon, a council gravel store off Greenway Lane in Ashcombe, a compound at Teignmouth Golf Club, a bus stop on the A381 near Ware Farm, an unclassified road near Shaldon and beside a road junction in Newton Abbot.

McDonagh also dumped waste at Cold Harbour Cross in the South Hams, a car park on the A386 near Clearbrook and at Calisham Cross in West Devon. The offences were committed over a 12-month period from July 2015.

The defendant was paid between £50 and £400 to remove waste – always in cash. He also offered other services including roofing, decking and power washing.

In August 2015, McDonagh was seen transferring concrete rubble from his Ford Transit van to a similar van parked nearby in Lower Brimley Road, Teignmouth. Teignbridge District Council decided to remove the second vehicle after it was found to have been abandoned.

However, a contractor hired to remove the van was unable to take the vehicle away after he saw what he believed to be asbestos in the back, along with other waste. Police closed Lower Brimley Road for a day while specialist contractors decontaminated the abandoned van. Subsequent analysis of the waste confirmed the presence of asbestos. The vehicle was later destroyed.

Councillor Roger Croad, Devon County Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment, said:

The high level of co-operation between the different agencies and councils involved in this investigation was critical in bringing

this offender to justice. The Devon and Somerset Trading Standards Service will continue to do all it can to protect residents and legitimate local businesses from such illegal trading activities.

Councillor Sylvia Russell, Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing at Teignbridge District Council, said:

This is a great outcome for taxpayers and involved a tremendous amount of effort by investigating officers. Tackling the scourge of fly-tipping is a top priority for Teignbridge Council, which works hard to protect the environment. Dealing with fly-tipping is costly, time consuming, frustrating for law-abiding citizens and wholly avoidable. We will continue to work with the Environment Agency and our partners to find out who is responsible so we can prosecute.

Councillor Rufus Gilbert, South Hams District Council's Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, said:

We are taking a very robust line on fly-tipping in the South Hams and have issued 13 fixed penalty notices against offenders. We are delighted that these cases are now coming to court. I assure you, we will continue whenever possible to prosecute future offenders.

Councillor Robert Sampson, West Devon Borough Council's Lead Member for Commercial Services, said:

It is crucial fly-tippers are traced and prosecuted for the damage they do to our countryside. This case shows what can be achieved by working closely with our partners.

At an earlier hearing, McDonagh, of Pemros Road, St Budeaux, Plymouth, pleaded guilty to 2 offences under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, of illegally depositing controlled waste at various sites across Devon. He also pleaded guilty to an offence under the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989, of transporting controlled waste without being registered as a waste carrier.

The second offence under the Environmental Protection Act was for depositing building waste (including asbestos) at Lower Brimley Road, Teignmouth on 9 July, 2016 in a manner likely to cause pollution or harm to human health.

Judge Lawrie said McDonagh would have faced a 2-year prison sentence had he not submitted a guilty plea. Upon issuing the arrest warrant Judge Lawrie said, 'bring him back before the court.'

Members of the public can report waste crime by calling the Environment

Agency's free 24-hour hotline 0800 80 70 60 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.
[Find further information on waste collection.](#)

[News story: Future cities: urban spaces will be 'radically different'](#)

Some of the UK's leading thinkers in urban infrastructure came together today to start a conversation about the challenges of supporting a growing population in cities.

The event was part of the [Future Cities Dialogue](#) project, by [Forum for the Future](#), Innovate UK, [Sciencewise](#) and [Ipsos Mori](#). It coincided with the release of a report which reveals the current trends and challenges in urban development and offers 3 visions for what our cities could look like in 20 years. This is based on substantial dialogue with citizens on the types of cities they would want to live in.

Find out more about our work in [infrastructure systems](#).

[Future Cities Dialogue – 3 potential city scenarios](#)

Growing cities

With more than 70% of people estimated to be living in urban areas by 2040, city infrastructure and design is going to need to drastically change in order to better support its citizens.

Speaking at the breakfast session, James Goodman, Director of Futures, Forum for the Future, said:

The year 2040 will be radically different from today. The population in the UK will be 74 million, climate change will have progressed and food production will have needed to increase between 50 and 80%.

In that landscape, the role of cities is critical because it is where ideas are formed and implemented.

Visit Forum for the Future's [project page](#).

How people are going to live

The group felt that the trajectory of growth in people would place pressure on public and private spaces. The consensus was that infrastructure design will need to get smarter, more collaborative and focus on the needs of people if it is to be effective.

Sophie Thomas, Founding Director of Thomas Matthews and the former Director of Circular Economy for Royal Society of Arts, said:

How are people going to live in these cities? What is the density? That is not going to feel like London and the other cities we know now. Where is all the public space going to go? This is what we really need to be thinking about and what the infrastructure needs to focus on. Where is my 10-year-old going to play football?

Rob Whitehead, Head of Strategy, Future Cities Catapult, added:

The key question is how do we manage the public interest versus the private interest? My optimistic side feels that the promise of what we have ahead of us, is that together we can find better, smarter ways of balancing our interests as a whole in a much more responsive and fine-tuned way than we do now.

Join the discussion

This is only the start of the conversation. Now we want to hear from you. We are hosting a Twitter chat on Wednesday 22 March from 11am to midday to answer any questions about where our urban environments are headed and to gather your thoughts.

Join the Twitter conversation at [#citiesdialogue](https://twitter.com/citiesdialogue).

Read the [Future Cities Dialogue report](#).

[Consultation outcome: Banning the landing of egg-bearing lobsters and](#)

crawfish in England

Updated: Summary of responses added.

We want to know your thoughts on proposals to introduce a national ban on landing egg-bearing lobsters and crawfish in England.

This ban will help protect these important shellfish stocks. We particularly want to hear from fishing vessel owners and fishing licence or shellfish entitlement holders.

Press release: Join Anglian flood and coastal committee

The Environment Agency is looking for members to join the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) which covers the River Great Ouse catchment, including large parts of the Fens, part of the Wash and North West Norfolk coast. Roles will start in July 2017 and January 2018.

RFCCs play an important role in deciding local priorities for flood and coastal work. They have a critical role supporting the Environment Agency and local authorities to work with communities and other partners to help bring in more funding.

More people are needed to help develop plans. They should have effective communication skills, be able to think strategically and bring enthusiasm, expertise and new ideas, using their particular skills and experience to advise and provide opinions during committee meetings.

A specific vacancy exists for a member with coastal expertise and focus. Someone able to network nationally and help develop innovative ideas with partners and communities. The RFCC has a varied and vulnerable coastline that extends from the west of King's Lynn through to Hunstanton cliffs.

There are also 3 vacancies for general members and, in particular, applications will be welcome from people with knowledge and experience of incident management, community resilience, agri-business and industry, land drainage, water management or strategic/spatial planning.

New members will have a contact within the Environment Agency who they can work closely with to ensure they have a good understanding of the issues and discussions taking place at meetings and who will be happy to answer any queries.

RFCC members are all appointed as impartial individuals in their own right and not as representatives of any particular organisation. It is important that the committees represent the communities they serve. All public appointments are made on merit, following a fair, open and transparent process.

Members would be expected to attend 4 committee meetings per year and are able to claim expenses.

Anyone interested in helping to make a difference in their local area should get in touch to discuss further with Paul Burrows (Environment Agency Flood & Coastal Risk Manager) on paul.burrows@environment-agency.gov.uk or on 07824431597.

For an application pack please [visit](#) or contact Stephanie North on 02030 251938 or email AnglianRFCCs@environment-agency.gov.uk

Closing date for applications is 13 April 2017. Interviews taking place the week commencing 19 June 2017 at Environment Agency offices, Bromholme Lane, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4NE.

[Form: Badgers: licence to interfere with setts](#)

Updated: Amended guidance on how to apply for registration to use this licence. A new application form has replaced 2 previous forms.

You can only use this licence to exclude badgers or destroy setts between 1 July and 30 November. At others times you must [apply for an individual licence](#) for these purposes.

You must apply to become a registered user of this licence and notify Natural England when you use it.

As a registered user you can interfere with badger setts under this licence to carry out development work or stop badgers causing serious damage by:

- monitoring setts using 'soft-blocking' techniques (temporary blocking with loose soil or vegetation) or inserting inspection equipment
- evicting and excluding badgers from setts using one-way gates
- destroying setts

This class licence replaces the need to apply for an individual licence each time you need to interfere with badger setts.

You can carry out works 5 working days after submitting a site notification, unless you hear from Natural England to say you can't. You must submit:

- a report form of your actions 14 working days after completing works
- an annual report form to stay registered to use this licence

Natural England will make the licence, site notification form and report form available to you once you've registered to use this licence. The licence is free of charge.

Criteria to get registered

You can apply to be a registered user of this licence if you've:

- held at least 4 licences to close badger setts within the last 5 years ('eligible licences')
- successfully excluded badgers from 4 different sites, which include a main sett at 2 of the sites
- proven experience from previous licences of using one-way gates to exclude badgers from setts
- designed competent schemes in your [method statements](#) to show you can exclude badgers from setts without causing harm
- met the deadlines for submitting licence return forms with full details of action you've taken under licence
- had no enforcement action taken against you for any wildlife licences you've held
- had no convictions of wildlife-related or animal welfare offences in the last 5 years
- evidence that you're a full member of a professional body (or an associate member for at least 3 years) such as the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) or Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) with authority to handle misconduct

You can still apply even if you:

- don't hold the required number of badger licences
- aren't a member of a professional body

You'll need to provide alternative evidence which meets the criteria. If you're not a member of a professional body you'll need to show how an appropriate third party would investigate malpractice.

Disability consideration

Email Natural England at badgerclnotifications@naturalengland.org.uk if you have a [disability](#) that makes it difficult for you to meet these criteria. Natural England will consider your request on its merits.

Apply to register

You can apply to register using the application form on this page. There's no charge to apply.

To be eligible to apply you must provide Natural England with the reference numbers of 4 eligible licences you've held in the last 5 years. Two of these must be for main setts.

For each licence you've held you must have completed a method statement and return form.

You must send your completed application form by email to Natural England badgerclnotifications@naturalengland.org.uk.

Natural England will review the information you've submitted. You'll get an email within 30 working days to tell you if you're registered to use this licence.

If your formal application failed

You can re-apply for registration to use the badger class licence CL35 if you failed to meet the criteria the first time round.

You can choose to apply for an [individual licence](#) to interfere with badger setts for development purposes or to prevent serious damage.