

# Environment Agency joins Warwickshire Police to stamp out illegal waste crime

Following a report that large scale waste was being deposited on a former car boot site and then buried near the bank of the River Cole in Coleshill, the Environment Agency started an investigation.

The officer investigating for the Environment Agency has worked with the Warwickshire Rural Crime Team. The team surveyed the site and provided photographs of illegal activity taking place that could later be used as evidence.

An excavator that was initially on site has since been removed, after the Environment Agency's investigating officer warned the company that had supplied the equipment that any activity on the site was illegal and any plant or vehicle found on the site would be seized.

While the machinery has since been removed, the waste, which includes household and construction materials, remains on site. The investigating officer along with the Environment Agency's National Enforcement Service who followed up the police investigation, are now monitoring the site for signs of any further illegal activity.

The land is privately owned and efforts are now being made to notify the landowner of the illegal activity that is taking place. Landowners may be committing an offence by allowing waste to be stored on their land without the relevant permissions, which could leave them liable to prosecution, or they may not be aware of the waste that has been dumped on their land.

Gerry Magee, Senior Investigating Crime Officer for the Environment Agency, said:

We remain committed during the coronavirus situation to reducing waste crime and reducing the opportunities for those operating illegally to do so.

Thanks to the support and assistance from the Warwickshire Rural Crime team we have some good photographic evidence which will help with our investigation into the illegal waste activity near Coleshill.

Landowners need to be extra vigilant during the current situation so they don't get dumped on. Waste criminals could target their land so landowners should make regular checks to make sure it's secure.

Our advice to homeowners and businesses, as always, is to check

someone is registered to take your waste away as you could be breaking the law if your waste isn't managed properly.

To report illegal waste activity, or if you suspect a company is operating illegally, call the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60 or report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

## Notes to editors

- An illegal waste site is any site routinely operating without a permit or outside of its permit limits. They pose a risk of harm to the health of people and the environment.
- [Check a waste carrier, broker or dealer is registered](#) before you use them.
- Waste site operators should make sure their site is legal and [check they have the right permit for their activities](#).
- It is illegal to burn most types of waste. Burning waste such as treated wood, tyres, plastics, rubber and oil can seriously harm health and pollute the environment. People face a fine of up to £50,000 for illegally managing waste.

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## [Revolutionising the way we fly: apply for business funding](#)



Flying taxis, drones delivering medical supplies, small electric aircraft, vertical take-off and landing vehicles and autonomous aircraft are some of the innovations that could transform aviation and broader transportation in the future.

New systems and technologies must be developed to allow them to use existing airports and airspace to fly in and around rural and urban environments. New business models must be created, and the public must have confidence in new services.

The government has set aside £125 million as part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Future Flight Challenge to make the UK a world leader in aviation systems, products and markets. The funding supports development of capabilities to enable safe operations of these new modes of air transportation.

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, has up to £30 million from the fund to support projects that develop and demonstrate integrated aviation systems for new electric and autonomous aircraft.

## **Projects should help new aircraft to fly in and out**

Projects should aim to develop and demonstrate integrated aviation systems that allow drones, urban aircraft or electric regional aircraft to fly in and out of airports, airspace, and rural and urban environments. They should take a 'system of systems' approach and could focus on several areas including:

- air traffic management and unmanned traffic management systems
- physical and digital infrastructure to support future flight
- autonomy
- digital and communications systems
- new business models
- public acceptance
- transport integration
- vehicle technologies enabling integration to new aviation systems
- simulation
- non-aerospace regulation
- viable, challenging, use cases
- total security systems

There are two strands to the competition, one for smaller fast-track projects and the second for larger consortia undertaking more ambitious projects.

Applications are sought from businesses that work in the aviation sector and from businesses outside the sector that can bring in new technologies.

### **Strand 1**

- the competition is open, and the closing date is at midday on 1 July 2020
- projects must be led by an SME working with at least one other business, research organisation, public sector organisation or charity
- we expect projects to range in size between £150,000 and £500,000 and to last between 6 and 18 months
- a briefing event will be held on 19 May 2020

## Strand 2

- the competition is open, and the closing date is at midday on 1 July 2020
- projects can be led by businesses of any size but must include at least 1 SME as a project partner
- we expect projects to range in size between £500,000 and £10 million and to last between 6 and 18 months
- a briefing event will be held on 19 May 2020

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1. 30 June 2020

Updated image

2. 18 May 2020

First published.

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## [Michael Walker, Referee Analyst, honoured by Queen's University](#)

[Michael Walker](#), a leading expert in food safety and authenticity, and a longtime partner of the Institute for Global Food Security, IGFS, has received an honorary professorship from Queen's University Belfast.

Professor Walker said:

I am deeply honoured. It is a privilege to support the Institute for Global Food Security and Queens University Belfast. I look forward to continuing my work alongside those at the forefront of food safety, authenticity and sustainability, which I enjoy immensely. It is also a reflection of the high standards of science in the Laboratory of the Government Chemist (LGC).

A graduate of Queen's, Sussex and Kingston universities, Dr Walker has always maintained close links with Queen's. He worked alongside Professor Chris Elliott in the '[Elliott Review](#)' into the integrity and assurance of food supply networks in the aftermath of the horsemeat scandal.

He has collaborated with a number of other IGFS scientists on research projects and publications and contributes to the supervision of final-year

undergraduate projects alongside IGFS Emeritus Professor, Duncan Thorburn Burns.

Dr Walker also sits on the Industrial Advisory Board of the School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering at Queen's.

Michael is a champion of forensic measurement science, particularly as it applies to food allergens and authenticity, and remains a very active (and past local Chair) of the Institute of Food Science & Technology (IFST) and was awarded an honorary Fellowship of IFST.

Michael is experienced in the fields of public strategy and policy. After serving as Public Analyst in Northern Ireland he spent a short period as Chief Executive of Forensic Science NI before taking up post at the Office of the Government Chemist, at the [UK National Measurement Laboratory](#) in Teddington, south west London.

In parallel, he has been a non-executive Director with the Consumer Council, a founder Board member of the Food Standards Agency and a Board member of AFBI, the Agrifood Biosciences Institute for NI. Michael applies his science in his own chemico-legal consultancy as an expert witness.

Professor Nigel Scollan, Director of IGFS, said the honorary professorship was a fitting acknowledgement of Dr Walker's contribution:

Michael has given strong support and assistance to Queen's over many years. We have benefitted from his insights into the bioanalysis of food allergens and in many other key food-safety and authenticity research areas and I look forward to continuing close collaboration.

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## [MAIB Annual Report 2019 published](#)

News story

This report provides information on the branch's activities during 2019.



Today, we have issued our annual report which details the work of the branch during 2019 and includes:

- an overview from the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents
- a summary of investigations started
- details of investigation reports published
- recommendations issued in 2019 and an update on their status
- updates on recommendations made in previous years

Marine accident statistics will be published in a separate document later this year.

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## **The danger of unsecured loads – Highways England reminds drivers to check before setting off this summer**

More than 46,000 items were found on England's motorways and major A roads over just 10 months and Highways England traffic officers have dealt with everything from a washing machine, sofa and king size mattress to a double-glazed door, garden sheds and a ship's mast.

With the summer staycation fast approaching, there will be many more drivers with loads such as bikes and roof boxes strapped to their vehicles. So today Highways England is urging all drivers to make sure their loads are safely secured before they set off.

Apart from leaving the owners out of pocket and maybe without a tent for their camping trip, these items pose a big safety risk for other people on the road including the traffic officers who help clear them up.

Highways England Traffic Officers experience first-hand the range of items

found on England's motorways and the impact they can have on drivers.

On Road Team Manager Mark Snell, who is based in Hampshire, said:

We have had fence panels, a shed, tools, tool boxes, motorcycle bags and top boxes – the whole contents on one family's top box was spread all over three lanes as they were on their way to a holiday in the West Country. "On one occasion there was a double-glazed door and windows on the slip road at junction 6 of the M3 with cars swerving around them.

Most incidents on are on the main routes, the M6 and M1, followed by the M5, M62 and M25.

On Road Team Manager Glenn Lamont, who patrols roads in Cumbria, said:

I personally have dealt with roof boxes, bicycles, sofas, LGV trailer roofs, a domestic oil tank and many other weird objects.

The most unusual item I came across was a 40ft mast off a sailing ship. It was at an angle across two lanes. We never found the owner.

But shed-loads can close a road for several hours as well as putting people at risk. So our advice is simple: Secure your load before you set out. It could prevent an accident and save lives.

Traffic officer Matthew Bradshaw, from Hampshire, said:

We once had a shed on the M27, without a scratch on it, just sat in lane 2. It was brand new and pretty massive. No-one ever claimed it. I have heard of a few sheds being found on roads before.

Matthew also had to deal with a load of timber which fell off the truck on a slip road joining the A27 just east of Portsmouth.

He said:

Fortunately the driver became aware of the problem before the rest of the load came off or before he got onto the main carriageway and no-one was hurt.

While Traffic officer Hannah Moffitt, based in the East Midlands, told how she came across a metal shed in lanes three and four on the M1 near Leicester. She said:

We never found the owner. That's the scary thing, it has fallen off and they haven't noticed.

Other items that traffic officers have had to deal with include a sofa on the M6 in the West Midlands, a washing machine in lane 2 of the M62 near junction 23, a steel chute from a cement mixer lorry on the M6 in Cumbria, near Carlisle and a king size mattress on the A3M onto the A27.

Camera footage captured the moment a piece of metal struck a road worker on the M6 after it came off a passing HGV and hit his leg. He was working on the central reservation as part of the upgrade of the motorway between junctions 13 and 15 in Staffordshire when hurt. Fortunately he did not suffer any serious injuries or broken bones.

[View video footage.](#)

Highways England figures show that there were almost 6,000 items on the carriageway of the M6 between June 2019 and April 2020.

The most items dropped on motorways were building or construction materials. Between June 2019 and April this year there were 9,576 incidents of building/construction items obstructing major roads. Meanwhile, there were 5,174 incidents of vehicle parts or accessories found over the same period and 3,383 household or garden items. The RAC, Road Haulage Association and Freight Transport Association are supporting Highways England's calls for drivers to check their vehicles, trailers and loads before setting off on journeys.

Ben Aldous, RAC patrol of the year, said:

Just a few minutes spent making sure things like bikes, roofboxes and caravans are completely secure, and then double-checking them can make the difference between a trouble-free journey and one that puts people's lives at risk as well as causes long delays for other travellers. We'd ask everyone checks loads at the same time as looking at things like tyre tread and pressure, and oil and coolant levels. The more care drivers take before setting out, the smoother their journeys.

Chris Yarsley, Policy Manager from the Freight Transport Association, said:

Paying close attention to load security must be a primary concern for all drivers using our roads and we would advise the public to check their vehicles closely before departure, in the same way that logistics operators conduct a daily walk round check before starting work to ensure everything is safe and secure. Transporting a secure load not only keeps others on the road safe but also ensures that vehicles and loads arrive on time, without incident, which is the primary aim of all our members and their customers.



Tom Cotton, Policy and Infrastructure Manager for the RHA, said:

As well as a safety concern, the recovery of items from the road network can cause congestion and delays, the RHA considers it's really important to take steps to make sure vehicle loads are secure.

Journey planning advice, including making sure vehicles are ready for the road, can be [found on the Think website](#). Advice on securing loads is available on this [webpage](#).

### **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

### **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.