

Press release: £28,000 penalty for Nottinghamshire farming companies who caused serious pollution

Two Nottinghamshire farming companies have been fined a total of £28,800 for causing pollution to a pond through the discharge of maize silage effluent from Sutton Grange farm in Sutton-cum-Lound near Retford.

The pollution incident resulted in the death of 35 fish and at the time caused a significant impact on the local groundwater.

Sutton Grange AD Ltd and Sutton Grange Services Ltd were successfully prosecuted by the Environment Agency in a case heard at Mansfield Magistrates Court on Friday 10 May.

The excessive amount of maize stored coupled with the manner in which it was kept, caused a runoff of highly polluting maize silage effluent. There was also a failure to comply with the silage, slurry & agricultural fuel oil regulations on the part of Sutton Grange Services Ltd in relation to a second pile of maize.

The two companies pleaded guilty to three charges of breaching environmental regulations following a number of pollution incidents in October and November 2015, all arising from a maize storage/clamping operation at an anaerobic digestion plant at Sutton Grange farm.

Sutton Grange AD Ltd were fined £6,000 and Sutton Grange Services Ltd were fined a total of £2,800. Each company was ordered to pay costs of £10,000, as well as a victim surcharge of £170.

The court heard how Sutton Grange AD Ltd, which holds an environmental permit for the operation of its anaerobic digestion activities, failed to ensure that proper systems were in place to ensure that only uncontaminated surface water was discharged into the ponds.

Sutton Grange AD Ltd stored a significant amount of maize on a purpose built clamp which was built on top of a manhole linked to a stone outfall at Bluebell pond. Sutton Grange Services had been contracted to carry out clamping operations.

Following an earlier report from a member of the public about a possible fish kill at the lake behind Sutton Grange Farm on 19 October 2015, on 24 October 2015 officers received a further notification of a pollution incident at the same pond. The officers attended and found dissolved oxygen levels in the pond were extremely low. They also found the maize clamp was blocked and contained yellow liquid. The liquid was flowing downwards across the farmyard.

Further inspections of the site showed silage effluent had escaped the

shallow perimeter drain surrounding the maize mound and was leaking into the manhole which discharges to the stone outfall in Bluebell pond, resulting in the fish kill and significant impact on groundwater quality.

In mitigation, the court heard that both companies had taken a number of steps to improve operations at the site to ensure that no further incidents such as this would happen again. Neither company had any previous convictions and were given credit for their early guilty pleas.

An officer speaking on behalf of the Environment Agency said:

Sutton Grange AD Ltd and Sutton Grange Services Ltd have failed to act in accordance with environmental laws and as a result they have caused pollution to a pond in the close vicinity of the farm and the local groundwater.

Pollution of any watercourse is a serious offence because of the devastating impact it can have on fish, wildlife and ecosystems. These were entirely preventable incidents, which led to the pollution of watercourses in the area and we hope this case sends a strong message to the farming industry that their activities have the potential for serious impacts on the environment.

We will always take action against anyone who fails to act in accordance with environmental laws and if anyone spots an environmental incident they can report it to the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

[News story: Defence Secretary calls for veteran-led support to be at the heart of mental health services](#)

Following the Government's allocation of £10 million to support veterans mental health, through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, the new Defence Secretary has announced that up to £9 million of this funding will be allocated to mental health and wellbeing activities.

She also announced that additional measures will be taken to attract and support applications from organisations run by veterans, and that the Trust has funded tools to evaluate such projects to enable those organisations to attract greater funding in the future.

Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Veteran led organisations often provide the most valued and effective support, but don't have massive "backroom" operations needed to research or make applications. We will provide support so they can access this funding, and help to demonstrate the difference their work is making to the wellbeing of those who have serviced.

As part of the package of measures, the Defence Secretary has also announced:

- As part of the new transition policy to be launched this year, when service personnel transition into civilian life, the MOD will seek consent from individuals to be proactively contacted in the future, in order to signpost towards support if required.
- The Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Defence will review specific information for veterans in receipt of benefits, pensions and compensation to ensure they are clearly pointed to where support is available. DWP will also introduce an indicator on the Universal Credit system, which will allow them to understand where veterans claiming benefits are, so they can ensure they've got their resources in the right place.
- The current MOD veterans study will be extended to include the most recent service leavers and will be updated on an ongoing basis to provide real-time monitoring of suicides.
- This will be complemented by a new study, funded jointly by the MOD and NHS (England), by Manchester University into ex-service personnel who take their own lives. The study will look at risk factors in the year leading up to a suicide and will use the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Mental Health database and records from Coroners' inquests to look at factors which led an individual to take their own life. Combined, these studies will provide increasingly robust data in order to understand whether suicide in the ex-forces community is disproportionate compared to the rest of the UK general population and will identify potential interventions in order to prevent suicide.
- The appointment of the first Armed Forces Mental Health and Wellbeing Champion, Warrant Officer Glenn Haughton OBE, who served in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Currently serving as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chiefs of Staff (SEAC), WO1 Haughton works with senior officers across the British Army, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Air Force to improve awareness of the issues facing service personnel at all levels. His new role will focus on the mental health and wider wellbeing of the Armed Forces, raising awareness for

the support available and the promoting the benefits of mental fitness within the military.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood, said:

I'm incredibly proud of how far our Armed Forces have come when it comes to recognising the importance of mental resilience, and having the courage to come forward and ask for help when it is needed.

But we still have a long way to go to encourage our people to get talking, share their experiences, and to make sure the support they need is never more than a phone call away.

W01(SEAC) Glenn Haughton, Armed Forces Mental Health and Wellbeing Champion, said:

It doesn't matter how big and tough you are – mental health can affect us all. My job will be to promote the tools available to enhance mental fitness and well-being, and to make sure those at the senior levels of Defence understand how best we can support. Every member of the Armed Forces deserves to know what help is available and how they can use it.

Mental Health Awareness Week will also see the launch of Project REGAIN – the new initiative designed by Royal Marines, aimed at promoting early detection of those who could suffer from mental health issues. REGAIN allow Royal Marines and related ranks to refer themselves directly to specialists without the need to first go through their unit's medical officer. This will ensure that getting support is as straightforward as possible. They will be required to make one phone call to an MOD mental health unit in Colchester, who will put them straight through to a nurse who will arrange an appointment locally.

The MOD is committed to supporting not just those who are serving, but also those who have left the forces and might be struggling to adapt to civilian life. Last year, the Veterans' Gateway – the first port of call for those in need – launched a new proactive outreach trial to check our veterans are receiving the care they deserve.

The ongoing trial, supported by £108,000 of funding from the Ministry of Defence, has so far made over 6,000 outbound calls, with over 300 resulting in referrals to support services or additional guidance and advice being provided.

Speech: UK stands proud with Pacific as climate change advocates: Speech: Melanie Hopkins at CAPP reception in Suva

Bula vinaka

I am delighted to be here tonight to support the Climate Action Pacific Partnership Conference 2019 under the theme of “Decarbonise and Build Resilience: the Call from the Pacific” and commend the Prime Minister of Government of Fiji Honourable Josia Voreqe Bainimarama for hosting this event.

The United Kingdom is proud to stand side by side with the Pacific as global advocates for tackling climate change. At home, we were the first country to introduce legally binding climate emissions targets through the 2008 Climate Change Act. Since 1990, the UK has reduced emissions by 42% whilst still growing our economy by 72% – we have decarbonised our economy at the fastest rate of any G20 country. Last week the UK enjoyed its first coal free week since 1880. By 2025 we will be able to fully operate Britain’s electricity system with zero carbon. Internationally, we are also one of the world’s largest funders of international climate finance and have committed over £5.8bn from 2016-2020 on international climate finance.

This week sees the visit of the UN Secretary General – a historic first for this region. We recognise the particular leadership of the Pacific Islands including Marshall Islands’ chair of the High Ambition Coalition, Fiji’s COP 23 Presidency or Palau’s hosting of the 2020 Our Oceans Conference. At regional level, we recognise the ground breaking Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific which calls for climate resilience to be integrated into all aspects of national and local policy.

Across the region, Pacific leaders have called time and time again for increased ambition in implementing the Paris Agreement. We know that if we continue on the current trajectory, we will not achieve the radical change required. The UK has therefore offered to host COP26 in 2020 and will be committed, ambitious and effective hosts. We also welcome interest from others and a final decision will be adopted at COP25 in Chile in December 2019.

This morning, we heard the Environment Minister of Chile talk of the “Blue COP” – we very much recognise the oceans-policy nexus. As members of the International Partnership for Blue Carbon, we also recognise that blue carbon ecosystems are vital for carbon sequestration, coastal resilience and sustainable aquaculture. We are proud to jointly lead the marine plastics Working Group of the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance with Vanuatu. Seven countries in the Pacific have already joined this Alliance since it was

launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting last year, and we hope that other Pacific countries will also come forward. One of the most important ways we can support our oceans is to provide ecological resilience through Marine Protected Areas – this is why we want to treble the target for MPAs globally to 30% by 2030.

The UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit, this September, is a critical moment to accelerate global climate ambition – on cutting emissions, building resilience and adaptation, and mobilising finance. We are fully committed to ensuring the Summit is a success. That is why the Prime Minister has accepted the UNSG's invitation to co-lead on climate resilience and adaptation with Egypt, in partnership with Malawi, Bangladesh, the Netherlands and UNDP.

We are keen to work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including in the Pacific, to bring commitments to the Summit that will drive truly transformational change.

Globally, 21% of climate finance is devoted to adaptation; that is not enough. As the UK, we aim for a 50:50 split in our £5.8bn in climate finance from 2015-2020. Through our work on the Summit, we will be also asking others to invest more in building climate resilience internationally.

Last December, Pacific Island countries, the Pacific Island Forum, the British and New Zealand Governments came together with leading private sector, civil society and academic representatives at Wilton Park in the British countryside to discuss resilience and adaptation. For the UK, this helped drive our thinking on a resilience and adaptation pact which we hope will be launched at the Summit. Alongside this pact, we will seek to secure concrete commitments from governments on a number of areas raised by Pacific Island Governments at Wilton Park. Current priorities include:

- Greater investment in early warning data and systems
- Expansion of risk finance and insurance mechanisms to enable early response and create greater incentives for risk management by the private sector
- Building technical and institutional capacity for locally led adaptation
- Restoring ecosystems, supporting sustainable agriculture and food security

In closing, I would like to congratulate the Pacific Leaders for your leadership and underline the UK's continued offer of partnership to reach our shared, global ambitions on tackling climate change and protecting the planet's oceans.

Thank you and vinaka vakalevu.

Speech: Deputy High Commissioner Tom Hartley's Speech at the MOU Signing between British Council and the Otumfuo Osei Tutu II Foundation

Your Majesty / Lady Julia Osei Tutu / Honorable Ministers / Members of Parliament

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Guests

Niimeɪ, Naameɪ, Nananom, Torgbewo, Mamawo

All protocols observed.

“Maakye, 3tes3n?” [Good morning, how are you?]

I am ‘Kojo’ Hartley.

I am delighted to have been invited to speak here today on behalf of the British High Commissioner and the UK Government. I hope my participation at today's momentous MoU signing ceremony between the British Council and the Otumfuo Osei Tutu II Charity Foundation is testament to the British High Commission and the British Council's share in the development of Kumasi and the Ashanti Kingdom.

First, allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate His Majesty the Asantehene on the 20th Anniversary of his enstoolment and his 69th birthday. I wish him many more years of peace and prosperity upon The Golden Stool.

The ties between the UK and the Ashanti Kingdom have been strong for generations. I was delighted to have witnessed, a historic moment for the region when, last November, Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall met His Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Asantehene (the King of the Ashanti) and his wife, Lady Julia Osei Tutu and the Queen Mothers, at Manhyia Palace. They felt the warm welcome of the Ashanti people during the ‘Akwasidae’ Grand Durbar, and experienced the richness of Ashanti culture in the company of HM the Asantehene, Lady Julia, The Queen Mothers, local Chiefs, religious leaders and guests throughout the Ashanti kingdom.

And I am proud of the strong Anglo-Ashanti connection which is so much more than warm words.

Just last week, a British company, Contracta UK, cut the sod on the second

Phase of the Kejetia Market Project in the presence of the British High Commissioner, His Majesty the Asantehene and His Excellency The President Nana Akufo-Addo. This development, backed by UK Export Finance, will modernise Kejetia Market and ensure that Kumasi remains a vital trading hub in West Africa, and that Ghana's famed second city continues to be recognised across the region as the place to do business.

And we are also backing the completion of Bekwai Hospital, through UKEF's guarantee of a £17 million loan that will deliver 120 new beds, an Emergency Department, a Maternity Ward and an Operating Theatre.

These are tangible examples of our investment in the development of the Ashanti Kingdom and the strong bonds of friendship with Manhyia Palace.

I am delighted that British Council's work in Kumasi is another leading example of our commitment to the Ashanti Kingdom. In Ghana, Kumasi is the only other city, outside of Accra, where the British Council has an office (Nigeria is the only other West African country that has a regional British Council presence). A clear demonstration of our commitment to supporting the educational development of the Ashanti people.

The British Council offer is diverse and world-class.

Through its pioneering work, the British Council is delivering programmes that extend across a range of cultural, technical and educational sectors:

- In Education, we are enabling teachers to deliver core skills training; foster new education and research partnerships; and support scholarship programmes that enable opportunities to study at the UK's best tertiary institutions.
- In Exams, we are giving young people access to leading international qualifications needed to further their careers.
- In Skills and Entrepreneurship, they are supporting the Government of Ghana's efforts to meet the employment needs of a growing, young population.
- Our Social Enterprise programme provides an enabling environment for innovators to develop profitable business solutions to many of today's social and environmental challenges.
- Our Arts programme engages the influential UK-Ghana Diaspora and supports Ghanaian entrepreneurs working within the creative industries.

A great example of the British Council's work in Kumasi is the Jobs for Youth Project where BC is working with two tech and enterprise Hubs in Kumasi to train, incubate and accelerate Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in order

to generate employment for young people. This work is training a total of 3200 young people in Kumasi and beyond. This is essential as no country can truly flourish if parts of the population are left behind, or excluded. Inclusivity is a necessary part of Ghana's vision for moving 'Beyond Aid' and underpins Ghana's reputation as a bastion of stability in the region.

Since its creation in 2009, I am proud that the Otumfuo Osei Tutu II Charity Foundation has supported this vision through its important work – at the community level – in support of Ghana's education and health outcomes, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

And I hope the British Council and the Foundation's new partnership will become a force for positive change. I hope that some of those with ties to the Ashanti Region, such as fashion designer Oswald Boateng and broadcaster June Sarpong, will join us and help us spark action on that will benefit all of Ghana.

On behalf of the British Council and the entire UK Government, I am delighted to witness the signing of this MoU today. The MoU will cement strong collaboration, particularly in four areas of mutual interest: art & culture; Education; enhancing the Asantehene's 20th Anniversary Celebrations; and joint participation in events that support community level development in the Ashanti Kingdom.

At the same time, it provides a framework for how the British Council can deepen the relationship with the Foundation on culture, sports, Diaspora and other shared priorities. I am confident that it will raise the bar for the UK's partnership in the Ashanti Region. And it is another sign of the UK's commitment to the development of the Ashanti Kingdom, and Ghana.

Medaase [Thank you]

[Press release: Government unveils new support for survivors of domestic abuse](#)

- For first time ever legal duty placed on local authorities to deliver support to survivors of domestic abuse in accommodation-based services backed by funding to place services on a sustainable footing
- This new requirement will end the variation across the country in support for those fleeing domestic abuse
- Consultation part of wider government drive to bolster protection for survivors of domestic abuse, including landmark [Domestic Abuse Bill](#)

Thousands of survivors fleeing abusive and violent relationships will receive greater protection thanks to a new package of support, confirmed today (13 May 2019) by Prime Minister, Theresa May.

For the first time ever, councils across the country will be legally required to provide vital life-saving support in secure accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse and their children – ensuring need in their local area is met.

Domestic abuse is a devastating crime which shatters the lives of over 2 million survivors and their families every year.

While many local authorities are already providing tailored support to those fleeing violent relationships, more needs to be done to end the variation across the country in support and ensure a consistent approach across the country so all families are able to recover and overcome their experiences.

Local authorities will also be required to work together with neighbouring councils to ensure domestic abuse services reflects the needs of local people – including targeted, specialist support for BAME, LGBT and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller survivors.

Today's [consultation](#) complements wider work across government, including a landmark Domestic Abuse Bill which will introduce the first ever statutory government definition of domestic abuse to specifically include economic abuse and controlling and manipulative non-physical abuse. The Bill will also establish a new Domestic Abuse Commissioner and prohibit the cross-examination of victims by their abusers in the family courts.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

I've always vowed to leave no stone unturned in tackling domestic abuse – this abhorrent crime has no place in our country.

And today we are ending the postcode lottery by placing on local authorities a legal duty to deliver support, including secure housing, to survivors of domestic abuse and their children.

Whoever you are, wherever you live and whatever the abuse you face, you will have access to the services you need to be safe.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

Domestic abuse destroys lives and I am determined to drive the change necessary to ensure families never have to endure the pain of domestic abuse in silence.

For the first time ever, local authorities will have to legally assess level of support needed in their local area and match that need with vital, life-saving services – helping untold numbers of families to safely rebuild their lives, free from the threat of

pernicious abuse.

These important measures will help us shape the future of the invaluable support survivors of domestic abuse and their children receive.

For the first time, local authorities will also be required to develop and publish strategies which set out in detail the range of support services available for survivors and their children – including refuge accommodation and specialist support from safety through to independence.

Funding will also be provided to place these vital services on a long-term, sustainable footing. The exact level of funding will be determined with stakeholders as part of the consultation process.

Through the consultation, ministers want to hear from victims and survivors, service and housing providers, local authorities, police and prime commissioners and other public agencies, as well as other professionals who support victims and their children every day.

In November last year, ministers awarded a further £22 million for domestic abuse projects across the country – ensuring thousands more survivors have access to the help they need as they move towards a safe and healthy future, free from domestic abuse. Funding will help to provide over 2,200 new beds in refuges and other safe accommodation, as well as access to education and tailored employment and life skills guidance.

Minister for Housing and Homelessness Heather Wheeler MP said:

It is our duty to ensure survivors of domestic abuse can access the support they need to restart their lives – we owe it to everyone who has experience of this terrible abuse.

I know from meeting with brave survivors when I recently visited a newly opened refuge the worth of such facilities and the important work they do. That's why the measures announced today are so crucial and will help ensure that survivors are supported right across the country.

Sandra Horley, CBE, Chief Executive of Refuge, said:

Refuge is delighted by the government's decision to place a legal duty on local authorities to provide funding for accommodation based support for survivors of domestic abuse.

This has the potential to end the postcode lottery for refuge places and could put these life-saving services on a secure financial footing for the first time.

It could provide vital protection to tens of thousands of women and children who experience violence and intimidation in the home. Women and children deserve and need to live in safety.

Nicki Norman, Acting co-Chief Executive of Women's Aid, said:

We warmly welcome this announcement which shows the government's commitment to the long-term funding of lifesaving refuges.

At Women's Aid we have been campaigning since 2014 with our SOS campaign to protect and fund the national network of refuges, and with many of our member services delivering services on a shoestring budget, a move to consistent, dedicated funding is desperately needed.

Safeguards to ensure that experienced women's services – including smaller specialist organisations led by and for black and minority ethnic women – are sustainably funded through a new statutory system will be vital.

Key to this is seeing quality standards, such as those developed by Women's Aid and Imkaan, at the heart of implementation – alongside real national oversight to end the postcode lottery and ensure no survivor is turned away from the support they need.

We look forward to working with the government to ensure that this important move to fund refuges is safe, sustainable and delivers the resources that services urgently require to support all women and children fleeing domestic abuse.

Suzanne Jacob, Chief Executive of SafeLives, said:

No one harmed by domestic abuse should have to leave their home. We have long called for victims and their families to have the broadest range of housing options so they can choose to stay where they are and for it to be safe to do so.

We welcome this consultation and call for the fullest range of support to be considered, including sanctuary schemes and specialist community support alongside refuges. A new duty, properly funded, would be a welcome step and could help make the case for change at local level.

We want to see adoption of the standards devised by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance which set out best practice for public, private and social landlords and for councils to accept the need to house people from outside their own area so survivors can be sure they are far from harm's way.

The [consultation](#) will last for 12 weeks. The government will set out its response in due course.

In November 2018, Minister Wheeler confirmed that 63 projects across England were to share £22 million to help domestic abuse survivors. Find [more information](#).

Funding will help to provide tailored support to more than 25,000 survivors and their families – including over 2,200 additional beds in refuges and other safe accommodation.

The funding builds on other actions being taken by the government to end domestic abuse, support survivors and ensure offenders are prosecuted. Such as:

- a new domestic abuse offence to capture coercive and controlling behaviour, the criminalisation of forced marriage and the introduction of new stalking laws
- a national roll-out of domestic violence protection orders and the domestic violence disclosure scheme
- the £15 million 3-year Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund