

Press release: Environment Agency day-long sting confirms 11 illegal waste sites

The largest one-day sting operation ever carried out by Environment Agency officers in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire has confirmed 11 illegal waste sites across the area.

Officers found 6 sites where waste had been burnt, a further 3 containing construction and demolition waste, one containing household waste, and one scrapyards – all were operating illegally.

Furniture, plastic, insulation, car parts, fuel containers, chimney-sweeping equipment and even a lawn mower and skis were among the items discovered.

A total of 28 sites were visited by officers; of them 17 were found to be operating within the law. The 11 sites which weren't will now receive written guidance from the Environment Agency clarifying the steps they must take, and follow-up visits will be arranged to make sure the site operators comply.

A pile of waste on an illegal site in Wellingborough discovered by Environment Agency officers yesterday

Mark Rumble, Enforcement team leader with the Environment Agency, said:

Yesterday's successful sting means that, thanks to intelligence from local communities, we found 11 sites where we can now take action to put a stop to activities that blight our neighbourhoods, our environment and our economy.

Also, it's encouraging that so many of the sites we visited were not breaking the law, and we continue to offer support to operators who abide by the rules.

We take waste crime extremely seriously and will be following up every single illegal site we found to bring them in line with the law. We'll also continue to monitor local reports, so if you have information about suspicious waste activity, report it to us by calling 0800 80 70 60.

Evidence gathered from the visits will be used against those breaking the law. Further enforcement action could include work with our partners such as local authorities, police and HMRC to prevent and disrupt crime, the serving of notices to have waste removed from land, and prosecution of offenders. If convicted of illegal waste activity, offenders face unlimited fines and up to 5 years in prison.

More information on the requirements for disposing of business or commercial waste can be found on gov.uk.

[Press release: Welsh Secretary launches Wales-France business forum](#)

The Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns launched the Wales-France business forum at a reception hosted by the British Embassy in Paris. The forum will connect business people across both countries, encouraging Franco-Welsh trade and creating new business development opportunities.

Wales is estimated to be home to 85 French companies employing more than 9,000 people. These include Keolis and Bouygues, who have committed their support to the new forum following recent investments in Wales. Keolis Amey was awarded the contract to run Transport for Wales and Bouygues has invested in a new innovation campus at Cardiff University which will create more than 60 jobs.

France represents the second largest export destination for Welsh goods and services. The Wales-France Business Forum plans to build on those existing links by giving Welsh businesses a wider platform to promote themselves to new customers.

Speaking at the launch reception, the Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns highlights his aspirations for the forum saying:

This forum will provide a home for strengthened Franco-Welsh relations where business representatives from all sectors can network and learn from one another.

As the UK prepares to leave the EU, this deepening relationship between the UK and France is important both economically and politically.

Crucial to the success of this partnership is the support of the UK, French and Welsh governments to create the right conditions to support companies to export and grow overseas.

The forum will host networking events for French and Welsh businesses and entrepreneurs across Wales, ensuring that Wales remains firmly open for business as the UK leaves the European Union.

[News story: Defence Secretary and apprentices meet military's most senior female officer on International Women's Day](#)

On a visit to the Defence College of Technical Training in RAF Cosford, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and Air Marshal Sue Gray met with some of the 45 female apprentices currently studying STEM trades at the college.

Some nine trades were represented, ranging from aircraft engineering to cyberspace communications, survival equipment, photography and the emergency services, showcasing the breadth of skills of apprentices in the Armed Forces.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

From those completing apprenticeships at the start of their careers, to the first female three-star officer, I am delighted to celebrate both National Apprenticeship Week and International Women's Day with the young men and women who will mark the future success of the UK Armed Forces.

I hope that the young apprentices we met today are inspired by Air Marshal Sue Gray's historic achievement to reach for the top. With all roles across the British military now opened to women, there are no limits to those looking to succeed in Defence.

Last year all combat roles in the UK Armed Forces were opened to women for the first time, including those in ground close combat and the Royal Marines.

This event demonstrates the breadth of professions that women are already working in within the Armed Forces. As of 2018, a total of over 20,000 women are currently serving in the Regular and Reserve forces.

AM Sue Gray was last month promoted to the rank of Air Marshal, becoming the RAF's first ever female three star officer and the most senior woman to have ever served in the UK Armed Forces.

She will shortly take up the role of Director General of the Defence Safety Authority, responsible for the regulation of Health, Safety and Environmental Protection across the Ministry of Defence.

While visiting Cosford, the Defence Secretary also met with a number of women completing apprenticeships in the RAF, including 20-year-old firefighter Cerys Hopkins. Cerys, from Pontypridd in South Wales joined the RAF 12 months ago and is stationed at RAF Benson in Oxfordshire. She said:

I have always wanted to be that person who people look to in times of crisis and emergency, someone they can rely on. Being a firefighter and being in the RAF really gives me that.

[News story: PHE scientists lead workshops to inspire next generation of scientists](#)

A group of 80 scientists from across Public Health England (PHE) will join forces to inspire young people about PHE's world-leading research.

From pupils extracting DNA from their own cells using household products, to hands-on experience of a real public health laboratory, a series of interactive activities will help children and young people understand the variety of scientific careers available to make an impact on the world around us.

[British Science Week](#) is an annual 10-day event, now in its 25th year. It encourages organisations, professionals in the science sector, science communicators and the general public to hold events that get people involved in scientific activities.

Between 8 to 17 March, scientists from PHE will be hosting workshops and taking part in the following events:

- 9 March: Science in the Park, Nottingham
- 11 to 15 March: PHE lab workshops in Harlow for local 6th form students
- 11 to 15 March: PHE lab workshops in Colindale for local university and 6th form students
- 11 to 24 March: activity stands and a panel discussion at Cambridge Science Festival as well as fun workshops at 5 Cambridgeshire primary schools
- 13 to 16 March: The Big Bang Fair, Birmingham

The scientists taking part are specialists in a range of disciplines, including vaccine research, antibiotic resistance and understanding how bugs cause diseases and spread.

Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England said:

In order to tackle the big questions in public health, we need passionate scientists from a diverse range of backgrounds. It's hugely important that as well as investing in our current generation of scientists, we spark curiosity in the next generation.

This includes showcasing the range of routes and opportunities they can pursue within world-leading UK science. We are thankful for the scientists taking part in British Science Week workshops across the country, and hope that their efforts encourage the pupils to consider a career in science as a viable and exciting option.

Vicki Chalker, Head of Science and Engineering Careers at Public Health England said:

Working with children and young people is inspiring, and it is wonderful to see the look on a child's face when you've helped them to think about something in a new way for the first time, or you've supported a young adult to realise that a career in science is possible.

As scientists at Public Health England, we are committed to driving forward research that improves and protects the nation's health, extending beyond our day to day work in the lab and at computers. We are always impressed by the ability of young people and children to think about science from novel angles and engage in the work we do.

Inspiring future generations by contact with scientists is critical to lift aspirations to join what are highly rewarding and exciting careers across a range of scientific disciplines and are open to people from every background. We have a responsibility to ensure that the future workforce continues to be made up of talented and enthusiastic individuals and I hope that our activities during British Science Week and beyond will inspire some budding scientists.

PHE is in the process of creating a world-leading campus of excellence for public health research, improvement and protection, and a new headquarters, at the vacant GlaxoSmithKline site in Harlow.

This will involve relocating facilities from Porton in Wiltshire and Colindale in north London, as well as the current central London headquarters. PHE Harlow is expected to be fully operational by 2024.

[Press release: Consultation on A66 improvements to start in May](#)

In May, Highways England begins a non-statutory public consultation on ideas to complete the dualling of this important Northern Trans-Pennine route.

The A66 is a strategically important road – a quarter of its 19,000 vehicles a day are lorries – and it provides trans-Pennine connections between the east and west coasts and a primary route connecting the south of England and Scotland.

Highways England is now developing plans to fully dual the remaining six single carriageway sections, which total 18 miles of the complete 50 mile route, in addition to junction improvements to the M6, junction 40 at Penrith and the A1(M) at Scotch Corner. This will provide improved benefits to journey time reliability, safety, network resilience and connectivity for nearby villages and towns.

While discussions have been ongoing with county councils, local councils, businesses, haulage firms, emergency services and other stakeholders, this is the first opportunity for the public to get involved with an eight-week non-statutory consultation between Tuesday 14 May and Tuesday 9 July.

Highways England senior project manager Matt Townsend said:

Although the start of construction is still a number of years away, this first non-statutory consultation is a significant milestone. We'll be presenting different options for dualling the six remaining single lane sections of the A66 and our improvement plans for Kemplay Bank roundabout to get the public's views on what might be the preferable options.

We want residents, trans-Pennine commuters, pedestrians, cyclists, businesses, land owners – anyone with an opinion or local knowledge – to get involved in this non-statutory consultation and help us shape this vital investment in the economy of the north.

Details of the route options for each of the six single carriageway sections along the route will be unveiled ahead of the non-statutory consultation. A number of public information exhibitions will take place in the various communities served by the A66 allowing local people the opportunity to find out more and meet the team delivering this major project.

Highways England will present route options for the following sections:

- Penrith to Temple Sowerby

- Temple Sowerby to Appleby
- Appleby to Brough
- Bowes
- Cross Lanes to Rokeby
- Stephen Bank to Carkin Moor

In May the public information exhibitions will take place at:

Date	Venue
Tuesday 14 May (11am to 7pm) and Wednesday 15 May (10am to 2pm)	Penrith Parish Centre, St Andrews Place, Penrith CA11 7XX
Friday 17 May (11am to 7pm) and Saturday 18 May (10am to 2pm)	Penrith Rugby Club, Winters Park, Carleton Hall Gardens, Penrith, CA10 2AL
Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 May (11am to 7pm on both days)	Gilling West Hall, High Street, Richmond, DL 10 5JG
Thursday 30 May (10am to 3pm), Friday 31 May (11am to 7pm) and Saturday 1 June 2019 (10am to 2pm)	The Appleby Hub, Chapel Street, Appleby, CA16 6QR

In June, public information exhibitions will take place at:

Date	Venue
Saturday 1 June 2019 (10am to 2pm)	The Appleby Hub, Chapel Street, Appleby, CA16 6QR
Tuesday 4 June (11am to 7pm), Wednesday 5 June (10am to 2pm) and Thursday 6 June (10am to 2pm)	Penrith Parish Centre, St Andrews Place, Penrith CA11 7XX
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 12, 13 and 14 June (all 11am to 7pm) and on Saturday 15 June (10am to 2pm)	The Witham, Horse Market, Barnard Castle, DL12 8LY
Friday 21 June (11am to 7pm) and Saturday 22 June to (Noon to 4pm)	The Station, Station Yard, Richmond, DL10 4LD

More information about the project – including a sign-up link for regular email updates – is available on [our A66 Northern Trans-Pennine scheme page](#).

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.