

[Press release: Ashford dairy farmer prosecuted for polluting stream with slurry](#)

A dairy farmer based near Ashford, Kent, has been ordered to pay £1,500 plus £5,516 in victim charges and costs by Maidstone Magistrates' Court, after being found guilty of discharging slurry into a local watercourse.

The Environment Agency brought the charges against Mr Peter Joules of Bircholt Farm, Bradbourne, Ashford, Kent, after its officers discovered a spill of neat slurry from an overflowing slurry lagoon that reached the stream. The officers then found that there had been a longer spill of dilute slurry and dirty water from livestock gathering areas that was also polluting the watercourse, via an underground pipe.

In March 2017, Environment Agency officers were inspecting a tributary of the Aylesford Brook when they discovered slurry running into the stream, and traced it back to the slurry lagoon at Bircholt Farm. They then discovered a black pipe discharging a brown liquid around 200 metres further upstream. The pipe was part of farmyard drainage system that discharged rainwater and yard washings. The pipe allowed diluted slurry, chopped straw, animal feed and soil sediment to enter the stream.

Environment Agency officers took samples from the stream and found the water quality was heavily impacted by the two discharges. The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) sets limits for what is considered 'good' water quality. The WFD levels for biological oxygen demand are 4.0mg/l, yet those found in the sample were 463mg/l; 115 times the limit. For orthophosphate, the level is 0.12mg/l, but the sample returned 15.2 mg/l; 126 times above the limit.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

Good farm management is vital to avoid incidents like this that damage the local aquatic environment and harm wildlife.

We take these incidents very seriously and do everything within our powers to safeguard the environment and people that may be affected. Mr Joules' farm didn't have the infrastructure to deal with the slurry it produces, which caused a serious pollution incident. In these circumstances we do not hesitate to prosecute.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Mr Peter Joules of Bircholt Farm was charged under: Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 Section 38(1) It is an offence for a

person to (a) contravene regulation 12(1) or (b) knowingly cause or knowingly permit the contravention of regulation 12(1)(a) Section 12(1) A person must not, except under to the extent authorised by an environment permit, (a) operate a regulated facility, (b) cause or knowingly permit a water discharge activity or groundwater activity.

Mr Joules received a £600 fine for the black pipe and £900 fine for the overflowing slurry lagoon.

For more information contact the Communications Team on 0800 141 2743

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[Press release: Commission appoints Interim Managers at The Alternative Animal Sanctuary](#)



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

The Charity Commission has today announced the appointment of interim managers to The Alternative Animal Sanctuary ([1111406](#)) due to continued concerns about the governance and management of the charity.

Interim managers are appointed to take over the running of a charity where the Commission has identified misconduct or mismanagement, or there is a need to protect the charity's property.

The Commission opened a [statutory inquiry](#) into The Alternative Animal Sanctuary in March 2017 to examine the administration, governance and financial management of the charity.

The Commission made an order under Section 76 (3)(g) of the Charities Act 2011 on 2 January 2019 to appoint Phil Watts and Sarah Tomlinson of Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP as joint interim managers to the exclusion of the trustees.

The interim managers will take on control of the management and

administration of the charity from the current trustees, with the exception of the day-to-day care of the animals at the sanctuary, until the Commission makes a further order.

The Commission's investigation continues; it intends to publish a report setting out its findings on conclusion of the inquiry. Reports of previous inquiries are available on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk).

Ends

Notes to Editors:

1. This appointment is a temporary and protective power that will be reviewed at regular intervals. It will continue until the Commission makes a further order for its variation or discharge.
2. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. For more information see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
3. Search for charities on our [online register](#).

Published 15 January 2019

[Press release: Wrexham care home abuser has sentence increased](#)

A man who sexually abused a teenager more than 40 years ago has today had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it to the Court of Appeal for being unduly lenient.

While in his late teens, Graham Stridgeon sexually abused a fellow resident at Bryn Alyn children's home on several occasions in the 1970s. The victim was under 15 at the time. Stridgeon, now 64, was arrested and charged following 'Operation Pallial', an independent National Crime Agency investigation into recent allegations of past abuse in the North Wales care system.

Stridgeon was originally sentenced in October 2018 to 3 and a half years in prison at Mold Crown Court. The Court of Appeal has today increased his sentence to 5 years and 10 months in prison with an extended licence period of 3 years.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

"I would like to thank the victim for bringing Stridgeon's offences to light, and I hope that they now feel that their courage has been rewarded and that justice has been done. I would also like to thank the National Crime Agency for their hard work on Operation Pallial."

Speech: Margot James' speech at the Tech Talent Charter's one year anniversary event

It is a pleasure to be celebrating the achievements and impact of the Tech Talent Charter after one year on from its launch.

Seeing so many signatories to the TTC gathered here is an inspirational sight. It shows buy-in from all sectors to improve diversity of the tech workforce, something so essential for the continued success of our economy, and also the success for the sector.

It is impressive to see companies here who are competitors, working together to drive change and looking at the supporters of this event, TTC's sponsors, and those on its board, shows that companies can put collaboration on this crucial issue ahead of their otherwise conflicting commercial interests.

I know this event sold out in under 24 hours and TTC could probably have filled the room again with the number of companies who wanted to be here, from large multinationals to small start-ups.

This is important because, as report shows today, larger firms can learn from how smaller firms approach the challenges around diversity.

In the UK we have a thriving, and ever-growing, digital and tech sector. The sector is worth over £184 billion a year and is growing at more than two and half times the rate of the economy as a whole.

Technology is a crucial and growing part of modern life. Emerging technologies have an ever-greater impact on how we work, communicate, travel, and more importantly on how the new generations are growing up.

And the people creating this technology have the power to influence how it works. That's why, it is important that all of this new technology is being developed by a diverse workforce. We need diverse ideas and representation to break down disparities between gender, race and class amongst other defining characteristics.

That is the only way we'll ensure that tech is created for everyone and that we will all benefit from these transformations.

Only 19% of our workforce in tech roles are female and furthermore, only 11.7% of computer science A Level students are women. And still, there is a digital skills gap we need to fill, despite the fact that digital jobs pay almost a third more than non-digital jobs it is proving a difficult gap to fill.

Whilst we often consider diversity in terms of race and gender, there are, of course, defining characteristics; age, sexuality, marital status, parental situation, mental health, and physical ability, to name some, against which we may unintentionally as well as intentional, discriminate.

At DCMS we want to support programmes working towards tackling the under-representation of all of these groups in our sectors.

It is encouraging to see the Tech Talent Charter has taken these other groups into account when mapping diversity work regionally – when we are addressing underrepresentation, everyone matters.

We've all seen the studies which prove that diverse workforces can improve a company's bottom line and the more diverse are more likely to outperform their competitors financially.

But we are not just interested in the business case for diversity – supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce is the right thing to do.

I am proud that my department has supported the Tech Talent Charter since its inception and continues to support its growth, particularly regionally growing outside London and the South East and integrating its diversity work with our Local Digital Skills Partnerships that we are now establishing across the country.

Three of these partnerships are already up and running in Lancashire, the South West and, most recently, in the West Midlands, with 3 more launching in the first half of this year.

So it is important that we all engage with our networks and our client-bases to encourage our connections to sign the Tech Talent Charter. It is only once more-and-more companies join us that we will start to see the cultural change that we all know needs to happen.

The fact that so many companies are keen to join is testament to the tireless work of Debbie, her team, her directors and the other activists and volunteers working behind the scenes of the Tech Talent Charter, I thank you all for your fantastic work.

All central government departments have now signed up to the Tech Talent Charter and I'm proud to say that DCMS was the first government department to sign. Again, the public, private, and voluntary sector collaboration on this issue is critical to achieve meaningful change.

Increasing sector diversity is critically important in the context of the changing nature of the tech sector. New innovations are increasingly blurring the lines between the tech sector and the rest of the economy. And the growing "Createch" sector, where technology enables new forms of creativity and creativity enables better development of technology.

The important impact of this is clear – addressing barriers to inclusion in the tech sector will also have increasing benefits across the wider economy. Equally, tech businesses can improve diversity by working more seamlessly

with other sectors.

In line with this cross-pollination of ideas and collaboration, my department is working more closely than ever with our counterparts across government to ensure we join-up on initiatives that challenge and change the status quo.

We are able to bring our knowledge of the sector to bear on how industry might play a part in attracting those young people from under-represented groups to a career in tech.

We also want to understand and improve the pipeline to the tech world via STEM choices in schools. Industry needs a boosted pipeline to feed into their growing numbers of tech roles. This, and, indeed the responsibility for diversity in tech as a whole, does not fall just on the shoulders of industry.

In government we are analysing how behavioural insights might help us understand the career choices for young women, and women entering the workforce, in making decisions that's leading them away from STEM subjects in school and from tech careers.

It is important that we address and understand these issues and address them so we can work together to make the tech environment a place that benefits everyone.

Congratulations to all of you on the great year that you've had, the first year of Tech Talent Charter and the impact you've already made, and I look forward to congratulating Tech Talent Charter on reaching 300 signatories, a milestone I know is just around the corner.

There is a lot more hard work to come in getting this right, but, when we do, it really will enhance freedom and the opportunity throughout our society.

Women account for half the population and only 20 per cent of the most influential force of our time, technology and innovation and that cannot go unchallenged.

And I wish you the very best with your future endeavours and I pledge my support for the continuity of the Tech Talent Charter until the job is done.

Thank you for listening.

[News story: UKAEA appoints new Chief Financial Officer](#)

Antonia Jenkinson trained at Accenture before starting her career in corporate finance at Apax Partners where she advised companies and management

teams on their equity & debt fundraisings, acquisitions and divestments. Antonia went 'in-house' in 2008 as Chief Financial Officer at the Wyevale retail group with £270m of sales across 130 sites and 5,000 employees. Antonia moved back into the technology sector when she joined the Satellite Applications Catapult and helped grow the business from a start-up to the established space innovation business it is today.

Over the last year, Antonia has been CFO of Roc Technologies Ltd, one of the UK's fastest growing IT transformation services providers, serving both the public and private sectors, particularly in defence and secure industries. She recently completed the acquisition of Esteem Systems Ltd, bringing the group to total revenues of £80m and 350 employees.

Alongside her executive roles, Antonia has been a Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Audit Committees of Garden Centre Property Development Trading plc, Ocean Safety Ltd and currently Vysion Limited. She won the Sunday Times NED Award for a private equity backed business in 2015. Antonia is a fellow of the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment.

Commenting on her appointment, Antonia said:

It is exciting to be joining the impressive UKAEA team at this important time in their mission to provide a source of sustainable energy. I am looking forward to finding ways to commercialise the leading-edge technologies involved, including robotics and new materials.