

Directors oversaw harmful waste stored in landfill

A former company boss from Hertfordshire has been fined and another awaits sentence after vast amounts of illegal waste were dumped at a quarry.

Nicholas Bramwell, then a junior director of The Anstey Quarry Company Ltd, and senior partner Liam Winters, ignored the Environment Agency's instructions to stop filling the landfill site near Royston with banned waste. More offences were committed at a second location in the county.

A judge at St Albans crown court fined 42-year-old Bramwell £1,450 after he admitted breaching 5 counts of environmental law at Anstey Quarry and a local shooting ground.

Winters, based in Warwickshire, pleaded guilty to the same charges, but will be sentenced next year after separate court proceedings brought by the Environment Agency.

The Anstey Quarry Company Ltd leased the quarry in Buntingford and had a permit from the Environment Agency to treat and dispose of up to 10,000 tonnes of clean soil waste.

However, the court heard the waste piled up was said to be 30 times that figure, and contained small fragments of contaminating plastic, wood, metal and packaging, as well as soil.

The company stood to save money in how much landfill tax it paid, based on the type and quantity of waste held at the rubbish dump.

Company bosses knew the waste would pose a risk to the environment

Investigators first visited the site in February 2015 and told Winters and Bramwell the huge quantities on site increased the risk of pollution when it decomposed. They were given a month to dispose of it legally in landfill.

A mound of the prohibited waste reached 20 metres into the sky, the height of 5 double-decker buses. Soil was used to cover some of the offending remains in a futile attempt to avoid detection.

Officers were back there a few weeks later, insisting the suspect waste was moved, but things only got worse.

By the July, the men had ignored an enforcement notice from the Environment Agency to stop filling the landfill illegally.

Clare Richards, an installations officer for the Environment Agency in Hertfordshire and who led the investigation, said:

It was clear every time we visited Anstey Quarry over nearly 18 months how there was no substantial change to the illegal way the site was being run.

Operations like this are damaging in many ways, including the potential or actual harm caused to the environment by storing waste materials outside the law; and the financial effect on businesses who follow the rules, pay their way and protect the environment.

Despite warnings from the Environment Agency to stop, the company continued bringing illegal waste onto the site. Winters and Bramwell knew the risks.

Officers' attention was then drawn to landscaping work undertaken by the men's company at Nuthampstead shooting ground, a few miles north-east of the quarry.

More plastic, wood and metal in sizable quantities was taken to the venue to build an embankment or bund that was 10 metres high when investigators inspected it.

Prosecution was inevitable after warnings to stop handling illegal waste were ignored

Before fining Bramwell £1,450, judge Michael Simon reminded the court "the importance of proper environmental management cannot be overstated."

The judge also ordered the director to pay £8,000 towards the Environment Agency's costs of investigating the offences and bringing them to court, and a victim surcharge of £120.

Bramwell, of Shepherds Close, Royston, pleaded guilty at St Albans crown court on 8 June to 5 counts of breaching Regulation 38 (2) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010, in relation to burying large quantities of potentially harmful waste.

Winters, 45, of High Street, Hillmorton, Rugby, admitted the same offences and will be sentenced following a separate trial in March next year, when he is due to face new charges of dumping waste illegally at a quarry near Stevenage.

The offences at Anstey Quarry and Nuthampstead shooting ground occurred between July 2015 and March 2016 and from August 2015 to March 2016 respectively.

There is no suggestion the owners of either site played any part in the criminal activity.

The Anstey Quarry Company Ltd entered liquidation in 2018.

[Van driver crashes into National Highways vehicle to evade road closure](#)

The footage, captured by a National Highways traffic officer vehicle near Keele in April 2020, shows an increasingly irate driver tailgating the patrol vehicle which was slowly bringing traffic to a standstill so that teams could fix a pothole further along the road.

The van driver can be seen gesticulating to the traffic officer vehicle to move out of the way so he can drive past.

With traffic slowly coming to a stop, the van driver attempts to swerve past the vehicle before colliding with it and speeding on ahead.

[Van driver crashes into National Highways patrol vehicle to evade road closure](#)

Following an appearance at North Staffordshire Justice Centre, the culprit has been disqualified from driving for a year, received a 12-month community order, a 19-day rehabilitation activity requirement and must complete 200 hours of unpaid work. Compensation of £833 and court costs of £425 must also be paid.

National Highways On-Road Service Delivery Manager Matthew Burns said:

Fortunately, in this incident, no-one was injured but it could have ended very differently. Our roads keep the country moving, keep families connected and businesses in business, so our roadworkers are vital to everyone's wellbeing, and their wellbeing is vital to us.

It is important that in doing their job, they can do so in an environment that is safe and that they are able to do so without some of the abusive behaviours they face every day.

We don't take the decision to close lanes lightly, but when we do, drivers must obey the closure and follow the signs set by the traffic officer vehicle.

Thankfully, the vast majority of drivers do comply with these signals but those who don't put themselves and others at risk.

National Highways is also raising awareness of the importance of obeying the Red X and the dangers posed by those who ignore the signals.

As well as the Red X signals, reduced speed limits are used to give drivers

more time to see the signs and move into an open lane.

In June 2019 there was a change in legislation which meant cameras can now automatically detect vehicles that ignore a Red X so the police can take enforcement action.

It has been an offence for more than two decades to drive in a lane closed by a Red X and can result in a fixed penalty of up to £100 and three points or, in some cases, more severe penalties or a court appearance.

In April 2021, National Highways committed to accelerating the upgrade of enforcement cameras regarding the automatic detection of Red X offences. This means by the end of September this year it will have upgraded all enforcement cameras to automatically detect vehicles passing illegally under a Red X or entering the lane beyond a Red X. This is 10 months earlier than previously planned.

The Red X signals are one of a raft of measures to help keep people safe if they break down on motorways. Find out more on the National Highways [Red X information page](#).

General enquiries

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

Media enquiries

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

UK promotes capacity building on the rights of transgender people in Guatemala

World news story

The British Embassy supported NGO Visibles in the training of transgender people and justice sector representatives on the rights of vulnerable minorities.



The project allowed to increase the capacities of transgender people to defend themselves against any possible violation of their rights or discriminatory action based on their gender identity. In addition, the project included awareness and training sessions for public servants.

The sessions and capacity building included 29 trans women, 14 trans men, 6 indigenous trans women. Materials and awareness sessions on the rights of transgender people were addressed to 25 public servants from the Public Criminal Defence Institute.

Moreover, legal experts worked on the construction of a comprehensive litigation strategy and a plan to achieve the right to gender identity in Guatemala. A strategy that includes aspects related to plans for investigation and evidence gathering, media and outreach, and financial management.

The project allowed the development of two tools for the empowerment of transgender people. First, a Popular Legal and Justice Education Programme to provide a general methodology and essential knowledge about human rights and the Guatemalan judicial system. Second, a training manual to help trans leaders and organisations perform better when interacting with local and international media.

During his visit to Visibles, the British Ambassador to Guatemala Nick Whittingham highlighted the importance of continuing to work with LGBT+ organizations to create conditions for greater freedoms so that all LGBT+ people, and especially trans people, can live freely and play an active role in society without fear of violence or discrimination.

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[Northern Powerhouse tech sector wins](#)

£45 million investment

Press release

American tech firm Credera invests £45 million into Manchester and Newcastle, creating over 300 jobs.



- Manchester to receive £20 million to create 150 graduate roles over three years.
- £25 million investment into Newcastle to create 160 high-skilled roles
- UK tech sector is now valued at US \$1 trillion (£764 billion) and is a top international destination for tech investment.

After a successful London Tech Week, the UK's thriving tech sector is celebrating more good news as American tech consultancy firm Credera has announced a £45 million investment in the Northern Powerhouse.

£20 million will be invested into Manchester to create 150 graduate roles over three years, for those looking to kickstart their career in tech.

Manchester has a proven track record for innovation and development and has a strong reputation of being a great place to work.

In 2020-2021 alone, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects created over 4,000 new jobs in the North West, building on our ambitions to level up the UK and create more highly skilled jobs across the country.

In the same time period, FDI projects created over 1,300 jobs in the North East, where Credera will invest £25 million into the heart of Newcastle to create 160 of an eventual 200 high-skilled positions for locals building their career in the UK's budding tech sector.

Newcastle's growing tech scene will open the door to new and exciting

opportunities thanks to the investment and will create jobs, boost the local economy and level up the UK.

Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

This boost of investment into our thriving northern tech sector is testament to the friendly and open business environment the UK offers, which creates high-value jobs, delivers clean growth and innovation, and builds our economy.

The Northern Powerhouse is a force to be reckoned with and I'm pleased to see this government's levelling up agenda having real, tangible benefits for the public up and down the country.

The UK is an extremely attractive investment destination the world over. Just last month, EU's recent Annual Attractiveness Survey saw the highest level of investment intent recorded to date into the UK; a testimony to the exceptional environment for innovation this government has created up and down this country.

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[Children design 'healthy rivers' posters for Colwick fish pass](#)

- Improvements for the passage of fish in the River Trent catchment, including salmon, and the creation of a healthy watercourse
- Construction of the Colwick (Holme Sluices) fish pass runs until 2023. It is the first scheme of the ambitious Trent Gateway Partnership which aims to remove all barriers to fish migration along the River Trent

Children from St John the Baptist Primary School in Colwick, Nottinghamshire have designed posters under the theme of 'healthy rivers' for inclusion in two banners that will be erected on the site of the Colwick (Holme Sluices) fish pass, which is currently under construction.

The children in year 4 and year 5 were asked to design a poster to depict what 'healthy rivers' means to them as one of the aims of the nearby Colwick (Holme Sluices) fish pass is to help to create a healthy watercourse. The winners of the poster competition were chosen by the Environment Agency Project Manager, and the appointed contractors, Jackson Civil Engineering.

Once complete in 2023, the fish pass in Nottingham's Colwick Country Park, will be the largest in the country. It will allow migratory fish to access

spawning grounds upstream, provide better wildlife habitats, and improve the biodiversity of the area.

Simon Ward, Fisheries Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

Our aim is to create a healthy watercourse that not only reduces flood risk and provides better wildlife habitats but also engages local communities about the natural and social history of the river.

The schoolchildren's poster competition run by our contractors is an excellent initiative which has succeeded in engaging the local community at an early age in our ambitions plans for the River Trent, starting with the construction of the Colwick (Holme Sluices) fish pass.

The banners are extremely eye-catching and once on display will highlight to the many visitors to Colwick Country Park our aim for the fish pass to help make the river a healthy watercourse.

There are a number of barriers to fish migration within the River Trent catchment, including Holme Sluices, which is the largest barrier to the natural migration of fish in the Midlands. By installing fish passage, it will become easier for salmon and other fish to reach their spawning and feeding grounds.

Kathryn Battelle, Public Liaison Officer at Jackson Civil Engineering, said:

It has been a pleasure working with St John the Baptist Primary School and seeing all the beautiful artwork the children created. It was extremely difficult to select winners, the standard of entry was so high. We would like to thank all the staff and children for their hard work and making us feel so welcome.

Construction of the fish pass will run until 2023. It is the first scheme of the ambitious Trent Gateway Partnership which aims to remove all barriers to fish migration along the River Trent.

Further details about the project are available on our dedicated Colwick (Holme Sluices) fish pass webpage:
<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/east-midlands/holme-sluices-fish-pass>.

Works to the main channel of the fish pass have now started, with the piling works beginning at the end of April. Since then, over 180 sheet piles have been driven into the ground, over a quarter of the estimated 620 needed. To date all piles have been successfully completed using movax vibration piling, which has helped to keep the noise disruption to a minimum. Piling works will continue for around a further 3 months.

The Colwick (Holme Sluices) fish pass will be the largest fish pass in the country. The cost of construction is £8.5 million. The direct environmental benefits of the fish pass will be £18.6 million. This includes 60 kilometres of river improvement from poor to good status for fish, as well as 60 kilometres of new spawning habitat immediately upstream of the barrier. It will also aid interconnectivity with numerous other fish passage schemes previously constructed upstream by the Environment Agency.

Holme Sluices is a major flood risk management structure that spans the full width of the River Trent – the third longest river in the country – to the south of Nottingham and helps to protect Nottingham from flooding. It was built in the 1950s as part of a large-scale flood defence scheme.

Clearance work started in January to create additional space for construction of the Colwick (Holme Sluices) fish pass to take place. For every tree removed, 5 trees within Colwick Park and the local area will be planted, once the fish pass is complete.

Colwick Country Park is owned and run by Nottingham City Council. The Environment Agency will work with the council to make Colwick Country Park in Nottingham the hub for Trent Gateway. Future plans could include a visitor centre telling the story of the Trent, its history, ecology and how it has shaped communities along its length for centuries. Discussions have taken place with the council and Heritage Lottery Fund

The Trent Gateway project is part of the Lower Trent and Erewash Catchment Partnership, hosted by the Trent Rivers Trust, who are leading on the development of projects to further enhance the river and deliver the ambition of Trent Gateway.

30 local partner organisations, including the Environment Agency, have been developing the ambitious project to restore the River Trent and reconnect communities and wildlife within it.