

# Press release: Furniture director shelved with a 6 year ban

Rebecca Dale-Essex, of London, knowingly removed the money over a 24 day period prior to the company going into liquidation. She was the sole director of Belle Maison Direct Limited, which sold children's furniture until it went into liquidation on 20 April 2016.

£42,000 of the amount removed came after she had informed the local council that her company had insufficient funds to make payments in respect of outstanding business rates. In total, she left creditors, including the council, out of pocket by £140,314.

She provided a disqualification undertaking to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy which prevents her from directly or indirectly becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company for six years.

Commenting on the disqualification, Martin Gitner, Deputy Chief Investigator of Insolvent Investigations, Midlands and West at the Insolvency Service, said:

Rebecca Dale-Essex deliberately removed significant amounts of cash from the company that was for her own benefit, leaving little, if anything, for the creditors of her company.

Company directors should note that the Insolvency Service will investigate and remove them from the business environment if they have acted to the detriment of the company creditors.

Rebecca Dale-Essex's date of birth is September 1971 and she resides in London; She was appointed as a director on 28 January 2009.

Belle Maison Direct Limited (Company number 06804657) was incorporated on 28 January 2009 and was placed into Creditors voluntary liquidation on 20 April 2016.

On 7 September 2017, the Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Dale-Essex for 6 years, from 28 September 2017.

The matters of unfitness, which she did not dispute in the Disqualification Undertaking, were that:

- Between 19 June 2015 and 13 July 2015, despite knowing the amounts due in respect of Business Rates, she caused BMD to enter into transactions

to the detriment of the company and its creditors totalling of £121,500, which worsened its insolvent position. These monies were funds held in BMD's bank accounts, which she transferred to herself.

- Further, £42,000 of these funds were transferred between 7 July 2015 and 13 July 2015, after she had emailed the Council advising BMD had insufficient funds to maintain repayments to a historic balance outstanding in respect of Business Rates on 7 July 2015.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies.

The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

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## **Press release: Foreign Office Minister visits Riyadh**

Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt visited Riyadh for bilateral meetings with the Governments of Saudi Arabia and Yemen (Sunday 15 October 2017).

In meetings during the visit, including with Foreign Minister Al Jubeir, Mr Burt highlighted common UK-Gulf security interests and discussed a range of issues. These included UK support for Vision 2030, the need to redouble efforts to end the war in Yemen, and the tensions with Qatar.

Mr Burt discussed the dire humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen with President Hadi and Foreign Minister Mekhlafi.

Speaking after his visit to Riyadh, Minister Burt said:

Saudi Arabia is one of our strongest regional allies and we continue to work closely together in a range of important areas. We support the delivery of Saudi Arabia's ambitious reform programme, Vision 2030, and the need to resolve the ongoing dispute with Qatar.

Central to all of my meetings was the ongoing conflict in Yemen. I made clear my concern that this conflict was now contributing to the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, and that the longer it continued the worse the situation would get. I also stressed the importance of keeping space open for the humanitarian community. Everyone agrees that urgent steps must be taken to make progress towards a political solution. The UK is playing a central role in these efforts and I call upon all parties to the conflict to show the flexibility required to keep the political process moving.

### **Further information**

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## **News story: Brown trout return to**

# Newcastle-under-Lyme

This follows successful work to improve the ecology and habitat of the brook.

The Lyme Brook runs through the heart of the town, and has suffered from poor water quality from as far back as the industrial revolution when new industry and development had an impact on the brook.

Since the 1980s water quality in the Lyme Brook, one of a number of brooks that form the headwaters of the iconic River Trent, has dramatically improved. In recent years, using the Environment Agency's Environment Improvement Fund, a partnership called the Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Partnership has been working to improve the habitat of the brook, mainly through Lyme Valley Parkway.

This volunteer-led programme that brings together Groundwork West Midlands, the Wild Trout Trust, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and the National Citizen Service has been making all sorts of improvements to encourage brown trout to return to their ancient spawning grounds. And the partnership is excited to say, brown trout have been found.

Stephen Cook from Groundwork West Midlands said:

It's great to see that the years of hard work by local people have paid off.

The fact trout are in the brook means that other species will be thriving too and the quality of the habitat must be improving which is so important. It was also great fun creating the new berms, shifting the gravel and teaching children about their waterways so this news is just the icing on the cake.

Councillor Ann Beech, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council cabinet member for operational services, added:

The Borough Council is proud to be involved in a partnership project which is already reaping the rewards of work to improve the water environment at the Lyme Brook.

It's great news that brown trout have returned – it's a clear indicator of the brook's renewed health as high quality water and a good habitat are vital requirements for them to spawn. Where they thrive, other wildlife will too.

Although the Environment Agency has found brown trout, the work doesn't stop. The partnership is continuing to work on further habitat improvements so the brook can sustain trout breeding populations.

It is currently looking to recruit members for a 'Friends of the Lyme Brook' group to safeguard this work and lead on future improvements. If you are interested, please call Groundwork on 01782 829914 or email [Stephen.cook@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:Stephen.cook@groundwork.org.uk).

Mel Westlake, Catchment Coordinator from Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment said:

This is fantastic news as brown trout are an indicator that the work being carried out by the Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment partners is having a real and lasting effect on the water quality and habitats for fish.

The brown trout is synonymous with Newcastle-under-Lyme for a number of reasons including appearing on [the borough's coat of arms](#) as well as featuring on the statue on the roundabout in the centre of the town.

We hope to be able to continue with more of this restoration work throughout the whole of the Trent Catchment ensuring that brown trout are once again a common site in our local rivers and brooks.

Hopefully in the near future, brown trout will again be a common sight in Newcastle.

The trout were found on an Environment Agency fish survey of the brook. The trout were measured and returned unharmed to the water.

Improvements led by Groundwork West Midlands were carried out through a series of volunteer-centred events using volunteers from the local community, Friends of Lyme Valley Parkway, Environment Agency and National Citizen Service.

These improvements have involved the creation of shallow sloping 'berms' along the bank side using brushwood from the pollarding and coppicing of suitable trees nearby. Opposite each 'berm', sections of the bank side have been removed with a mini-digger allowing the brook to 'wiggle'.

In addition, gravel spawning areas (riffles) have been created by placing gravel at locations in the brook, together with pinned woody debris, which has been fixed into the banks. Woody material becomes home to invertebrates and is a good hiding place for young fish.

Yellow flag iris and sedge have been planted along this section of the bank and in the muddy pockets within the berms. These plants will provide shelter and shade for developing fish and for adult fish. [Further details of the project](#) are online and there are films showing the making of the Lyme Brook wiggle.

[Lyme brook: road to recovery](#)

## **News story: Exploration Education and Outreach Grants Awarded**

A total of £122 000 has been awarded for these exciting new projects.

The following partners have been awarded funds for projects that support the objectives of the Agency's education and exploration programmes:

- Curved House Kids: City on Mars Discovery Diary
- North Hertfordshire College: Airbus Foundation Discovery Space – Aurora Programme
- Northumbria University: Family Space Explorers
- Spacefund: RoboKids Primary School Tour

The UK Space Agency is delighted to be able to support these projects, which meet our education objectives in encouraging children to take up STEM subjects, raise awareness of careers in space-related areas, and raise awareness of the UK's exploration programme.

We look forward to publishing more details on the individual projects as they get up and running over the next few months.

NUSTEM at Northumbria University who will be working on the 'Family Space Explorers' project said:

NUSTEM at Northumbria University are delighted to have been chosen as part of the outreach programme for the UK Space Agency. Space is a fascinating subject, and we're looking forward to bringing the story of space exploration to toddlers and their families. Through story books and creative activities, we'll be sharing a glimpse of the UK's role in space with North East families.

Joanne Fox from Spacefund, who will be creating the 'RoboKids Primary School Tour', said:

Sponsored by the UK Space Agency's Exploration grant scheme, RoboKids aims to take over 7,000 Primary School children on a fun and inspirational journey to Mars. Pupils will help programme our friendly robot "Nao" and embark on a robotic mission to the Red Planet. Curriculum mapped to Key Stages 1 & 2 for computing, science and design technology, RoboKids uses a successful recipe of fun, excitement, and technology to deliver a 40 minute interactive

show followed by a 40 minute ExoMars rover building and programming workshop. Available from October 2017.

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## **Press release: James Brokenshire statement on Storm Ophelia**

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Over the past 24 hours, I have been in regular contact with the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and representatives from multi-agency emergency response organisations, ahead of Storm Ophelia. There is close co-operation between the agencies and necessary contingency arrangements are in place with the relevant resources and networks tasked to ensure public services are protected as far as possible. The UK Government stands ready to provide a full range of support if requested.

The Met office has put an Amber warning in place from 12 Noon to 11pm with the likelihood of storm force high winds during this period. Everyone should take steps to protect themselves and their family from the impacts of this severe weather threat.

We should be particularly mindful of the elderly and vulnerable and ensure they remain safe throughout the coming hours. Regular updates will be provided via NI Direct and PSNI across various social media channels.

I am remaining in Northern Ireland today and will be keeping in close contact with the agencies who are planning both for the initial storm and its aftermath.

People should be vigilant and stay safe.