

# Press release: Trade Minister praises South Coast's marine and maritime sector

International Trade Minister, Mark Garnier, has praised the UK's South Coast recognising its world leading maritime and marine industries on a visit to Portsmouth.

The UK has the largest marine and maritime sector in Europe contributing £22 billion to the UK economy and sustaining around 500,000 jobs.

Beginning his visit at Clipper Ventures, the Minister announced that the GREAT Britain campaign will partner with [Clipper Round the World Yacht Race](#) for a third consecutive year.

This will see a Clipper Yacht 'GREAT' branded providing an unparalleled opportunity to promote the UK on a global stage, as the yacht sails around the world and competes in the global challenge.

The minister then visited ASV Global – a leading supplier of unmanned and autonomous marine systems – where he officially opened the company's new mission control centre. The new facility will be the hub for ASV Global's on-going development of their pioneering autonomous vessel control system.

International Trade Minister, Mark Garnier, said:

With world-renowned research institutions and leading innovative businesses the UK's south coast really is a leading marine and maritime hub.

Today I have seen the UK's maritime excellence in operation and how UK companies, such as Clipper and ASV Global, are playing their part in the helping the UK forge new trading relationships and become a truly Global Britain.

I want more companies to follow their example and seize the global opportunities and demand for UK goods and services.

Although in its third year, this is the first time a yacht will be branded 'Welcome to GREAT Britain'. Circumnavigating the globe along historic trade routes, the yacht will promote the UK as a place in which to visit, study and with which to do business.

While visiting Clipper Ventures the Minister met with Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, founder and Chairman of the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race. He met with a number of skippers that will take the yachts around the world and was given a tour of the 'GREAT' branded yacht.

Following this the minister visited ASV Global headquartered in Portchester. The company designs, builds and operates unmanned surface vessels and maritime robotics. With offices in the UK, US and Brazil the company exports to 10 countries and is a world leader in its field.

The minister was given a tour of the new facility which will be enable the control, operation and monitoring of their global fleet as well as operator training and simulation exercises. He also visited ASV Global's workshops and took the opportunity to discuss the company's exporting success and plans for the future growth.

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## [News story: Richard Turfitt appointed as Senior Traffic Commissioner](#)

Richard Turfitt has been appointed as the new Senior Traffic Commissioner by Transport Minister John Hayes.

Currently the Traffic Commissioner for the East of England, he will begin his new role on 1 June 2017, taking over from the current Senior Traffic Commissioner, Beverley Bell.

Traffic commissioners are [responsible for the regulation of bus, coach and goods vehicle operators, and registration of local bus services](#). Where appropriate, they can call operators to a public inquiry to examine concerns about vehicle and driver safety. They also deal with professional drivers at conduct hearings.

Richard has been Traffic Commissioner for the East of England since 2008, and worked as a government prosecutor for over a decade. He is a serving Justice of the Peace.

Transport Minister John Hayes said:

I'm delighted that Richard will be the new Senior Traffic Commissioner, following his tenure as Traffic Commissioner for the East of England. His knowledge and vast experience means he is well-placed to regulate services appropriately, and I wish him all the best in this important role.

Richard Turfitt, said:

I am excited to be asked to take up the role of Senior Traffic Commissioner for Great Britain.

There is no doubt that I have a hard act to follow and I want to thank Beverley for her work as Senior Traffic Commissioner over the last 5 years. We have a strong, dedicated team of traffic commissioners and I look forward to continuing that work with them, to support responsible, compliant operators and drivers and focus our scrutiny on those who pose serious risks to safety standards.

Current Senior Traffic Commissioner, Beverley Bell, said:

Richard has been an unstinting source of support for me in my time as Senior Traffic Commissioner and I feel comfortable leaving the role in his capable hands

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## **Press release: Credit union directors banned for flouting regulations**

Richard Charles Nichols, Phillip Raymond Neale and Gillian Birkett were directors of Enterprise The Business Credit Union Ltd T/A DotcomUnity Credit Union (EBCU) which went into administration on 14 May 2015 with estimated total creditor claims totalling £7,277,425.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has accepted a disqualification undertaking from Richard Charles Nichols for a period of 9 years, commencing on 24 April 2017. Mr Nichols had not disputed that he had failed to ensure that the rest of the EBCU Board either agreed, or were even aware of, changes in the contract with a company of which he was also a director. This caused additional fees of £392,629 to be charged by that company. Additionally, by failing to include the monies charged and paid out to his other company in EBCU's accounts, he failed to ensure that EBCU filed accurate accounting information to the Prudential Regulatory Authority (PRA), at a time when EBCU's capital position was below the required level and it was subject to the PRA's regulatory enquiries.

The Secretary of State has also accepted disqualification undertakings from Phillip Raymond Neale and Gillian Birkett for 6 years each. Both they and Mr Nichols did not dispute that they had failed to ensure that EBCU obeyed a voluntary imposition of requirements, agreed with the PRA on 24 December 2014, to cease the normal operation of the credit union until such time that it was able to meet regulatory requirements: In the following weeks EBCU further damaged the liquidity of the company, by continuing to issue loans in direct breach of the restriction.

The disqualification prevents Mr Nichols, Mr Neale and Mrs Birkett from

directly or indirectly becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company for the duration of their disqualification terms without the permission of the Court.

Commenting on the disqualification, David Brooks, Group Leader at The Insolvency Service, said:

On 19 December 2014, Mr Nichols told the Board of EBCU that the company had 'broken all rules in the book' and 'can't continue to flout the rules'. However, both he and Mr Neale and Mrs Birkett then allowed the company to do just that, leading directly to its failure.

In addition, Mr Nichols allowed a serious conflict of interests to occur regarding a second company, which carried out all almost-all administrative functions within the credit union. He then failed to prioritise his duties to EBCU regarding both the agreement of a fee structure with that company and the accurate reporting of the intercompany transactions in its accounts. This is serious misconduct and the high tariff of disqualification reflects the seriousness of such behaviour.

We are grateful for the assistance of the Prudential Regulation Authority, in particular, in this matter.

## **Notes to editors**

Enterprise The Business Credit Union Ltd (Company Reg No. IP00469C) T/A DotcomUnity Credit Union was incorporated on 11 June 1996 and latterly traded from 3rd Floor, Enterprise House, Oxford Road, Bournemouth, BH8 9EY.

It was previously named:

- Federation of Small Businesses Credit Union Ltd
- Lancashire and Cumbria FSB Credit Union Ltd

The Company went into administration on 14 May 2015 and then into liquidation on 17 August 2015, with an estimated deficiency as regards creditors of £1,466,161. Creditor claims up to October 2016 totaled £7,277,425.

Richard Charles Nichols' date of birth is in January 1959 and he resides in Hampshire.

The Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Mr Nichols for a period of 9 years on 3 April 2017. The disqualification is due to commence on 24 April 2017. The matters of unfitness, which Mr Nichols did not dispute in the Disqualification Undertaking, were that he failed from July 2014 to 2 March 2015 to ensure that the Board of Enterprise The Business

Credit Union Ltd either agreed, or were aware of, changes to a contract with a company of which he was director, leading to additional fees of £392,629 being charged. Specifically:

- the EBCU Board had given interim agreement to an unsigned contract with the associated company on 22 March 2013 to operate, create and carry out all functions for the administration of the Credit Union it operated. Fees for this service included 50% of all loan interest actually received
- however, the associated company produced to the liquidator an altered agreement, purportedly signed by EBCU's then Chairman, altering the loan interest to be 50% of the total interest due per loan and adding an investment fee for New Savings Accounts, including ISAs. The Chairman denies knowingly signing the altered contract and all directors deny agreeing to it. I stated that I knew the altered contract was being operated from July 2014
- as a consequence the associated company invoiced £65,212 in investment fees and £633,117 (before VAT) for loan fees when the original contract fees are estimated at £305,700

He failed to ensure that EBCU filed accurate accounting information to the Prudential Regulatory Authority, in that:

- the accounts to 31 March 2014, signed on 23 September 2014 and sent to the PRA on 7 October 2014, schedule an amount of £93,070 owed to EBCU by a company of which he was also director. This figure included £23,940 of accrued commission to be charged by that company for the period to 31 March 2014. However, by 10 July 2014, he knew or ought to have known that that company had invoiced £176,362 in respect of the services provided for the period to 31 March 2014 and net assets had been therefore overstated by £152,422 (before VAT)
- on 13 November 2014, EBCU he emailed a letter to the PRA stating that it acknowledged that it had a shortfall in its regulated capital reserves and attached profit and loss and cash flow accounts supporting its strategy for correcting the position by March 2015. The profit and loss account stated that the aforementioned associated company had not charged any fees in the previous 8 months and intended not to do so in the next 4 months. However, the company had already invoiced £310,508 by that date, and invoiced another £571,621 in the following 4 months. In addition, the cashflow forecast stated that there would be no payments to the associated company in respect of fees from October 2014 to September 2015. However, £38,262 had already been paid to it in October 2014, another £13,000 was paid on the day of the email, and £257,293 was paid thereafter

He failed to ensure, from 24 December 2014 to 2 March 2015, that EBCU met its regulatory requirement to not make new loans, or make further advances in relation to, or otherwise vary the terms of, any existing loans. In that period, EBCU was subject to a Voluntary Imposition Of Requirements agreed with the Prudential Regulatory Authority to cease the normal operation of the credit union until such time that it was able to meet regulatory requirements. EBCU made payments in the period of £518,115 in respect of 134

loans; a regulatory breach which then contributed to its insolvency.

Gillian Birkett's date of birth is in May 1956 and she resides in Bournemouth. The Secretary of State accepted a disqualification undertaking from Mrs Birkett for a period of 6 years on 9 March 2017. The disqualification commenced on 30 March 2017.

Phillip Raymond Neale's date of birth is January 1964 and he resides in Bournemouth. The Secretary of State also accepted a disqualification undertaking from Mr Neale on 7 March 2017 for a period of 6 years. The disqualification commenced on 28 March 2017.

The matters of unfitness, which Mr Neale and Mrs Birkett did not dispute in their Disqualification Undertakings, were that they failed to ensure, from 24 December 2014 to 8 May 2015, that Enterprise The Business Credit Union Ltd met its regulatory requirement to not make new loans, or make further advances in relation to, or otherwise vary the terms of, any existing loans. In that period, EBCU was subject to a voluntary imposition of requirements agreed with the Prudential Regulatory Authority to cease the normal operation of the credit union until such time that it was able to meet regulatory requirements. EBCU made payments in the period of £635,511.67 in respect of 175 loans; a regulatory breach which then contributed to its insolvency.

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 Prudential Regulation Authority ('PRA') was created as a part of the Bank of England by the Financial Services Act 2012 and is responsible for the prudential regulation and supervision of around 1,700 banks, building societies, credit unions, insurers and major investment firms. The PRA's objectives are set out in the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA). Further information about the work of the PRA is [available](#).

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

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# Statement to Parliament: Conduct guidance for 8 June 2017 general election: written ministerial statement

The Prime Minister will write to ministerial colleagues providing guidance on the conduct of government business during the general election period. The Cabinet Secretary has issued parallel guidance to civil servants on their conduct during this period. The guidance comes into force on 22 April 2017.

Copies of the documents have been placed in the libraries of both Houses and on the [Cabinet Office website at GOV.UK](#).

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## Press release: Arrests made following dawn raids

Today (Thursday 20 April 2017), the Environment Agency and police carried out 5 dawn raids following an in-depth investigation into illegal dumping of waste. There were 2 people arrested pending further enquiries. A third person will also be helping Environment Agency officers with their enquiries.

Enforcement action took place at 5 separate addresses in Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Hertfordshire this morning following an investigation into illegal dumping of 20,000 – 25,000 tonnes of waste at 17 sites across the Midlands, North West and North East.

More than 25 Environment Agency investigators, supported by over 20 police officers from Staffordshire, West Mercia, Warwickshire and Hertfordshire Police forces were in action at suspects' homes and business addresses seeking evidence as part of Operation Cesium.

The investigation will now continue with the evidence seized today. This investigation is expected to continue for many more months.

Paul Clarke, lead investigator in the Environment Agency's National Investigation Team, said:

The Environment Agency takes waste crime seriously and we will persistently pursue those suspected of illegally dumping waste.

In this case we have 17 landowners and communities blighted by significant amounts of dumped waste. We've already seen some of these sites catch fire, causing significant impact on communities, the environment and our emergency services partners who have to tackle them.

Illegal waste activity of the likes we're investigating here diverts £1 billion from legitimate businesses and the treasury, and at the Environment Agency we do everything we can to bring those responsible to account.

This investigation has been ongoing since last summer and enquiries will continue to examine the evidence to determine the full extent of the suspected offences.

The Environment Agency takes waste crime extremely seriously. This is a live and complex investigation, anyone with further information should contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.