

Press release: 8 anglers face combined fines of over £5,600 for fishing illegally in Staffordshire

On 20 February 2017, North Staffordshire Justice Centre Magistrates' Court issued a total of £5,680 in fines to 8 anglers caught fishing illegally last summer.

All 8 anglers were caught fishing without a rod licence by Environment Agency officers out on regular patrols, and with an annual rod licence costing £27, these anglers have really been left out of pocket.

Matthew Bamford of Werrington Road in Stoke on Trent, Ricky Fisher of Millfield Road in Walsall, Mark Francis of Sefton Park Road in Liverpool, Robbie Johnson of High Street in Laurencekirk, Carl Johnson of Cowlshaw Way in Rugeley, Anthony Leese of Dawlish Drive in Stoke on Trent, Blain Pickering of Community Drive in Stoke on Trent, and Richie Wilkes of Nash Peake Street in Stoke on Trent, were all found guilty under Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Magistrates heard that on 3 separate days last June and July, Environment Agency enforcement officers found these anglers fishing without a rod licence at pools in Stoke on Trent, Rugeley, Eccleshall and Penkridge.

Andrew Eardley from the Environment Agency said:

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence. With an annual licence costing £27 it seems ridiculous that anglers risk a significant fine like these we've seen here.

The minority of anglers that fail to buy a rod licence are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport. Rod licence cheats risk a criminal conviction, a significant fine and could lose their fishing equipment.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency Rod Licence if you are aged 12 or over and fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

[Press release: Still time to have your say on plans to widen A12 in Essex](#)

Highways England has held seven consultation events over the last fortnight, with staff available to speak to over 1,853 members of the public who attended.

The events showcased Highways England's plans to widen the A12 between junction 19 (Boreham interchange) and junction 25 (Marks Tey interchange), which will reduce congestion, improve safety and boost the economy. It is part of the Government's record £15 billion investment in England's motorways and major A roads.

Highways England programme leader Richard Hofton said:

I want to thank everyone who has taken part in the consultation so far. We've heard some really interesting views and opinions from people and have encouraged everyone to contribute to our consultation. It is vital that we get that local feedback, as well as from wider stakeholders to help us reach a final decision.

There is still time for you to take part, so I urge anyone who is affected by and interested in our improvement work on the A12 to take part and share your views with us. There are important choices to be made and we are keen to get as many views as we can, so be sure to join in with the consultation so you can help us to make these decisions.

Some 89 per cent of respondents were positive about the events, which were held alongside Essex County Council's consultation into plans for widening the A120 between Braintree and Colchester. The figure rose to 94 per cent satisfaction at Boreham, with residents and other interested parties sharing their views and learning more about both schemes at the events.

Despite the last of these events taking place last Wednesday (15 February) in Chelmsford, the public can still have their say by contributing to the consultation, which will close on Friday 3 March.

All responses to the consultation will help Highways England take the best

possible improvements forward. The four options shortlisted in the consultation are:

- option 1 – widening the existing A12 corridor (the online option)
- option 2 – widening the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19 to 22 and 23 to 24 and two new bypasses between junctions 22 and 23 (Rivenhall) and between junctions 24 and 25 (Marks Tey)
- option 3 – a variation of option 2 with only one new bypass between junctions 22 and 23 (Rivenhall)
- option 4 – a variation of option 2 with only one new bypass between junctions 24 and 25 (Marks Tey)

For more information about our proposals and to share your views, [visit the scheme website](#).

Alternatively, you can call the Highways England information line on 0300 123 5000 for further information or write to Freepost A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening

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.

[Press release: Minister for the Middle East visits region for bilateral and regional talks](#)

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Part of:

Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, Tobias Ellwood, will visit the United Arab Emirates today and Saudi Arabia tomorrow.

During his visit to Abu Dhabi, Mr Ellwood will attend the twice-yearly UAE – UK Joint Working Group Ministerial Taskforce with his counterpart His

Excellency Dr Anwar Gargash, to discuss cooperation between the UK and UAE in a number of areas including trade, regional issues and UK participation in DubaiExpo2020.

In Saudi Arabia, Mr Ellwood will meet His Excellency Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, among other senior Government representatives, to discuss finding a political solution to the conflict in Yemen, and improving access for humanitarian relief in the country.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Mr Ellwood said:

The UK's partnership with the Gulf is an important one: as the Prime Minister said in her address to the Gulf Cooperation Council, Gulf security is our security, and we will be discussing areas where we can further cooperation. I will also be discussing the conflict in Yemen and making clear that an inclusive political solution is the only way to end the suffering of the Yemeni people. Finding a political way forward will not be straightforward and tough discussions need to be had, but the UK will do everything it can to support that process.

Further information

[Important archive of the Somerset family, Barons Raglan accepted for the nation](#)

The family archive has been accepted for the nation by the Welsh Ministers in lieu of inheritance tax.

The archive includes the military and personal correspondence of FitzRoy Somerset, 1st Baron Raglan (1788 -1855) who died near Sevastopol in the Crimea. FitzRoy Somerset was one of the most distinguished British military commanders of the 19th Century. He served for over four decades as the aide-de-camp and military secretary to the 1st Duke of Wellington.

The archive provides very significant detail as to Somerset's relationship with Wellington immediately after Waterloo. The collection also contains extensive family correspondence and papers illustrating the influence and interests of a prominent family during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Welcoming the news, Ken Skates said:

“I am delighted that this collection will be permanently housed at Gwent Archives. It is a superb addition to their collections, providing a wonderfully rich resource for the study of an enormously significant period in British military history. It also provide fascinating insights into the life of the Somerset family over several generations.”

Tony Hopkins, County Archivist at Gwent Archives said:

“This is an outstanding collection and we are privileged to be entrusted with it. The Raglan archive is without doubt a collection of national and international importance and a huge boost to the cultural resources of the area. The people of Gwent can take great pride in it.”

The Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) scheme enables taxpayers to transfer works of art and important heritage items, such as the Raglan Archive, into public ownership in full or part payment of their inheritance tax. In Wales, these items must be approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, who is advised by the Acceptance in Lieu UK Panel.

The panel consists of independent experts, who seek specialist advice on the object offered. The Panel operates on behalf of the Welsh Government in Wales and often co-ordinates with the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division.

The AIL Panel Chairman, Edward Harley said:

“The Acceptance in Lieu scheme continues to secure exceptional art and cultural objects for the nation. I’m delighted that this fascinating archive, which documents the military careers and achievements of the first Lord Raglan and the first Duke of Wellington in connection with the Peninsular War, the Napoleonic Wars and the Crimean War, will be permanently retained at Gwent Archives.”

[Xi stresses precision in battle against poverty](#)

President Xi Jinping underscored the importance of precision in the battle against poverty, saying that poverty relief targets should be accomplished as scheduled.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks Tuesday during the 39th study session held by the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

It is the least requirement of building an all-round moderately prosperous society and "our solemn promise" to ensure that the rural poor shake off poverty as planned, and that all poverty-stricken counties be delisted and poor areas lifted out of poverty as a whole, Xi said.

Xi said responsibilities, capital investment, grass-roots vitality and the implementation of tasks must be improved for the poverty relief targets to be met.

China has made remarkable progress in this respect. During the 2013-2016 period, 55.64 million rural people were lifted out of poverty, according to Xi.

"In the coming years, China's poverty relief work faces a daunting task," said Xi, since "poverty alleviation is getting more and more difficult as it nears the end."

Poverty relief is high on China's 2016-2020 agenda, and the government has vowed to lift everybody out of poverty by 2020.

To this end, some people living in impoverished regions will be relocated. Xi stressed that this must be done on a voluntary basis and the cost must be kept within a reasonable level.

Health and education policies must be implemented to fight poverty, with priority given to helping poor families that suffer major or chronic diseases, or have difficulties in providing schooling for their children, Xi said.

He called for greater policy support to poverty relief, including fiscal, land, financial, education and health policies.

China will apply the highest assessment standards to evaluate the success of poverty relief, Xi added.