

Three men fined for Alston illegal waste sites

Father and son Keith and Paul Liverick pleaded guilty when they appeared at Carlisle Magistrates' Court on Wednesday 30 March.

Keith, 74, of Station Road, Alston, pleaded guilty to two charges of operating illegal waste sites, while Paul, 51, of the same address, pleaded guilty to one charge of the same offence, and two charges of illegally depositing waste.

Their associate Frank Shepherd, 77, of Leadgate, Alston, had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to a charge of operating an illegal waste site, and a second charge of burning waste on land.

Waste stored at the Clarghyll Colliery site

The court heard that each of the four sites; Clarghyll Colliery, land at the rear of Moredun Garage, Old Foundry Yard, and Rotherthorpe Old Mine, had varying environmental permits and permit exemptions in place to allow for restricted waste deposits and activities.

None of the sites had an environmental permit to allow for the importing, depositing, treatment or sorting of mixed waste. Environmental permits impose conditions on waste operators to govern the type of waste and the type of activity permitted on a given site.

These conditions are designed to reduce the risk of pollution and harm to the environment arising out of the site activities. Environmental permits are designed to protect people and the environment and failure to comply is a serious offence that can damage the environment, undermine legitimate businesses, put jobs and risk and cause misery for local communities.

Between August and November 2018, Environment Agency officers made visits to each of the sites, where they saw illegal deposits of large amounts of mixed waste, which included scrap vehicles, skips of household waste, plastics, timber and construction waste.

Waste stored at the Clarghyll Colliery site

Over the ensuing two years, officers tried to work with the operators to bring the sites into compliance, but advice and notices were largely ignored.

In mitigation, Shepherd was remorseful, while both Paul and Keith Liverick said it was caused by poor management of the sites.

Andrew Turner, Area Environment Manager for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

All three showed a blatant disregard for the environment over a great length of time and seemed to think the rules did not apply to them.

They deliberately and persistently allowed the deposit and storage of waste on these sites knowing the activity was illegal and presented a risk of harm to the environment. They did this in the face of officers working hard to encourage compliance.

We work hard to prevent and disrupt waste crime and we're pleased all three have admitted wrong-doing.

Shepherd was fined £666 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £67 and costs of £400; Keith Liverick was fined £1,980 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £190 and costs of £1,350, while Paul Liverick was fined £2,566, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £190 and costs of £2,200.

Environmental incidents can be reported to the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 807060.

Waste crime can also be reported anonymously via Crimestoppers online or on 0800 555111.