

East Midlands builder put environment at risk

A Northamptonshire building contractor and its managing director have been convicted of storing waste illegally.

Martyn Parratt, of Newnham, and the business he runs were twice investigated by the Environment Agency after receiving a report he was operating on land next to a busy road near Daventry.

The Environment Agency responded to a complaint in June 2017 about waste dumped off the A361 at Badby.

Investigators sent to the site were greeted by insulation waste, mixed wood and plasterboard. Parratt was told to apply for a permit or stop processing the material.

Those warnings appeared to work, as by August, Parratt had all-but-cleared the land. Neither Parratt nor the business had permission from the Environment Agency to carry out the work within strict limits to protect the area from pollution.

However, when crime officers went back in May 2019, they found a myriad of discarded items not meant to be there without a permit.

Builders' waste, more wood and plastic and a skip full of plasterboard were all on site. None of it there legitimately. Investigators also came across two ovens and a couple of refrigerators – all left illegally.

The 60-year-old Parratt blamed fly-tippers for the fridges and the ovens. He said his nephew, James, also a builder, was responsible for some of the new waste. Parratt senior only admitted his own company left some of the wood and plastic by the roadside.

Despite those investigating the case finding the remnants of a fire beneath the rubbish, Martyn Parratt denied lighting any. He said the pair didn't get on, so hadn't spoken to his nephew about clearing the site.

Paul Salter, the Environment Agency waste crime officer investigating Parratt and his company, said:

Operations like Parratt's are damaging in many ways. The potential or actual harm caused to the environment by storing outside of the law; the unsightliness of piles and piles of waste for communities; 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, Parratt and his company continued bringing waste onto the site, and ultimately

paid the price with fines and costs approaching £9,000.

My message to operators like Parratt is get a permit, get legal and stay legal.

It was only after more pressure from the Environment Agency the land was again clear. This was in July 2019, more than two years after the first investigation into illegal activity at the site.

Wellingborough magistrates' court fined MJ Parratt and Son Ltd, based in Queensbridge, Northampton, £3,500, and Martyn Parratt, of The Green, Newnham, £1,467. The Environment Agency's costs were split between them, with the company and Parratt paying £1,765.24 each.

The hearing on 18 January also awarded victim surcharges of £170 and £146 against MJ Parratt and Son Ltd and the managing director respectively.

MJ Parratt and Son Ltd pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to dumping and storing waste illegally, breaching regulation 13, contrary to regulations 12 and 38 (1) (a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

As a company director, Parratt admitted allowing the business to operate illegally, in breach of the same regulations.

The Environment Agency investigated Martyn Parratt's claims his nephew dumped some of the waste beside the A361. James Parratt, 32, of The Paddock, Welton, Northamptonshire, was given a formal caution for breaching environmental law.

[New report sets out best practice for using e-signatures](#)

News story

Ministry of Justice welcomes publication of report by expert group on e-signatures.



The expert Industry Working Group on Electronic Execution of Documents has today (1 February 2022) published their interim report, which: sets out their analysis of the current situation in England and Wales; identifies simple best practice guidance based on existing technology, including for vulnerable individuals; and makes recommendations for future analysis and reform. The [report](#) can be found on GOV.UK. You can watch Lord Justice Birss, Mr Justice Fraser and Professor Sarah Green discussing the report and its findings below:

[Electronic Execution of Documents – Industry Working Group interim report](#)

The Industry Working Group was convened following a recommendation by the Law Commission, which the Lord Chancellor welcomed and implemented. More details, including the Group's membership and full Terms of Reference, can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

The Ministry of Justice welcomes the interim report and is grateful for the Group's work, which will assist in informing the future use and uptake of e-signatures by government and others. The Group's work is also central to ensuring that the UK remains a centre for legal excellence and that the English and Welsh jurisdiction continues to lead the way in enabling the adoption emerging technologies and in supporting and facilitating digital trade and commerce.

Lord David Wolfson, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, said:

I would like to thank the Industry Working Group for this important report on electronic signatures. We in Government are excited about the potential benefits of new, digital ways of working and I welcome in particular the best practice guidance put forward by the group, which will help increase confidence in and encourage uptake of electronic signatures. I am committed to ensuring the UK jurisdiction remains at the forefront of adapting to digital innovation, so that we can best capture the opportunities this offers for our businesses and citizens.

In the next phase of its work, the Group will focus on its remaining Terms of Reference, namely to consider the challenges arising from the use of electronic signatures in cross-border transactions and how to address them,

and how best to use electronic signatures so as to optimise their benefits when set against the risk of fraud.

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[UK Government and Pride Cup together on LGBT+ inclusion in sport](#)

Pride Cup and the UK Government bring you the Pride Cup Community Cricket Series – inspired by the Ashes and celebrating LGBTI+ inclusion in sport with three community Pride Cups kicking off in Geelong on 20 February 2022 before heading to Canberra and Newcastle in March.

These Pride Cups will be a celebration of the diverse identities that help make our international cricket teams so unique and impactful throughout the LGBTI+ community.

We are also celebrating the historic rivalry between the UK and Australia with an exhibition match at each of the games in this series. The Geelong curtain raiser match will include MP's Andy Meddick and Chris Couzens, Pride Cup Chair Holly Ransom, Victorian Commissioner for LGBTI+ communities Todd Fernando and LGBTI+ community leaders from across Victoria.

The Geelong leg of the Community Cricket Series will take place at South Barwon Reserve with South Barwon Cricket Club taking on Collendina Cricket Club across 6 teams on 3 grounds.

Pride Cup CEO James Lolicato said:

Pride Cup is extremely proud to be partnering with the UK Government to help change the landscape of LGBTI+ inclusion in sport and make cricket everyone's game.

The UK Government is helping achieve safer sporting environments around the globe. We know that sport is a human right and everybody deserves a safe and equitable connection to a sporting club that accepts them for who they are.

Evaluation has shown how communities can change by hosting a Pride Cup, and the Barwon Cricket Association is dedicated to seeing those positive changes ripple across their league.

Through running education, delivering inclusive activations and showcasing diversity, we can ensure LGBTI+ people are included and welcomed in our community sport clubs, which for a long time hasn't

been the case.

British High Commissioner to Australia, Vicki Treadell said:

We're delighted to be supporting Pride Cup on the Community Cricket Series. The UK and Australia share a love of sport – we're great mates on and off the field – but it's fair to say we see some of our greatest rivalry in cricket! The recent Ashes tournament was a great example of this – I won't talk about the men's result – but proudly watched on as the Women chased down the final runs needed to draw in what was an exceptional match.

Watching and playing sport can feel like a break from reality – but these sports and these teams must also be a reflection of reality and inclusive and open to all players – regardless of their sexuality or gender identity.

The UK is committed to championing LGBT+ rights globally. We're co-chairs of the Equal Rights Coalition and this year we are hosting 'Safe to Be Me: A Global Equality Conference". This is the UK Government's first global LGBT+ conference coinciding with the first official London Pride March's 50th anniversary.

I'm excited to see the themes of the Conference come to light in this tournament – tackling discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for all.

Geelong game organiser Jennifer Walsh said:

This Pride Cup event is incredibly important because it not only highlights LGBTI+ inclusion in sport, but also increasing LGBTI+ inclusion in regional Victoria. My teammates and our opposition players are so excited about taking part in such a positive, fun, and inclusive day of sport where everyone belongs and everyone is celebrated.

Pride Cup works with all levels of sport to build a world where LGBTI+ people feel included, accepted and proud to be who they are, and empowers clubs to become leaders for inclusivity and diversity in their communities.

[Research](#) shows that 80 per cent of Australians have experienced or witnessed homophobia in sport; 75 per cent believe openly gay spectators would not be safe at a sporting event; and 87 per cent of young gay men and 75 per cent of young gay women hide their sexuality while playing sport.

Event Details

Date: 20 February 2022

Time: 10:00am – Morning tea with speakers & entertainment

11:45am – Welcome to Country

12:00pm – Curtain Raiser Match – Australia v England

12:30pm – Ongoing entertainment, warm-up

1:00pm – Collendina v. South Barwon match

4:00pm – Presentation of Pride Cup and medals

Location: South Barwon Reserve, Belmont VIC 3216

Further Information

A photoshoot will be taking place on 2 February at South Barwon Reserve from 12.30pm to 2pm (AEDT) – we will have James Lolicato, CEO of Pride Cup, a representative from the UK Government, as well as two members of the Geelong Cricket Community sharing their lived experience of LGBTI+ inclusion to select media representatives. Please RSVP by C.O.B today for your chance to attend.

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[£50 million of Government investment announced for creative businesses across the UK](#)

- £18 million funding will support creative businesses outside of London as they create new economic opportunities in their areas
- £21 million to go into three-year UK Global Screen Fund to promote UK films internationally
- £8 million will help entrepreneurial, start-up video game developers from across the UK create new games

Creative industries businesses will benefit from a £50 million Government

boost to help drive economic growth and level up the country, Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries announced today.

The investment includes £21 million to help build on the international success of the UK film industry through a three-year UK Global Screen Fund. This follows a successful one-year pilot of the DCMS scheme that has boosted the global reach of UK independent productions, including *The Miracle Club* (starring Maggie Smith) and *Good Luck to You, Leo Grande* (starring Emma Thompson), administered by the British Film Institute (BFI).

£8 million will help start-up gaming businesses across the country grow their operations, through the UK Games Fund. Based in Dundee, the UK Games Fund will make sure video games firms' talented workforces have the skills they need to thrive in the sector. This includes increased support for early stage businesses and entrepreneurial young developers, nurturing talent and fostering new games creation across the UK.

The Creative Scale Up Programme, which provides finance and business support to firms in the creative industries, will also be expanded with more than £18 million of new funding. This investment will support innovative creative businesses outside of London as part of the government's levelling up plans.

The creative industries have made a substantial and sustained contribution to economic growth and job creation across the UK growing, on average, nearly twice the rate of the wider economy. Today's announcement is recognition of their great work, and will form part of the Government's Creative Industries Sector Vision, which will be published in the summer and will set out the approach for supporting this high-growth sector into the future.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

The creative industries in the UK are truly world class and I am committed to doing everything I can to support their innovative work as they continue to thrive.

£50 million of Government investment will provide businesses across the country with the tools they need to expand their work and provide even more jobs as we look to level up opportunities across the country.

British Film Institute CEO Ben Roberts said:

It's great news that the UK Global Screen Fund is set to deliver a further three years of vital support to our world class independent screen industries. In its pilot the year, the fund has stimulated new international partnerships, boosting co-production, distribution and development opportunities to drive growth and export.

This continued investment recognises the power and potential of UK

screen content and ensures that we can build on its global impact, delivering for the UK economy and reaching new audiences around the world.

Caroline Norbury MBE, chief executive of Creative UK, said:

Creative Coalition Festival is a key moment for UK creativity, bringing together diverse voices from across industry and politics to drive the change and fresh thinking needed to unleash the potential of our world-leading Creative Industries. I'm delighted that the Secretary of State has chosen today's forum for this announcement, an intervention which rightly recognises the power of our sector and the vital importance of investing in creativity to drive growth and innovation across all parts of the UK.

Dr Jo Twist OBE, CEO of Ukie, said:

Ukie has consistently called for the invaluable UK Games Fund to be extended and this is a welcome vote of confidence in our thriving games industry. The UK sector is a global success story that is both a critical exporter and a source of extensive inward investment. This support will help the next generation of businesses access the finance they need to build the games to do that, while creating high value jobs across the whole country.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

UK Global Screen Fund:

- Launched as a pilot in April 2021, the UK Global Screen Fund will provide targeted investment of £21 million into UK screen companies over the next three years
- The DCMS fund, administered by the British Film Institute, is designed to boost the international reach and revenues of UK independent screen content
- In its pilot year, the UK Global Screen Fund invested £7 million in business development, co-production and the distribution and promotion of UK independent screen content
- The multi-year UK Global Screen Fund will launch later this year

UK Games Fund:

- Established in 2015 and headquartered in Dundee, the UK Games Fund supports new games businesses, intellectual property and talent across the UK. It does so through:
- Providing grants of up to £25k to high-growth potential SMEs and

microbusinesses

- The Tranzfuser programme which mentors teams of talented, entrepreneurial university graduates in regional hubs across the UK
- Providing mentorship and support to SMEs
- To date, the UKGF has funded over 170 projects, valuing over £5.7m, and helped to bring together a community of over 6,000 UK games developers

Creative Scale Up Programme:

- The Creative Scale Up Programme will build on the success of the Creative Scale Up pilot. The pilot was a two year, DCMS-funded £4 million investment programme, which supported over 200 creative businesses across three English Combined Authority regions (West of England, West Midlands and Greater Manchester).
- The programme was announced in December 2018 as part of the Creative Industries Sector Deal. It provided intensive business support to growth-stage creative businesses, to support them to grow and to access finance
- It is also designed to improve the capacity of relevant investor communities by identifying and engaging local angel investors and matching them to a pipeline of high-growth businesses

Creative Industries Sector Vision:

- The creative industries were identified as one of four key sectors in the Plan for Growth to encourage recovery following the pandemic and have been invited to develop a Sector Vision
- The Sector Vision, due to be published in summer 2022, will set out a long-term strategy focused on promoting growth within a sector and delivering on the government's levelling up, Global Britain and net zero objectives
- This strategy will be developed as a partnership between government and industry. The Creative Industries Council will be our primary partner to deliver the Sector Vision

Package to transform education and opportunities for most disadvantaged

Education will be at the heart of major new reforms set to give every child and adult the skills they need to fulfil their potential, no matter where they live.

Through the government's Levelling Up white paper, areas such as County Durham, Cornwall and Hartlepool are set to benefit from improved schools, part of a package of measures that will also boost take-up of high-quality training across England and support stable families that help children to

succeed.

The plans being published tomorrow (Wednesday 2 February) will identify 55 cold spots of the country where school outcomes are the weakest, to target investment, support and action that help children from all backgrounds and areas to succeed at the very highest levels. These include Rochdale, the Isle of Wight, Walsall, parts of Yorkshire and Sunderland.

As 95% of these areas are outside London and the South East, it is the struggling schools of the North, Midlands, East of England and South West that will be receiving much more support over the next decade.

In these new '[Education Investment Areas](#)', the Department for Education will offer retention payments to help schools keep the best teachers in the highest priority subjects. These areas will be prioritised as the location for new specialist sixth-form free schools where there is limited provision to ensure talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to the highest standard of education this country offers.

Schools in these areas that have been judged less than Good in successive Ofsted inspections could be moved into strong multi-academy trusts, to attract more support and the best teachers. This will be subject to a consultation in the spring.

The paper will set a new national mission to ensure that 90% of children leaving primary school in England are reaching the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths by 2030. In 2019, just 65% of pupils met all 3 standards, with the proportion substantially varying across the country.

Schools in the Education Investment Areas will also be given support to address wider issues. For instance, schools struggling with attendance will be encouraged to join a new pilot programme to tackle the issue.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

The most valuable resource on the planet is the human resource. Investing in people to get on in life and receive the best possible education is core to the mission of this government, and we are determined to help people gain the knowledge and skills needed to unleash their potential.

This white paper sets out our blueprint for putting skills, schools and families at the heart of levelling up. It focuses on putting great schools in every part of the country, training that sets you up for success in a high-skilled, well-paid career and ensuring no one misses out on opportunities simply because of where they live or their family background.

Raising our expectations and aspirations for children, as well as creating a high-skilled workforce, will end the brain drain that sees too many people leaving communities in order to succeed. These plans will help create a level playing field and boost the economy,

both locally and nationally.

In direct response to the activities young people said they want outside of school, the government has announced a National Youth Guarantee. Backed by £560 million worth of investment, plans set to be outlined in the Levelling Up white paper will mean that every young person in England will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and volunteering opportunities by 2025.

An extra £200 million is also being invested in the government's Supporting Families programme in England, helping create strong, stable families where children thrive. This brings total investment to £695 million to improve the lives of up to 300,000 vulnerable families. The programme will help local areas tackle the challenges families face that can hold children back from attending and achieving at school or put them at risk of neglect or harm.

Minister for Levelling up Communities and Equalities Kemi Badenoch said:

Our Supporting Families programme is providing the most vulnerable families with the help they need to build a better future.

This help means more children returning to the classroom, more parents out of work starting a job and more support for the victims of domestic abuse.

Alongside these reforms will be a new skills mission set by the government to help improve people's lives and boost the economy. This will target 200,000 more people in England to help them complete high-quality training each year by 2030, including 80,000 more completing courses in areas of England with the lowest skills levels.

Skills are a crucial driver of economic disparities between people and places, so the mission will help level up opportunities in left behind areas. Boosting skills improves human capital which can drive up earnings potential and life chances for people who have already left school.

To better understand the skills gaps, the Education Secretary is establishing a new Future Skills Unit which will look at the data and evidence of where skills gaps exist and in what industries.

Thousands more adults will soon be able access free, flexible training and get the skills needs to secure careers in sectors including green, digital and construction as part of up to an additional £550 million boost to expand the popular [Skills Bootcamps](#) across the country. Prisoners can also now take advantage of Skills Bootcamps as part of a new trial to support them to find work on their release, levelling up opportunities for more people.

The plans published tomorrow will also set out the government's commitment to making Institutes of Technology the pre-eminent organisation for technical STEM education in England, through which successful ones may apply for a

Royal Charter. This will help secure their long-term position as anchor institutions in their regions, placing them on a par with the UK's world-leading historic universities.

The government will also aim to double the capacity of the [Supported Internship programme](#) to provide thousands more young people who have additional needs with the skills to secure and sustain paid employment. Backed by £18 million over 3 years, the programme will additionally drive up the standards and quality of internship delivery across the country for students who have an education, health and care plan.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), their families and caregivers will be better supported with respite care and internship opportunities. Councils will be funded £30 million for the next 3 years to set up more than 10,000 additional respite placements, helping to provide positive opportunities for disabled children and young people and to give family carers a break so they can look after vulnerable children better in the long-term.

All local authorities which contain 1 of 12 of the government's [Opportunity Areas](#) will be designated as Education Investment Areas, and so will benefit from these interventions. Opportunity Areas have been and continue to be effective, with their funding extended up to the end of August 2022.

The new funding for respite and Supported Internships come alongside more than £45 million of continued targeted support for families and parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These programmes will:

- target support to improve monitoring, support and intervention for local authorities and local health and care partners' delivery of statutory SEND services, with a focus on underperforming areas and sharing best practice
- improve participation and access for parents and young people for high quality advice and support; and
- directly support schools and colleges to effectively work with pupils with SEND, for example through training on specific needs like autism.

The 55 areas selected as Education Investment Areas to raise school standards include Bedford, Blackpool, Bolton, Bradford, Bury, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Cornwall, County Durham, Coventry, Darlington, Derby, Derbyshire, Doncaster, Dorset, Dudley, East Sussex, Halton, Hartlepool, Isle of Wight, Kirklees, Knowsley, Leeds, Lincolnshire, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Norfolk, North Northamptonshire, North Somerset, North Yorkshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Oldham, Peterborough, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Rochdale, Rotherham, Salford, Sandwell, Sefton, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, South Tyneside, St. Helens, Stoke-on-Trent, Suffolk, Sunderland, Swindon, Tameside, Wakefield, Walsall and Wirral.