

Lending Operator Licences

In a recent public inquiry into an application for an operating licence, the Traffic Commissioner for the West Midlands found a catalogue of offences by several individuals and companies, many of them related to the lending of operator licences.

After a detailed hearing, the Traffic Commissioner, Mr Nick Denton, refused an application from Centro Waste Ltd after hearing evidence of how they had been operating vehicles without a licence for some time.

This company had been operating, on the face of it, as a broker, taking bookings for skips and assigning them to sub-contractors, among them Eric Gowland trading as Dial A skip.

Centro Waste claimed to have had had an arrangement with Eric Gowland under which Mr Gowland had run vehicles belonging to Centro under his licence. The arrangement had not been documented, nor had any invoices been issued or any money changed hands, because they claimed "he was doing his own work and tipping in my yard and we set one off against the other."

In reality, Mr Gowland is 92 years old, lives in the South West and has not operated vehicles for many years.

This was not the only deception by Centro Waste Ltd.

In his decision, Mr Denton said "the HGVs run from the Nechells Lane premises look like a Centro Waste operation, quack like a Centro Waste Ltd operation and waddle like a Centro Waste Ltd operation. I find that they are indeed a Centro Waste Ltd operation.

"Because Centro Waste Ltd has operated vehicles without a licence, and because its director Colin Wilson has woven a tissue of lies to try to conceal this, I find that neither director nor company are of the required good repute to hold a standard national licence."

Further details can be found [here](#).

We must ensure civil society and human rights defenders can engage with the UN without fear of reprisal

Delivered by Ambassador Barbara Woodward, UK Permanent Representative to the UN:

I have the honour to deliver this cross-regional statement on behalf of the United Kingdom and 79 other countries.

UN member states have repeatedly recognised that civil society and human rights defenders are crucial in supporting our work at the UN. We therefore condemn any act of intimidation or reprisal against individuals and groups who cooperate, seek to cooperate, or have cooperated with the UN.

We call on States to prioritise and support the meaningful participation of civil society at the UN. This involves taking action against intimidation and reprisals, including through robust investigations, to ensure accountability.

We also urge States to cooperate with the ASG for Human Rights, in fulfilling her mandate to address reprisals. We need a clearly-defined and coordinated approach to respond effectively to this growing issue.

We welcome the SG's most recent annual report, and share his concerns on the growing number of reprisals globally and the disproportionate impact on certain groups. This pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges for civic space. It has only brought new challenges and risks, including:

- Increased surveillance and hacking;
- The rise of online violence, particularly against women and girls; and
- The use of emergency measures to unduly restrict access and communication with the UN.

The cases documented in the SG's annual reports represent only the tip of the iceberg. We call for improvements in data collection and analysis to address gaps in the reports, such as climates of fear conducive to self-censorship.

We must ensure all civil society organisations and human rights defenders can engage the UN without fear of intimidation or reprisal. They dedicate their lives to serve their communities, some even risking their lives – they should not face further retaliation for engaging the international community.

Trevelyan welcomes new £1bn investment partnership

International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan has today (Thursday 14 October) welcomed the launch of the new communications infrastructure partnership between TfL and BAI Communications, which aims to transform the capital into a smart city and boost connectivity across London creating 600 jobs.

She was joined at a launch event at the Leadenhall Building in the City of London by Australian Minister Dan Tehan. The deal between TfL and BAI Communications, whose global operations include the UK, Australia and Canada will upgrade and add state-of-the-art 4G and 5G-capable mobile network capacity to the Underground, ending one of the key 'not spots' in the UK and enabling uninterrupted mobile coverage across all underground stations.

International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

The UK remains one of the most attractive destinations for investment globally and this partnership proves that investors are backing Britain. The upcoming Global Investment Summit will create more opportunities for industries of the future like digital and tech which support high-value jobs across every part of the UK.

As we strike ambitious trade deals across the globe, including with our good friends Australia we are opening up even more opportunities for investors, exporters and businesses to grow, creating jobs and boosting the economy.

Billy D'Arcy, CEO of BAI Communications UK, said:

We are proud to be making such a significant investment into an incredible partnership with Transport for London, that will transform London into a leading smart city. Our Australian experience in managing critical communications and our wider global experience in delivering large-scale, connectivity infrastructure projects that will ensure people in London can stay connected in the moments that matter.

It will also create a city-wide innovation platform for creative and digital entrepreneurs in the UK and worldwide to build upon, making London a smarter and safer place to live in, work in and visit.

The International Trade Secretary also hosted Mr Tehan for talks on shared trade priorities and closer cooperation on tackling threats to free and fair global trade.

Total trade between the UK and Australia was worth £13.9 billion last year and our new trade deal will create more opportunities for businesses and producers in every part of the UK, making it easier for them to invest across the economy. It will ensure UK investors will benefit from broader and deeper market access than Australia has ever guaranteed before, and ensure the right to invest is protected in all sectors of the economy.

Today's announcement comes as the UK prepares to welcome global business leaders and industry heavyweights at the UK's Global Investment Summit next week.

[New thermal kit to improve fisheries enforcement in East Anglia](#)

Press release

The Environment Agency has purchased a thermal imaging camera for fisheries enforcement activity in East Anglia.



A picture taken on a thermal imaging camera.

The kit will be used during patrols in Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The thermal camera detects heat signature which will help staff during patrols when visibility is limited due to the lack of light. Illegal fishing activity often takes place early in the morning or late in the evening conditions that make detecting it more difficult. However, with this new kit there will be no place to hide.

Using the same surveillance powers as the police, the team also have the ability to record and retain video footage to use as evidence.

A picture taken on a thermal imaging camera which shows a heat signature.

So far the camera has been used for late night patrol along the Well Creek, Middle Level Main Drain and Twenty Foot Drain. These areas were patrolled as a response to anglers reporting poaching to our incident hotline number. Intelligence led enforcement helps the [Environment Agency](#) know where to

target and be more effective with resource.

Although on these occasions we didn't apprehend any suspects or locate anything illegal, these late night and early morning patrols will continue. Hopefully this action will disrupt and deter people from committing any further illegal activity.

Chris Middleton, fisheries enforcement officer for the Great Ouse and Fenland catchment, said:

With the winter months approaching it is great to have these cameras to help us catch offenders in the dark.

The kit can detect the heat signature so a person trying to set an illegal trap, or acting suspiciously will be easily noticeable using these cameras.

If you witness illegal fishing or find a trap/net please call our incident hotline number 0800 807060.

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[River Wansbeck trial aims to improve water quality](#)

This will affect the river from Sheepwash Weir downstream to Wansbeck Barrage, also known locally as Wansbeck Weir.

The long-term aim of the project is to improve the ecology of Wansbeck Lake, enhance the facility for those who use it recreationally, and contribute to habitat improvements further downstream in the estuary.

A study, carried out last winter, looked at the options available for making improvements to the popular lake in Riverside Park in Ashington, where the community go for water sports and to enjoy nature.

The build-up of silt on the lake bed is adversely affecting the future of these activities as well as impacting on local habitats and water quality.

The study identified that leaving the lock on Wansbeck Barrage, situated at the mouth of the river, open for three months could allow the river to flow through and flush out some of the silt. The Environment Agency and its partners have consulted with river users about the plans and the gates, which are operated by Northumberland County Council, will be opened between mid-

November until mid-February. The results will then be reviewed to inform the future operation of the barrage.

It means sports activity on the water will be limited to appropriate tide levels during this time.

Safeguarding the long-term future of the lake

The project is being delivered collaboratively by the Environment Agency, Groundwork North East & Cumbria, Hull University, river user groups, Northumberland County Council, Choppington Parish Council and Ashington Town Council.

Heather Harrison, from the Environment Agency's Environment Programme Team in the North East, said:

We are working closely with the local community, river users and our partners to safeguard the long-term future of Wansbeck Lake and its surroundings.

Our 2020/21 study helped us get a better understanding of the options available to improve the water quality and biodiversity of the lake and its sustainability as a recreation ground for local people to enjoy.

One of the initial options is to try to flush away sediment build up on the bottom of the lake, and the best way to do this is to leave the gates open for three months to see if it has a positive impact.

This is a popular area for the community and visitors alike and we've worked closely with them throughout to ensure they understand the project, the decisions we are making as a partnership, and continue to have a say in its future.

Popular lake

Councillor John Riddle, County Councillor Cabinet Member for Local Services, added:

This is a well-loved lake popular with families and water sports enthusiasts and we want to do all we can to keep it in good condition.

This work will unfortunately mean use of the lake will be restricted for a period of time although the rest of the park will still be open. Hopefully once this is done we'll end up with an improved facility as well as an improved habitat for the wildlife which flourishes in the area.

The £50,000 trial, funded by the Environment Agency, follows last winter's £35,000 study, which included surveys by marine experts and drone surveys, which collected the data used to inform options for removing the silt build-up.

Other funding for the overall project comes from contributions from National Lottery Heritage Fund, Groundwork NE and Cumbria, Northumberland County Council and Arup engineering.

Wansbeck barrage, which was constructed in 1975, was part of a major regeneration scheme following dismantling of heavy industry in the area. The barrage created a locked navigable inland waterway and artificial 4km long lake, and 3 miles of riverside country park in Ashington.