

Northumberland man jailed for dumping and burning waste illegally

Dominic Allen, 25, of Old Swarland, Northumberland appeared at Newcastle Crown Court on Tuesday 2 August for sentencing after previously pleading guilty to 2 offences of operating a waste site without an environmental permit, and 3 offences of burning waste.

He was sentenced to 12 months in prison, ordered to pay £1,000 in costs and has 18 months to clear the site.

Prosecuting for the Environment Agency, Andrea Parnham told the court that an investigation into illegal activity on the land next to Allen's property at Old Swarland began in February 2020 after Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service attended a fire at the site. The investigation revealed that Allen had been operating without any authorisations to transport, deposit or sort waste.

On 16 March 2020 Environment Agency officers visited the site and saw several piles of waste including household goods and construction waste and evidence of burning. Letters requiring the site to stop taking in waste and for it to be cleared were sent but the fires continued, including a significant fire on 31 May 2020 which the fire service extinguished.

Following a number of visits to the site and more waste dumped including garden waste, electricals and vehicle tyres, a statutory clearance notice requiring the site to be cleared was issued in July 2020.

Waste dumped on the site at Old Swarland

Restriction Order granted

When the deadline for that passed, the waste had not been removed so the Environment Agency blocked access to the land through a court order to prevent further offences from taking place.

In October 2020 a Restriction Order was granted – the first time the powers have been used in the North East – which prohibited anyone from entering or depositing waste on the site to reduce the impact on the local community while the criminal investigation into activity at the site was ongoing.

Environment Agency officers locked the site's access gate and placed a warning notice at the entrance.

In defence, the court was urged not to impose a custodial sentence, stating that this would impede efforts to clear the site and also mean the defendant would lose his job.

But in passing sentence Recorder Mullarkey said that he could have no confidence in Allen complying with any suspended sentence requirements. He ruled that the offending had been deliberate, persistent and financially motivated, with all offences committed while Allen was on bail for other matters.

Waste dumped on the site at Old Swarland

Allen showed 'blatant disregard' for the law

John Crowl, Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader in the North East, said:

This result should serve as a warning for others that we take illegal waste activity extremely seriously and we won't hesitate to take enforcement action against those who flout the law.

After working closely with our partners at Northumbria Police and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, we used the powers at our disposal to block access to the site to protect the community while the criminal investigation was ongoing and this proved successful.

Allen showed a blatant disregard for the law and we are determined to make like tough for those who damage the environment and blight local communities.

A Northumbria Police spokesperson added:

This sentence was only made possible thanks to the diligence of our colleagues at the Environment Agency and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. We have proven we are stronger by working together, and that a joint approach to tackling this type of blatant offending has seen a man jailed.

We welcome this sentence and hope it sends a clear message to others who think they are above the law – we will not tolerate this type of criminality. You will be pursued and you will be brought to justice.

[More than £1m investment brings North](#)

East improvements

More than 15km of river has been improved, 1,000 hectares of habitat created or improved and more than 18,000 trees planted.

In addition, 10 lakes were given a boost for fishing while 9 fish and 5 eel passage projects were completed.

The figures are released during the Environment Agency's #WaterWarriors campaign, which launched last week and urges people to consider how their actions can affect water quality and take action to protect blue spaces for everyone.

The North East Environment Programme is managed and delivered by the Environment Agency working mainly in partnership with government backed Catchment Partnerships, bringing together river and wildlife trusts, local authorities and other organisations to improve the environment.

River Aln fish pass

Key projects delivered

There were 43 partners involved in this year's £1.3million programme, contributing £461,000 in funding.

Key projects progressed in 2020/21 include:

- Identifying actions to reduce the growth of macroalgae at coastal streams at Holy Island, Northumberland, which poses a risk to key protected habitats and internationally important wildlife.
- A study carried out and design options produced for ecological enhancements at Blyth estuary, Northumberland.
- Improvements across the Northumberland Coquet catchments to reduce pollution run off from land, which has seen 3,500 trees planted, thousands of metres of new fencing installed and advice given to 150 landowners.
- Completion of a two-year project to improve fish and eel passage on the River Aln, Northumberland, along with restoration involving 2,450 trees planted and work with 100 landowners to reduce pollution run off from land.
- Planting almost 7,000 trees and hedgerows along a 1km stretch of the Upper Ouseburn, north of Newcastle, to provide habitat and reduce sediment pollution into the river.
- Innovative estuary improvements at pilot sites on the Tyne and Wear, which includes floating ecosystems.
- The final year of a four-year woodland restoration project in Durham which has seen 4,875 trees planted, creating 3.3hectares of new woodland.
- Improved access and the installation of a new classroom to improve

coaching and boost family fishing opportunities at Tilery Pond at Hartlepool.

- Improvements at Langley Beck on the River Tees catchment near Staindrop, including improved connectivity to the beck for fish and addressing diffuse pollution issues.

Trees planted at the Upper Ouseburn

North East 'is a far richer place'

Catherine Saxon, North East Area Director for the Environment Agency, said:

From removing obstructions to allow fish to move further up our watercourses and reach their natural spawning grounds, to interventions to reduce the amount of sediment entering our rivers, and innovative techniques to create floating ecosystems in our estuaries, the environment in the North East is a far richer place following the delivery of last year's projects.

The Environment Agency's #WaterWarriors campaign is highlighting the work our teams do on a daily basis to monitor and improve water quality. Working together in partnership means we can share expertise and deliver more for less and these successes would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of all those involved.

But it's important to remember that individual actions really do count. Small actions can have a damaging impact on water quality and there are some simple steps we can all take to make a difference.

Floating ecosystem at Royal Quays

Public urged to be #WaterWarriors

With 4 out of 5 people expected to take a #GreatBritishStaycation this summer, it's more important than ever that we are all #WaterWarriors and protect the quality of our waters and beaches for everyone to enjoy.

- Whether you are at home or away this summer, become a #WaterWarrior by taking small steps to protect water quality such as:
- Only flush the 3Ps – pee, poo and paper
- never pouring fats and oils down the sink
- never flushing wet wipes and sanitary products down the loo
- always taking your rubbish away from the beach
- always bagging and binning your dog's poo
- never pouring waste liquids or throwing litter down surface water drains

The campaign is also urging people visiting beaches, lakes and rivers to 'know before you go' by checking the Environment Agency's [Swimfo website](#) which provides instant, easy access to information on over 400 bathing waters in England, including the latest water quality classification – and, for some bathing waters, when warnings are issued due to the temporary effects on water quality after a rainy day or high tides.

Having this information at the fingertips ensures people have the most up-to-date information before they take the plunge. Joint advice with Public Health England is also available on open water swimming – that's swimming anywhere that isn't a public pool – at [Swim healthy](#)

[Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Libya: Caroline Hurndall MBE](#)

Press release

Ms Caroline Hurndall MBE has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to Libya in succession to Mr Nicholas Hopton. Ms Hurndall will take up her appointment during September 2021.



Curriculum vitae

Full name: Caroline Hurndall

Married to: Dominic Hurndall

Dates	Role
2020 to present	Full-time Language Training
2017 to 2019	FCO, Head, Iran and Iraq Department, Middle East and North Africa Directorate
2013 to 2017	Washington, Head, Middle East Team
2011 to 2013	FCO, Head, Sudan Team, Joint FCO-DFID Unit

Dates	Role
2010 to 2011	FCO, Press Officer for Middle East, Media Office
2009	Helmand, UK Political Advisor to US Commanding General, Marine Expeditionary Brigade
2008 to 2009	Kabul, Second Secretary – Political/Military
2006 to 2008	FCO, Programme Manager, Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit
2004 to 2006	FCO, Desk Officer – Peacekeeping, Conflict Issues Group

Newsdesk

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[Parole Board Chief Executive's blog – August 2021](#)

This week, the Parole Board has [shared its 2021 to 2022 Business Plan](#) which includes our strategic aims and priorities over the coming year.

It will be no surprise to hear that 2020 provided the Parole Board with one of its most challenging periods in recent years, but one which we have handled with great professionalism, agility, and adaptability.

Despite the huge challenges and a number of extended national lockdowns forcing prisons to close and face-to-face hearings to be halted, the Board has made more decisions than it did the previous year, keeping the system moving efficiently and effectively for victims and prisoners despite initial concerns that a backlog may emerge.

Now, our biggest task of the this year will be recovery from the pandemic, continued use of remote working and an increased use of video and telephone hearings as we head towards the “new normal”.

Figures for 2020/21 show the Board conducted 9,202 oral hearings – the vast majority of these by video or telephone – as well as 23,453 paper hearings. Those figures are expected to continue to grow next year, with latest projections estimating 10,300 oral hearings and 24,800 paper hearings.

Before I delve into our newly published Business Plan, I would first like to reiterate that our top priority, as always, is to keep the public safe by

only releasing someone when we are satisfied that imprisonment is no longer necessary for the protection of the public. We do this by undertaking fair and independent risk assessments. The Board has three key strategic aims: to make independent, impartial and quality decisions; work efficiently, effectively and provide value for money; and seek to be as open and transparent as possible.

Our members make decisions without fear or favour by ensuring they are fair, respect the rights of the prisoner but always put public safety first. We operate like a court by making difficult decisions by considering all evidence available.

We achieve these goals by selecting our members – the people who decide whether a prisoner can be released or not – through a rigorous recruitment process. They are independent public appointees who come from a variety of backgrounds and represent the community they serve. Some are judges and lawyers, some are psychologists and psychiatrists, some come from the charity and private sectors while others may be former police or probation officers.

All members are provided with the appropriate training and tools to be able to carry out their role effectively and their continued development is important to us.

The Parole Board deals with around 26,000 cases each year. We remain committed to ensuring they are processed in a timely manner and aim to issue 90% of all decisions within 14 days of an oral hearing concluding. If this is not possible and the panel requires further information, an adjournment notice will be issued. Public safety is at the forefront of their minds, and although adjournments can delay some cases, our members need all information available to them to make the a fully informed decision based on all evidence available.

We will continue to trial and implement new ways of working to improve our processes and performance as well as undertake regular monitoring of outcomes through Key Performance Indicators.

Openness and transparency remain vital parts of what we do at the Parole Board. We will continue to provide around 100 summaries per month to explain our decisions to the public and victims. The Parole Board is also committed to improving the public's understanding and awareness of our work, so that all those affected by our decisions understand how we make them.

There are a number of tasks the Parole Board is undertaking and will undertake in order to continue to progress as an organisation and achieve the aims set out in our Business Plan.

As you may be aware, the Board is currently undergoing a Root and Branch Review by the Ministry of Justice to look at whether changes should be made to our constitution and powers to improve the effectiveness of the parole system. I am sure that the outcome and recommendations of this review will only be a positive thing for the Parole Board, prisoners, victims and the wider parole system as a whole.

We are working extremely closely with the Ministry of Justice to implement the Rule change on private hearings, announced as part of the review, which will allow for applications for certain hearings to be heard in public if it is in the interests of justice. As part of this, we will launch a pilot when the rules change as well as support victims to observe hearings if they wish.

The Parole Board strives to be an open and inclusive organisation and as such we aim to continue to have more than 14% of Parole Board members from a BAME background. This is an area we plan to build on. We will also carry out research into outcomes by black, Asian and minority prisoners and consider our policy for all protected characteristics, focusing this year on women, older offenders and traveller communities.

I look forward to continuing to build on the strides we have made this year despite the unprecedented challenges faced by everyone and hope the Business Plan effectively sets out these aims.

[Charity regulator announces inquiry into Care4Calais](#)

Press release

The Charity Commission is today announcing a statutory inquiry into serious governance concerns identified at Care4Calais



An interim manager has been appointed to the charity to support the investigation.

Care4Calais's (charity number 1169048) work includes providing aid and support for displaced people in Belgium and France and asylum seekers in the UK.

The Commission first engaged with the trustees in August 2020, after proactively identifying concerns arising from the charity's accounts. This

engagement led to wider concerns about the charity's governance, including a lack of clarity around who was validly appointed as a trustee and around how decisions are made.

The Commission is concerned that the charity's existing governance arrangements may not be appropriate for a charity of this size, leading to potential further problems, including around implementing adequate financial controls and enacting safeguarding policies.

The inquiry opened in August 2020, to examine matters including:

- whether there has been mismanagement and/or misconduct in the administration of the charity by the trustees
- the trustees' responses to the Commission's requests for information and whether or not the charity has followed its regulatory advice and guidance
- the charity's financial controls
- the charity's safeguarding policies

Sarah Tomlinson and Philip Watts of Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP have been appointed as interim managers to review the charity's governance, administration and decision-making and make recommendations so that the charity is operating in line with its governing document, relevant laws and that its policies and procedures reflect best practice. The trustees remain otherwise responsible for the running of the charity.

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if additional issues emerge.

It is the Commission's general policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission](#) are available on GOV.UK.

Ends

Notes to editors:

- The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
- The announcement of this inquiry has been delayed as a result of an appeal lodged by the charity, which has since been withdrawn.
- Section 76(3)(g) of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission power to

appoint interim managers to a charity. Interim managers are appointed as a protective measure where the Commission has identified misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of a charity, or where there is a need to protect a charity's property.

- This appointment is a protective power that will be reviewed at regular intervals. It will continue until the Commission makes a further order for its variation or discharge.

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