

Anglian Water could and should have reacted quicker to pollution

Sewage flooding a river for hours was blamed on Anglian Water's slow response to the incident.

The company has been fined £18,000 for failures at a pumping station near Peterborough that an investigation said showed up their "reactive attitude" to pollution.

District judge Ken Sheraton said Anglian Water should have given "a higher category of response" to a second sewage pump failing because the site at Yaxley was operating at a lower capacity with another pump already out of order.

The pumps were meant to regulate the flow of effluent but had stopped working a week apart, meaning raw sewage poured into Pig Water Drain for several hours and the damage was done before an engineer arrived at the pumping station in Windsor Road.

Investigators from the Environment Agency said at least 60 fish died with no chance of surviving the incident in February 2019. The final death toll was believed to be higher, with the fish killed by reduced oxygen and toxic ammonia in the water.

A dog-walker reported a creamy substance on the surface of the watercourse. The woman said she saw fish leaping from the water like they'd been electrocuted or attacked.

Louis de Quincey, who led the Environment Agency investigation, said:

With only a single pump in operation, this was always likely to increase the chances of an incident. Anglian Water should have sped up its response time as a result. Many hours passed before a technician stopped sewage entering the water.

Anglian Water could and should have acted quicker.

An Environment Agency officer called to the scene saw effluent gushing into the "grey and murky" water from a pipe traced back to the pumping station, supposed to control the flow of sewage through the sewer network.

Anglian Water staff seemed blind to the ongoing incident – one employee telling the technician there was nothing wrong, that no sewage was being pumped into the river.

Roach, pike and eel were among 60 dead fish recovered from the scene, but fisheries specialists from the Environment Agency believe many more would

have been killed by a sharp decline in water quality caused by the release of the effluent.

In polluting Pig Water Drain, Anglian Water pleaded guilty to breaching regulations 12 (1) (b) and 38 (1) (a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

Sitting at Peterborough magistrates' court on 4 May 2022, district judge Sheraton also ordered Anglian Water to pay £10,957.80 in costs to the Environment Agency and a victim surcharge of £170.

Major boost for live music and touring industry specialist hauliers to move more freely between countries

- new provisions for specialist hauliers will ensure British talent can tour more freely between Great Britain and abroad
- 'Dual registration' will be created following consultation with the specialist haulier touring sector and will let hauliers drive the same vehicle in Great Britain and abroad
- specialist events hauliers will be able to transfer their vehicles between operator licences without needing to pay additional Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) in Great Britain for 6 months

Hauliers serving music concerts, sports and cultural events will be able to move their vehicles freely between Great Britain and the EU thanks to [new measures for the haulage sector](#) announced today (6 May 2022).

Designed in consultation with the live music, performing arts and sports sectors, the new dual registration measure is expected to come into force from late summer 2022. It will apply to specialist hauliers that transport equipment for cultural events, such as concert tours or sports events.

Dual registration will mean drivers with an established base in Great Britain and in another country outside of the UK will be able to transfer their vehicle between both operator licences without the need to change vehicles, have their journeys limited or pay VED in Great Britain.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

British talent has long been at the heart of global performing arts and our specialist haulage sector is critical to the success of their tours.

It is unacceptable that because of EU bureaucracy, the operations of our specialist haulage sector on which our artists rely have been put at risk, impacting the livelihoods of touring artists and sportspeople.

Dual registration helps put this right and means that touring events can take place seamlessly across Great Britain, the EU and beyond, keeping our incredible cultural sector thriving for years to come.

Creative Industries Minister Julia Lopez said:

Live events are at the heart of the entertainment and sports industries, giving fans and performers unique and memorable experiences.

I welcome this move, which will better enable Britain's creative talent to grow their audiences, showcase their work abroad and make sure people across Europe have the chance to see many of their heroes on their doorstep.

Since the UK's departure from the EU, British specialist hauliers have been limited to visiting just 3 EU stops per tour. However, under the new legislation, companies with operating bases in both Great Britain and another international location can switch vehicles between the respective operator licences and make use of the internal movements permitted within each territory.

This opportunity applies not just to the EU, but also to other countries, opening our doors to cultural exchange from all over the world.

We are continuing to work closely with our EU partners and the live music industry to ensure that smaller artists can continue to tour freely around the world.

Tarrant Anderson, Company Director of Vans for Bands, said:

We are really pleased that the Department for Transport has engaged in detail with our sector on this critical issue and has come up with a solution to keep the live music touring industry moving. Without this initiative a large number of tours this year would simply have been unable to take place.

Craig Stanley, Touring Group Chair, LIVE (the voice of the UK's live music business), said:

We are delighted that our close work with government has paid off and welcome this move, which will allow European music tours to

continue this summer.

We now look forward to working with government on options to permanently resolve this issue, such as the negotiation of an EU-wide cultural exemption.

Payments brought forward to help farmers with cashflow

The Government has today announced further steps to support farmers with cost pressures caused by demand and instability seen across the globe. Under the latest plans, Direct Payments in England will be paid in two instalments each year for the remainder of the agricultural transition period, to help farmers with their cashflow.

The deadline for submitting Basic Payment Scheme 2022 applications is Monday 16 May 2022 and, under these plans, farmers with eligible applications will receive the first payment of 50% from the end of July and the second from December.

With agricultural commodities closely linked to global gas prices, farmers are facing rising costs for inputs including manufactured fertiliser, feed, fuel and energy. Due to heightened worldwide demand as the global economy reawakened following Covid, by February the price of gas had quadrupled on the previous year, and with the instability caused by Putin's illegal war in Ukraine that price has risen further.

Output prices, particularly wheat, are also high and from analysis published by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) it is clear that farmers should continue to buy their inputs as usual. The steps government is taking to bring forward payments will allow them to do so.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

While increasing farm gate prices may mean that farm profitability remains stable, we recognise the short term pressures on cash flow.

We have decided to bring forward half of this year's BPS payment as an advance injection of cash to farm businesses from the end of this July. It will give farmers some additional cashflow earlier in order to provide some confidence. We will also make this a permanent change to the way we pay BPS in future with twice yearly instalments going forward.

In the days of the EU this would never have been possible due to the way audits worked and the need to enforce the three crop rule during the summer.

Rural Payments Agency Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

Bringing forward half of this year's BPS payment from the end of July will be a welcome boost to cash flow for many farm businesses during uncertain times.

This is not just an opportunity to support farmers here and now through a cash injection. It's a permanent change to bring Direct Payments in line with what will be a more regular payment system under the new environment land management schemes.

This builds on a package of measures to support farmers announced in March, including: a delay to changes to the use of urea fertiliser by at least a year; revised and improved statutory guidance on the Farming Rules for Water; slurry investment grants to help meet those rules; and further details of the Sustainable Farming Incentive which will reward farmers for manufacturing more organic-based fertiliser products.

[EHRC reappointing Helen Mahy and Alasdair Henderson for a second term](#)

News story

The Minister for Women and Equalities has confirmed the reappointment of Helen Mahy and Alasdair Henderson as Equality and Human Rights Commission commissioners for another four year term.



The two commissioners will continue to bring their skills and experience to the roles, it was announced today Friday 6 May.

Alasdair Henderson is a barrister at 1 Crown Office Row, specialising in public law, human rights, employment law and equality law. He previously worked in Rwanda for International Justice Mission, investigating cases of land rights violations.

Helen Mahy was, until she retired in 2013, Group Company Secretary and General Counsel of National Grid plc for 10 years. At National Grid she was also executive sponsor of inclusion and diversity, about which she is passionate.

Both Henderson and Mahy have served as Commissioners since 2018.

The Board of Commissioners is the highest level decision-making body in the organisation, responsible for the strategic oversight of the EHRC.

The EHRC is Great Britain's designated equality body and 'A-rated' national human rights institution. These new appointments will assist the EHRC to fulfil its role as the country's expert body on equality and human rights issues.

These appointments are made in accordance with the Cabinet Office Code of Governance for Public Appointments. The regulation of public appointments against the requirements of this Code is carried out by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

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Julian Glover OBE and Taryn Nixon appointed as Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and The National Lottery Heritage Fund

News story

The Prime Minister has appointed Julian Glover OBE and Taryn Nixon as Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and The National Lottery Heritage Fund, for terms of three years commencing 01 May 2022 until 30 April 2025.



Julian Glover OBE

Julian Glover OBE is an author and journalist with extensive experience of working with the government. He led the Landscapes Review for Defra, into better ways of running England's protected areas, and has been a special advisor in both Number 10 and the Department for Transport. He has been Associate Editor of the London Evening Standard and a columnist and reporter for the Guardian. He advises a range of organisations, especially on transport and sustainability. He is the author of *Man of Iron: Thomas Telford and the Building of Britain*, a biography of one of the country's greatest engineers. He lives in Derbyshire.

Taryn Nixon

Taryn Nixon is an archaeologist with a background of leadership in the historic environment sector. From 1997 to 2016, she was the Chief Executive of MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology), an educational charity, SME and Independent Research Organisation (IRO) delivering commercial services and public benefit in the context of planning, construction and development. She was a Board Trustee of MOLA from 2017-19. She is currently an independent heritage management adviser and consultant, helping organisations working with heritage as a force for good.

Taryn is a Trustee of National Trails UK, championing the long distance routes that are part of the protected landscapes family and administered by Natural England and Natural Resources Wales. She is an Honorary Lecturer at University College London's Institute for Archaeology, a former Chair of the professional body, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, and has served on committees for organisations such as Historic England and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. She has published widely about the power of cultural and natural heritage to connect people and place and about putting people and sense of place at the heart of sustainable development, regeneration, restoration and recovery.

Julian Glover will chair the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Midlands and East regional committee and Taryn Nixon will chair the regional committee for London and the South.

These roles are remunerated at £13,500 per annum. These appointments have been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for

Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Julian Glover declared having canvassed for independent candidates in the 2019 election. Taryn Nixon declared no political activity.

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