

Press release: Doncaster teens take lead on environmental improvements

The children at XP Secondary School have been working with experts from the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to research and improve how surface water drains away from the land.

Their findings have helped with the installation of a new sustainable drainage system (SUD) on the school's grounds, designed to mimic nature in the way it allows water to soak away.

Dave Newborough from the Environment Agency said:

SUDs help slow down the flow of surface water, giving it time to soak into the ground and for pollutants to be naturally filtered out before entering local watercourses.

In doing so, they help reduce the risk of flooding and improve water quality, as well as enhance the environment for people and wildlife.

XP's students carefully studied their school grounds, carrying out environmental experiments to determine how a SUD would work best. They presented their findings to a panel of experts, including Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, before helping to plant hedges that form an important part of the new drainage system.

The project has given the kids a real sense of ownership in their local water environment, which they can pass on to their family and friends," says Dave.

They've also learnt first hand how the water cycle works and how it can be affected by urbanisation and pollution. And they've had the opportunity to explore local wetland at Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Potteric Carr Nature Reserve, discovering its importance for biodiversity and for managing flood risk.

The work at XP Secondary School is part of Inspiring Water Action in the Torne (iWAIT), an Environment Agency led project restoring almost 50 hectares of rare wet woodland priority habitats at 7 sites in Doncaster.

Around 450 children and young people across 7 schools, each linked with one of the woodland sites, are using the project to learn about flood risk, water quality and management, and ecology.

Three of the schools, including XP, will have SUDs fitted to manage the quantity and quality of surface water feeding the restored wetlands, as well as helping to involve young people in environmental activities and learning.

iWAIT is a Torne Catchment Partnership project led by the Environment Agency and involving Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Natural England and local communities.

ENDS

Notes for editors

- The iWAIT project is turning 46.5ha of non-priority habitat into priority habitat – this is 11% of the Environment Agency’s nationwide target 400ha for habitat creation.
- A priority habitat is one identified as being the most threatened and requires conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Wet woodland is a biodiversity habitat, important for animals and plants. It supports a large number of species, many of which are now rare in the UK.
- For more information on the iWAIT project, see this [previous news release](#).
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is a local charity which works to create a Yorkshire rich in wildlife for the benefit of everyone. Our goal is nature’s recovery, on land and at sea. We stand up for Yorkshire’s wildlife wherever it is under threat, and work with others to find solutions that benefit both wildlife and people. We inspire thousands of children, families and others every year, reconnecting them with their local environment and wildlife. With the support of these people, we are restoring and recreating a habitats in Yorkshire and raising awareness of, and fighting for, Yorkshire’s seas.

[News story: Procurement for apprenticeship training in smaller employers](#)

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has carefully considered the applications made in response to the recent procurement for apprenticeship training provision for non-levy-paying employers.

This procurement was markedly oversubscribed, a sign of the significant level of interest from the training provider market in the apprenticeship reforms. In response, ESFA intends to pause the current competition. This will allow us to review our approach to ensure that we achieve the right balance between stability of supply and promoting competition and choice for employers. It is

important that we fully consider how best to achieve these outcomes in a way that achieves the best value for employers and apprentices as we move to a fully employer-led system.

We will undertake further engagement with the market to clarify our approach, and ensure that this meets the government's wider objectives of securing stability in the market, good sectoral and geographical coverage of provision, and a market which meets the skills needs of employers. We will issue further guidance shortly.

In order to maintain stability in the system through the start of the next academic year, in the interim period we will extend existing contracts held by all current providers until the end of December 2017. To maintain our quality standards, current providers with extended contracts will be able to undertake new starts on those contracts provided they are on the [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers](#). The ESFA will notify providers of specific arrangements shortly so that amended contracts are in place ahead of 1 May.

This will not affect training provision for existing learners. Extending existing providers contracts means employers can be confident in taking on new apprentices without disruption over the months ahead.

[Press release: Man fined for running illegal waste site](#)

A Gateshead man has been fined and ordered to pay thousands of pounds in compensation after he illegally stored waste at a site and then abandoned it.

John James Armstrong, 52, of Park Lane, Winlaton Mill, appeared at North Tyneside Magistrates' Court on Friday 7 April.

He pleaded guilty to one offence of operating a waste site without a permit.

He was fined £1,000, ordered to pay compensation of £7,069.49 to the landowner to cover the costs they paid to clear the site, and £1,591.26 costs.

Armstrong was Director of Canterhall Builders Limited, a construction company which dissolved on 23 May 2016.

Prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency, Simon Crowder told the court that on 20 April, 2016, two Environment Agency officers attended the unit at Unit 1 Felling Business Centre, Green Lane.

They saw the site was covered in construction waste, including bricks, broken concrete, wood, plaster board, insulations, pallets, old kitchen units,

benches and electrical waste. There was also a skip full of building waste.

Enquiries revealed that Canterhall were tenants at the site but had abandoned it earlier in the month.

On 16 May a letter requesting removal of the waste was given to the landowner. On 23 May Environment Agency officers traced the defendant to a site in Swalwell, where he was given a letter inviting him to be interviewed.

Two days later the site at Felling was cleared by the landowners, at a total cost to them of more than £7,000.

The defendant has no previous convictions and was co-operative during the investigation.

During an interview on 2 June he said that if it was not cost effective to hire a skip to remove waste from carrying out construction work, then he would instead transport the waste back to the unit. When there was enough waste at the unit he would then order a skip to have it removed.

He said in January 2016 more and more waste was deposited at the unit and due to financial problems he could not afford skips to get the waste removed. He said he left the unit on 10 April and had made no attempts to clear the waste.

He added he was unaware of the need for an environmental permit or registered exemptions.

The Environment Agency's Paul Whitehill said:

We take waste crime very seriously. It can cause serious pollution to the environment, put communities at risk and undermine local businesses.

The defendant flouted the law for financial gain – he cut costs by not hiring skips at the sites where work was taking place to ensure disposal of the waste.

He also avoided the cost of an environmental permit and annual subsistence fees. Illegal waste activities that avoid regulatory controls don't have the appropriate infrastructure to protect the environment, and can have a detrimental impact on local communities.

The sentence follows calls from the Environment Agency warning landowners about criminals looking to profit by dumping waste illegally on their land.

Landowners can often find their property filled with waste and abandoned by tenants, leaving owners with an expensive clean-up bill. The Environment Agency is cracking down on waste crime and taking tough action to deal with this behaviour.

This ruling demonstrates that people can be made to pay for the cost of clearing the mess they leave behind.

Information and advice about environmental permits can be found on the Environment Agency website. To report illegal waste activity contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

[Press release: Environment Agency tests new powers for volunteer bailiffs](#)

The Environment Agency and Angling Trust are running a pilot project, funded by the fishing licence, testing the benefits of giving members of Voluntary Bailiff Service powers to make fishing licence and byelaw checks. If successful, the initiative's expansion would allow Environment Agency fisheries officers to focus on investigations into other types of fisheries crime.

In the first phase of the project, the Angling Trust recruited over 300 volunteers across England to help Environment Agency fisheries officers by providing information and reporting suspicious incidents on riverbanks and lakes.

In the second phase, the pilot project has now trained 10 of the Voluntary Bailiff Service members from the south east to undertake fishing licence and byelaw compliance checking patrols, reporting offenders in the same way that Environment Agency enforcement officers do.

Judy Proctor, head of fisheries at the Environment Agency said:

The volunteer bailiffs already provide a great service to angling by helping our officers catch people fishing illegally. We will be evaluating the pilot carefully to see what more can be done and how we can improve the service.

There is no excuse for illegal fishing. A fishing licence costs from just £30 for a whole year and you can get one on GOV.UK. Anyone fishing illegally can expect to be prosecuted and face a fine of up to £2,500 and up to £50,000 for byelaw offences. In 2015/16, the Environment Agency's patrols checked 62,076 rod licences and brought 2,043 successful prosecutions for fisheries crime.

The Voluntary Bailiff Service recently inducted a further 35 new Phase 1 recruits in the North East and is currently recruiting in the rest of England. Induction and training days are being held this spring and anyone expressing an interest in joining the VBS should email karen.sarkar@anglingtrust.net

Speech: 'FinTech will transform the way we live and do business', says the Chancellor

This fantastic building has a proud history as an international marketplace.

One-hundred-and-forty years ago, it opened as the new home of Billingsgate fish market ...the largest fish market of its kind in the world.

But Billingsgate's heritage as a place of commerce and free trade goes back even further...

...ever since a 1699 Act of Parliament made it "a free and open market for all sorts of fish whatsoever"...

...with a single exception: the sale of eels...

...which was restricted to Dutch fishermen, in recognition of their help in feeding the people of London during the Great Fire.

An early trade agreement that I am sure Prime Minister Rutte will remember during the upcoming negotiations... Global ambition

Of course when this building opened the world was, once again, embarking on an industrial revolution...

...and, like the first, this second industrial revolution was led by British ingenuity and British design.

And whereas the First was characterised by the mechanisation of textile production in the North of England...

...and the advent of the steam engine, first built in the West Midlands...

...the Second saw steel production in Yorkshire take the place of iron...

...the first modern power station constructed in Deptford...

...the first commercial oil refinery in West Lothian...

...and the first commercial telegraph system, just down the road in Euston.

For the first time, merchants in London could send an order to suppliers in India, China or the United States along our international network of telegraph lines...

...to be shipped in steel-built steamships...

...refrigerated where necessary...

...and then distributed by rail to all corners of our country.

These breakthroughs drove the first major wave of globalisation...

...sustaining our economies until the breakthroughs in computing technology and the creation of the World Wide Web...

...led to what is now referred to as the Third Industrial Revolution.

Today we are on the brink of yet another industrial revolution.

One that has the potential, once again, fundamentally to transform the structure of the global economy, and the way we live our lives.

And once again it is British invention and entrepreneurial spirit that is at the forefront of the technologies...

...such as artificial intelligence, robotics, big data analytics, biotech and FinTech...

...that collectively are the drivers of what has become known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution. FinTech

And here in London, it is the combination of financial innovation with available venture capital...

...and the world's largest international financial services marketplace...

...that has put this city at the forefront of the FinTech revolution, changing the way in which financial services are accessed and delivered.

Just as with the telegraph and telephone in the 1870s...

...the first ATMs in the 1960s...

...and the arrival of online banking in the 1980s...

...FinTech will transform the way we live and do business.

Whether it is cashless transactions between friends...

...sending remittances to family in other countries...

...or apps that automatically invest savings at the best rates...

...FinTech provides consumers with better services, more choice, and lower costs.

And as I found on my recent trip to India...

...it has the potential to transform financial inclusion across the developing world too...

...with more than a billion people now biometrically enrolled in that country and 220 million new bank accounts opened in the last 18 months alone.

For businesses, it can mean access to new and cheaper credit...

...as digitally enabled disintermediation links savers and businesses directly...

...through peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunding and smart lenders with innovative distribution techniques using technology to power credit approvals for on-line SME lending.

And apps that automate firms' compliance processes – so-called "RegTech"...

...have the potential dramatically to cut costs too.

This market is growing at a tremendous pace...

...and with hundreds of millions of people worldwide entering the digital financial system every year that growth shows no sign of abating.

Over the last few months, I have visited Barclay's FinTech accelerators in Cape Town and in Mumbai, and seen the impressive successes they are achieving.

So, I am delighted to announce today that next month Barclays will open its new flagship, 'London Rise'... ..the largest FinTech accelerator of its kind in Europe, offering over 500 workspaces for start-up innovators.

And, also today, HSBC and Tradeshift have confirmed that their new 'procure-to-pay' product will go live in July...

...allowing businesses to manage their entire supply chain and working capital requirements in one place, from any device...

...a great example of a partnership between a banking giant and a FinTech entrepreneur to develop practical solutions to support everyday businesses.

Today is about the UK as the global FinTech hub.

About bringing 450 investors, drawn from every continent...

...together with 100 of Britain's top FinTech firms...

...from Silicon Roundabout in London, to TechNorth in Manchester and Leeds...

...to demonstrate how our entrepreneurs are applying their ingenuity to deliver

the next steps in the FinTech revolution.

We have the time zone, the language, the legal system, and the talent...

...in the world's number one financial centre...

...and the fastest growing tech centre in Europe.

And this government is committed – through the Patient Capital Review, and the work of Sir Damon Buffini...

...to ensuring that we have the deep pools of long-term capital, too.

Taken together we have a FinTech sector that generated almost £7 billion revenue last year...

...and now employs over 60,000 people.

And you don't just have to take my word for it...

...EY and Deloitte have independently ranked the UK as the best place in the world to succeed as a FinTech firm. government support

This is not by accident...

...of course we have the talent, the entrepreneurs, and the markets...

...but we also have the regulatory and tax environment to support it too.

Because we have given our regulators a clear mandate to do so.

The FCA has led the way internationally with their 'regulatory sandbox'...

...allowing firms to test their products with consumers in a safe environment.

The Bank of England's FinTech Accelerator gives companies the chance to work on innovative central banking solutions...

...while the Bank is broadening access to its settlement accounts and payment systems;

The FCA are hosting a regulator's summit today, to discuss what more regulators can do to support the market's growth.

The government has also played its part.

In the last year we have introduced a new investors' relief, to support investment into firms looking to scale up...

... provided £400 million of new capital to the British Business Bank to leverage £1bn of investment in UK technology businesses...

...and through our proposal for the Royal Bank of Scotland, we will see funding for a series of initiatives, worth around £750 million, to boost competition

in the UK business banking market, and to stimulate further investment in FinTech of the future.

But we can do more.

This government is consulting on a modern Industrial Strategy...

...and high-growth, knowledge intensive business will be at its heart.

Our tech sector already contributes a bigger proportion of our GDP than any other country in the G20.

But we cannot rest on our laurels...

...we must constantly move onward to remain the best place in the world to start and grow a tech business.

Our Plan for Britain points the way:

We must invest to overcome the poor productivity performance that has plagued our economy for well over a decade...

...and that is why at Autumn Statement I announced a £23 billion National Productivity and Investment Fund.

We need a skills system that offers clear routes into work...

...and that is why at Spring Budget I announced funding for new 'T-Levels' for 16-19 year olds.

And we must embrace the technological change that has the potential to transform our economy for the better...

...and that is why I also announced an Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to keep the UK at the forefront of disruptive technology.

We can't remain the number one place for FinTech and the other technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution...

...by simply relying on our ingenuity, talent and openness...

...we have to go out and get the business.

Findings from our sponsors, EY, show that British FinTech firms most want to expand into Asia.

I could sense that excitement in the delegation of FinTech firms that I took to Mumbai last week to the first UK-India FinTech Conference...

...where we agreed with the Indian Government to work on a UK-India FinTech Bridge...

...in addition to similar arrangements, we've reached with China, Korea and Singapore...

...building vital links between markets and consumers in Britain and Asia.

Conclusion If the UK is going to make the most of the freedoms it will have after leaving the European Union...

...we have to build trade links with the fast-growing economies of Asia...

...we have to invest in the skills of the future...

...and our economy must remain at the cutting edge:

Not just of Fintech. But of AI, biotech – of every area in which we have the potential to lead the world into this new industrial revolution.

The world does not owe us a living.

We will have to strive and graft and fight to seize opportunities; and make the most of them.

That means growing and strengthening the areas – like Fintech – in which we enjoy a comparative advantage...

...it means maintaining and enhancing the UK's reputation as one of the best and most attractive places in the world to do business...

...and it means ensuring we are producing the people with the skills and the aptitude to become the next wave of innovators, entrepreneurs and investors.

Because while we need to continue to attract the brightest and the best from around the world to these shores...

...we must also do better at nurturing and developing the home-grown talent to drive our economy forward in the future.

Our vision of an outward-looking, Global Britain that will deliver the high-skilled, high-wage economy of the future...

...that will power the higher living standards we all want to see for future generations.

So I urge everyone here today – innovators, investors, regulators – to help us realise that vision.

Help us keep the UK at the forefront of the FinTech revolution.

Help us build a truly world-beating new tech sector.

Let your ideas, your apps, your services, your equity demonstrate what's really possible when government, business and regulators all pull in the same direction.

Working together, to build the world's greatest FinTech hub.