

Press release: Fishing cheats land big fines in court in Middlesex

Anglers had penalties of over £450 each imposed at Uxbridge Magistrates Court on 6 February 2017 for fishing illegally, without an Environment Agency rod licence.

Adam Younie 26 of Haverhill, John Tibbs 46 of Romford, and Steve Sullivan 48 were caught fishing without a licence by Environment Agency fisheries enforcement officers at Thorney Weir lakes, West Drayton, Middlesex. Each were fined £300 (with £127 costs and £30 victim surcharge) when an Environment Agency annual licence at the time, cost just £27.

All anglers failed to appear in court. Environment Agency Fisheries Team Leader, Richard Tyner said:

We check licences across all fisheries in Hertfordshire and Essex, and work in partnership with fishery owners and the police to detect and deter fisheries crime. People who don't buy a licence are cheating other anglers and the future of the sport. The Environment Agency relies on the income from rod licence sales to continue the important work we do to protect fish stocks, improve fisheries and encourage more people to take up fishing.

If you are caught fishing without a rod licence you risk a criminal conviction and a fine up to £2,500. There is no excuse. Annual rod licences for trout and coarse fishing remain at £5 for 12 to 16 year olds, £18 for senior and disabled concessions and £27 for non-concessions. Children under 12 can fish for free. Licences are easy to buy from the Post Office website or by phone on 03448 005 386 prior to fishing. Anglers should always ensure they have permission to fish at a fishery and check Environment Agency byelaws.

Last year, Environment Agency officers checked more than 62,000 licences and prosecuted more than 1,900 licence cheats. Between them, they were ordered to pay fines and costs in excess of £600,000. To help crack down on unlicensed fishing, the Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal activity by calling 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Money raised from rod licence sales is reinvested in the environment, including; a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers, protecting stocks from illegal fishing, fish restocking, invasive species eradication, and working with partners to encourage people to take-up fishing for the first time.

Economy Secretary visits set of big budget US drama

Ken Skates visited the set of TNT's Will, a high end drama series based on the early life of William Shakespeare and met members of the cast and production team.

Will is being filmed largely in Pontyclun's Dragon Studios and is due to broadcast in the US this summer with UK dates to follow. It boasts the largest budget and highest spend of any production shot in Wales to date.

Will is the latest in a growing list of US productions to be filmed in Wales and follows other high profile productions such as Da Vinci's Demons, The Bastard Executioner and The Collection.

It is anticipated that the production, which has been backed by Welsh Government finance, will generate around £18m spend into the local economy.

The first series of Will was commissioned following the success of an initial pilot programme filmed in London. Following support from the Welsh Government the production company decided to undertake a significant proportion of filming and production of the first series of Will in Wales.

Speaking after his visit, Ken Skates said:

"I was so pleased to be able to visit the set of Will, which really is an impressive and quality production with the highest budget of any film or programme to be in Wales so far.

"The scale of the project is resulting in the largest local spend related to TV and film production even seen in Wales which is great news for the local economy and a real coup for the Welsh film and TV sector more broadly.

"We are continuing to work hard to attract high end drama to Wales with a specific focus on the lucrative US market and the probability of repeat series.

"I know the Will production will act as another great endorsement for what Wales can offer the film and TV industry, in terms of our location, expertise and talent. I am delighted that Welsh Government has been able to play a decisive role in bringing this investment to Wales."

Ninth Floor UK Productions Limited – the company behind the series – will be based at Dragon Studio in Pontyclun for nine months of the year with location

shooting in and around South Wales as well as London.

Executive Producer Alison Owen said:

“Filming at Dragon International Film Studios has provided many advantages for the production – using Dragon’s four stages and its extensive backlot, we have been able to create a whole world in one place.

“The streets of Shakespeare’s London spread out on the backlot, whilst the huge Theatre takes up one whole stage, additional interior sets complete the show’s universe. Other breath-taking exterior locations are a stone’s throw away, giving scope and breadth to the show’s visual landscape.

“The close proximity of so many locations has given us an ease and efficiency enabling us to be ambitious with our show, giving us terrific ‘bang for our buck’ and putting the budget on the screen. With access to the experienced Welsh crew based in the area, in Cardiff and Swansea, while only a couple of hours from London on the train, it has been the perfect choice for us.”

Last month the Welsh Government launched a promotional showreel featuring clips from the latest major productions filmed in Wales to promote Wales worldwide as a premier location for TV and feature film production.

Government needs to urgently look at suggestion of abuse of extra time provision in exams – Rayner

Angela Rayner, Labour’s Shadow Education Secretary, commenting on reports that independent school students gain extra time for exams, said:

“Our education system allows children with special educational needs extra time in exams to ensure that they are not unfairly disadvantaged. The suggestion that this could be being abused raises serious questions about the fairness of this arrangement.

“The Government needs to look at this urgently to make sure that no school is abusing the system.”

Ends

Hollow words from Jeremy Hunt as the NHS is suffering from the biggest financial squeeze in history – Ashworth

Jonathan Ashworth, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, commenting on reports that Jeremy Hunt said the problems facing some parts of NHS England are 'completely unacceptable', said:

"These are hollow words from the Secretary of State this morning. On his watch the NHS is suffering from the biggest financial squeeze in history and social care is at tipping point. Jeremy Hunt appears to be finally waking up to the scale of the crisis but he must now accept responsibility. Instead he offers just hand wringing but no solutions.

"This week we have seen more and more statistics revealing that patients are waiting longer, and suffering longer in discomfort.

"Government advisor Lord Carter has extraordinarily called NHS conditions 'warlike' and now Sir Robert Francis says there is an 'existential crisis' for the health service warning that another Mid Staffs is 'inevitable.'

"By making such stark warnings Sir Robert Francis blows apart Jeremy Hunt's rhetoric on putting patient safety first.

"The Prime Minister can't just put her head in the sand and ignore these astounding warnings. This is clearly not just a 'small number of incidents' as she glibly suggested.

"The Government's mismanagement of the NHS is causing chaos and misery for patients. We can't go on like this. They need to listen to the experts and explain fully in the Budget in a few weeks time how they will put the

NHS and social care on sustainable footing. NHS patients and their families should never be put through a winter like this again.

Ends

Swansea school receives prestigious health award

This prestigious accolade rewards 'healthy schools', which take responsibility for maintaining and promoting the health of all who learn, work, play and live within it.

The National Quality Award is the highest accreditation a school can achieve through the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes, which is run by Public Health Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government.

The Minister said:

"I am delighted to present Cwm Glâs school with this award.

"The school has worked really hard to achieve the standards required in promoting the health and wellbeing of all its pupils and staff.

"Everyone is encouraged and educated about the issues which affect their health, such as diet, physical activity and not smoking.

"I am very pleased to present Cwm Glâs school with this plaque in recognition of its commitment to the health and wellbeing of its community. Well done!"

Mrs Osborne, Headteacher of Cwm Glâs Primary School said:

"We have worked extremely hard for many years on this scheme and are proud of our achievement, which would not have been possible without the dedication of Mrs Williams and an excellent team of staff, management, parents and pupils at Cwm Glâs Primary School."

The National Quality Award is independently assessed after a school has been involved in the scheme for nine years. It is provided to schools that have proven they are putting the health and wellbeing of all members of its community at the heart of everything.

This also involves teaching pupils about how to lead healthy lives and enabling pupils and staff to take control over aspects of the school environment which influence their health.

Cwm Glâs school is the 128th school in Wales to achieve the National Quality Award and the second in Swansea to do so. To date 130 schools in Wales have achieved the award.

Julie Bishop, Director of Health Improvement for Public Health Wales, said:

“This is a fantastic achievement for Cwm Glâs Primary School! To have received our top health award has taken a great deal of hard work and commitment from pupils, staff and parents alike.

“Everyone at Cwm Glâs deserve this important recognition for their commitment to embedding health and wellbeing in the culture and fabric of the school.”