

Press release: Wood fire man to pay £6,491

Waste company director Lee Reynolds has been fined £1,356 for the illegal storage of wood which went up in flames at Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire. He was also ordered to pay £5,000 costs and a victim surcharge of £135.

In just 2 months 3,000 tonnes of processed mixed waste wood was stashed in a warehouse at Lattersey Hill Industrial Estate before being abandoned some time before March 2015. A month later, the first of 3 significant fires broke out.

Reynolds, aged 36, formerly of Eye Road, Peterborough, was the sole director of Biomass Products UK Ltd which owned the illegal business.

Biomass Products UK Ltd was unlawfully operating the site without an Environmental Permit. In pleading guilty at Peterborough Magistrates' Court (14 February 2018), Reynolds accepted that the offence was due to his consent, connivance or attributable to his neglect as a director of the company.

Miss Wendy Foster, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court Reynolds had a 'flagrant disregard for the law' and had deliberately run the site illegally or allowed it to be run illegally. She said:

From January 2015 there can be no doubt that Reynolds was expressly aware that the activities were illegal and posed a significant fire risk.

She told the court that the site, a steel framed warehouse, was leased by Reynolds in October 2014 for 5 years from a pensions' holding company. The building's use was restricted to warehousing or workshop use, with a specific condition of the lease that no waste should be stored there. On the same day, Reynolds opened a business bank account stating he would use the building for storage, chipping and onward sale of waste wood. Miss Foster said that deliveries were made only in the evening or at weekends and soon neighbours noticed a bad smell coming through the wall, which was reported to the landlord. The Environment Agency was alerted to the site in December 2014 and gained access early in January 2015 when it was found that the unit had been stacked from floor to ceiling with processed mixed treated wood. The unit was 7 metres high.

Reynolds was told he was operating without an environmental permit and was potentially committing an offence and that operations should stop immediately and the waste be removed. Waste transfer notes were also requested. The waste was not moved and no transfer notes handed over.

At a site meeting 2 weeks later temperature readings in the waste pile were

so high that Reynolds was told the site was a fire risk and the waste needed to be removed imminently, but despite a following enforcement notice nothing was done and the site abandoned.

Following a fire, a multi-agency emergency action plan, put together two months before, was put into action and two-thirds of the waste wood was removed from the building, co-ordinated by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and paid for by the Environment Agency. Four fire service appliances remained at the site for 12 more days leading to significant financial and logistical demands on the fire service.

Miss Foster said the building was structurally damaged and the remaining third of the wood inside had to be cleared by the landlord at their cost. The adjoining building was also damaged.

Reynolds told investigating officers that he had made all the decisions about the operation, had no experience of waste and had only intended to store the wood until it could be shipped abroad.

He claimed he had not been paid to take the wood and a man he had met in a coffee shop said he could buy it off him and ship it abroad for power supply.

He said he did not know he needed an environmental permit, hadn't looked at waste transfer notes and handed the keys back to the landlord before the first fire assuming they would deal with the waste.

He said he had been an estate agent for 10 years before starting the business.

Miss Foster said:

Research carried out by Mr Reynolds before starting the business was grossly inadequate and the activities that followed were reckless, if not a flagrant disregard for the law.

She said the failure to retain transfer notes for the wood was 'highly suspicious'.

After the hearing Environment Agency officer Emma D'Avilar said:

This individual has put his own gains before the environment, and the businesses and people who have to live and work on the industrial estate. His story does not add up and the court has seen through his fabricated story.

Companies that deal in waste are governed by extensive legislation and controls so that situations like these do not occur. It was a sham operation from the outset that had to be cleared up by the Environment Agency, Fire and Rescue Service and the landlord which put great pressure on already limited resources.

Reynolds pleaded guilty to:

Between 1 October 2014 and 12 March 2015 on land at Unit 1, Unit B1, Lattersey Hill Industrial Estate, Benwick Road, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire, Biowood Products UK Limited did operate a regulated facility, namely a waste operation for the deposit and storage of waste, without being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 13 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 and that offence was due to your consent, connivance or attributable to your neglect as a director.

Contrary to Regulation 12(1)(a), 38(1)(a) and 41(1)(a) and (b) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

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News story: Home Office announces new round of funding to tackle knife crime

As part of a new step-change to tackle the threat of violent behaviour, the Community Fund – which supports community projects to work with young people about the dangers of carrying knives – will have its funding increased to up to £1 million.

Over 40 charities, including the Ben Kinsella Trust, have already benefited by receiving grants of up to £20,000 through the first round of the Community Fund which was launched in October 2017.

In addition, further funding has been secured for Young People's Advocates until at least the end of March 2019, to provide support for vulnerable women and girls at risk of exploitation by gangs.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

Knife crime has devastating consequences for families and local communities and I am determined to provide necessary support for those most at risk.

Tackling this crime needs a change in young people's attitudes so they are not tempted to carry a knife and understand that they risk inflicting serious injury or even a tragic loss of life if they do.

This new funding will allow communities to work with young people so they do not want to carry knives. This will be a commitment in the forthcoming Serious Violence Strategy which will be published later this spring, in which there will be a strong emphasis on early intervention.

The Home Office has already provided around £2.5 million of funding for 13 Young People's Advocates over 6 years (April 2012 to March 2018) in London, Manchester and Birmingham. In recognition of the important services these professionals deliver to vulnerable women and girls affected by gangs, funding will continue in order to ensure effective delivery of these services.

Early intervention and prevention will be one of the main messages in the new Serious Violence Strategy to be published later this spring. It will place a new emphasis on steering young people away from crime, while continuing to promote the strongest possible law enforcement approach.

[News story: Cumbria is called upon to help drive gender balance](#)

Recognising the unique contribution that the county makes to the nuclear sector, 'Women in Nuclear UK' will launch a dedicated 'Cumbria' branch, at an event held at the new National College for Nuclear.

Claire Gallery-Strong from Sellafield Ltd heads up the [WiN](#) Cumbria team, she said;

There is a unique concentration of nuclear capability in Cumbria and by strengthening links here, WiN UK can help the local industry reach its full potential by maximising the talents of all.

At the launch we are letting people know how we can help, whether that be through training, mentoring services and building a

valuable network in the area.

However, this is also a call to action. It's everyone's responsibility to ensure we create an inclusive and fair environment that helps attract, retain and build a diverse workforce of the future, for Cumbria and the UK.

Speakers include Cumbrian entrepreneur and MD of Prima Uno Limited, Sarah Purdham, she said:

This is something very close to my heart as there is a huge wealth of talent and experience in women in West Cumbria and in the nuclear industry.

I am looking forward to helping people follow their dreams and harness their career ambitions by listening to people and sharing my experiences, my own journey and also some of the mistakes I have made along the way.

Equality and diversity expert Alison McDermott and Sellafield Ltd's Dorothy Gradden OBE are also speaking.

WiN UK was established in 2014 to increase the skills base in the nuclear industry by encouraging gender balance, improve the representation of women in leadership, engage with the public on nuclear issues and support the industry with tools and information.

Claire Gallery-Strong added;

The overwhelming response to our soft launch shows that there is a real appetite for collaboration in this area. We have people at various stages of their career, from a broad range of organisations and disciplines, all hoping to share ideas and experiences.

The WiN Cumbria team will carry out the objectives of WIN UK on a local basis and will engage with the local industry and support career progression through mentoring and networking. It also aims to attract younger women into the nuclear industry through engagement with local schools and universities.

Currently only 22% of the UK's nuclear industry is female, and this number declines significantly at senior levels, statistics that WiN UK is working to change. There is strong evidence to suggest that an inclusive environment, with diverse teams, leads to better performance.

News story: Changes to processes for sediment sampling and analysis

The MMO has now validated other laboratories to provide analysis of sediment samples. As a result it is changing relevant parts of the marine licensing pre-application process.

Applications for marine licences which require analysis for chemical, physical and biological determinands must have an associated sample plan agreed in advance by the MMO. Previously analysis was only provided by the MMO's technical advisors, The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas). However in order to provide additional choice to applicants other laboratories have now been validated to provide this service.

From 1 April 2018 the MMO will only accept requests and provide responses for sample plans to applicants through [our Marine Case Management System \(MCMS\) online portal](#).

All sample plan responses issued after this date will include a list of laboratories which have been validated to undertake sediment analysis, as well as the specific determinands which they are validated to analyse. The list of individual determinands can also be [viewed on the MMO website](#).

This change means that once the MMO has issued the sample plan, applicants will be able to make their own independent choice on where to obtain sediment analysis. They will need to contact that laboratory directly to undertake the required analysis.

After the MMO has issued the sample plan response with link to validated laboratories it will close the pre-application sample plan request in MCMS.

Whichever validated laboratory is used to undertake sediment analysis, the applicant must submit the results to the MMO on the correct template (available from the MMO website) to accompany a marine licence application (where applicable). This also applies to marine licences with a requirement to periodically provide sediment analyses to the MMO over the duration of that licence.