

## **News story: Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visit British Forces Cyprus**

Landing at RAF Akrotiri, the Duke and Duchess met with the men and women who will be serving on operations throughout the Christmas period. They first met with personnel who have been providing ongoing support to Operation Shader, as well as later meeting with members of the 2 Battalion, The Mercian Regiment, recently returned from deployment in Afghanistan.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge meets with the children of military personnel currently based at Cyprus, accepting a gift of flowers. MOD Crown Copyright 2018

Speaking to assembled personnel, the Duke paid tribute to the 11,000 personnel currently serving overseas and on operations, who will be spending time away from their families at Christmas.

The Royal couple joined with members of the British Forces Cyprus community, military personnel, civil servants and locally employed staff, for tea and cake. Here they heard about the work this wide range of individuals carry out in support of operations and learnt about daily life on the base.

The Royal couple meet with the children and families of service personnel, civil servants and locally engaged staff. MOD Crown Copyright 2018.

After meeting with local children, the Duke and Duchess opened the new OASIS Centre, a welfare facility built for single personnel serving on operations or based at RAF Akrotiri.

After the Royal couple had departed, Commander of British Forces Cyprus, Maj Gen James Illingworth said:

This was an exceptionally happy day for military personnel and families in Cyprus, both for those posted here in support of operations and those that are on overseas tours away from loved ones during the Christmas period.

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## **DVSA opening hours: Christmas and New Year**

Last updated 16 December 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 16 December 2020

Updated content with Christmas 2020 and New Year 2021 opening hours

2. 4 December 2019

Updated with opening hours for Christmas 2019 and New Year 2020.

3. 7 December 2018

Updated with opening hours for Christmas 2018 and New Year 2019.

4. 11 December 2017

Updated with opening hours for Christmas 2017 and New Year 2018.

5. 17 December 2016

Updated with opening hours for Christmas 2016 and New Year 2017.

6. 16 December 2015

DVSA opening hours for Christmas and New Year.

7. 17 December 2014

First published.

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## **[News story: Energy systems of the future: local communities to benefit sooner](#)**

A new research consortium and funding for business-led innovation projects will speed up the uptake of smart energy systems by local communities to start benefiting from cleaner, cheaper and more consumer-friendly energy.

Funding is by [UK Research and Innovation](#) through the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#) for clean energy – a £102.5 million investment in UK industry and research to develop systems that support the global move to renewables.

## **Rolled out by 2020s**

Twelve projects from all across the UK will share £1.5 million to design ground-breaking, local, smart energy systems that are ready for roll out in the 2020s.

They will quickly bring forward energy systems with improved efficiency and productivity, at lower costs, in order to reduce energy bills for consumers and create better user experiences.

Ultimately this should help improve air quality in line with the government's [fifth carbon budget](#), at the same time as building the UK's energy supply chain, creating high value jobs and export opportunities.

Projects include:

- creating an energy marketplace and local trading platform between the predominantly commercial premises in London South Bank and Waterloo, using IoT sensors, predictive algorithms and storage systems
- maximising existing and planned renewable generation assets in Bridgend, including solar farms and a nearby energy park, to develop a local electricity flexibility market, an electric vehicle charging network and improved service offerings for transport and heat
- making use of an established energy innovation district group and new digital technologies, such as sensing and control devices, data analytics and artificial intelligence, the Cheshire Energy Hub will better manage energy use by industrial users, decarbonise and lower costs

## **Developing novel research concepts**

To bring forward novel research in local energy systems and accelerate uptake, value and impact, £8 million will go to setting up EnergyREV, an energy revolution research consortium.

The consortium will be led by the [University of Strathclyde](#) and include 29 investigators across 22 universities, working to ensure that UK academic expertise delivers impact and a competitive advantage.

It will work closely with the [Energy Systems Catapult](#) to provide analysis, evaluation and assessment of the projects funded under the prospering from the energy revolution challenge.

Additionally, EnergyREV will deliver its own strategic research projects that address some of the industrial challenges in developing local, investable, consumer-centred energy approaches.

## **Improving uptake, value and impact**

Professor Stephen McArthur, Deputy Associate Principal for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation, at the University of Strathclyde said:

EnergyREV is excited about its role in supporting innovation in the prospering from the energy revolution programme.

The world-class knowledge, research teams and interdisciplinary expertise available through our university partnership will improve the uptake, value and impact of smart local energy systems.

We are focused on using our novel research to accelerate and help deliver the Industrial Strategy goals and enhance UK competitiveness.

Rob Saunders, Deputy Challenge Director, Prospering from the Energy Revolution, UK Research and Innovation said:

This is an exciting time for energy innovations.

We all rely on energy and we all need it to be cleaner and more cheaper, both as consumers and as a nation. New technologies point towards a new energy future, one of lower carbon and more efficient energy supply, distribution and storage, giving consumers more control.

This energy revolution – a crucial part of the Industrial Strategy – has the potential to unlock investment and create high-quality jobs and grow companies capable of exporting.

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## **Press release: North East man fined for waste offences**

A North East man has been fined after pleading guilty to four offences, including breaching an environmental permit and obstruction.

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## **Press release: North East man fined for waste offences**

A Teesside man has been fined after he breached his environmental permit and then obstructed an Environment Agency officer during his investigation.

Glenn Norman Walsh, 56, of Blue House Point Road at Portrack, Stockton-on-Tees, appeared at Teesside Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 4 December where he pleaded guilty to all four allegations against him.

He was charged with two offences of breaching the terms of his environmental permit, one of failing to comply with an Enforcement Notice, and another of obstructing an Environment Agency officer in the exercise of his duties.

He was fined £1,173 and ordered to pay legal costs and a victim surcharge amounting to a total of £4,790.

## **Number of breaches found**

Prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency, Matthew Treece told the court that on 10 May 2017 Environment Agency officers visited SIS Plastics at Stockton-on-Tees where they found a number of breaches.

This included waste being stored without fire breaks, non-permitted waste accepted on to site, waste stored loose or in insecure containers, and waste being stored on land outside of the site.

Mr Walsh had also failed to tell the Environment Agency about the breakdown of the granulator, which is a piece of equipment central to the site's operation.

A number of enforcement notices were served, including one to remove all waste which is either sludge or liquid and dispose of it properly, which was met.

Another required all waste to be stored and treated properly, including all waste outside either being moved inside or into a secure container, or off site by 23 June 2018.

A visit on 19 April 2018 found there was still a risk of pollution due to fire, waste was still being stored outside and water was pooling in the yards due to inadequate drainage.

During a visit the following month Environment Agency officers were being shown around the site by the manager when Walsh approached angry and agitated, shouting at the officers to leave, and was abusive about one of them. The officers left without being able to inspect the premises.

The incident was captured on the officer's body worn video camera and the footage was played to the court before sentence.

On 25 June 2018 the officers returned and found large amounts of waste still stored outside and on the ground.

## **Body worn cameras**

Paul Whitehill, Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

Deliberately flouting environmental permits impacts on the environment and local community as well as undercutting legitimate businesses who abide by their permits.

We take offences such as this extremely seriously and I hope this sends out a message to others that we will take appropriate action for anyone who disregards the law.

Environment Agency enforcement officers in the north east first trialled the use of body worn cameras last year to help reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour, assaults and threats against staff. They are currently being rolled out to teams elsewhere in the country. Paul added:

Our officers are doing an important job ensuring that waste sites are operating within the law and it's not acceptable for them to be subject to abuse such as this. The safety of our staff is paramount and they shouldn't have to put up with any kind of abusive or threatening behaviour.

Our preference is for the cameras to prevent hostility in the first place and I hope this serves as a warning to others that their actions are being recorded and will be used in future court proceedings.

The cameras – which are the norm among many enforcement agencies – can be used in a variety of ways, including at visits to poor performing waste sites, illegal waste sites, enforcement investigations and during fisheries and navigation patrols.

Officers must follow clear guidelines on use of the cameras, including telling people they are being filmed, and deleting any footage after a month unless it is used for evidential purposes.

[Body worn camera footage of obstruction offence](#)