

Press release: Environmental charities receive over £2.2 million from businesses which broke environmental laws

Companies and individuals will make the payments for environmental offences including pollution of rivers or the sea, not meeting permit conditions or not taking reasonable steps to recover packaging waste.

A total of 15 charities and projects will benefit from the £2,223,121.54 with the money to be spent by local groups on projects that benefit the environment including cleaning up and enhancing parks, rivers and beaches.

The latest list includes the Environment Agency's largest ever financial contribution of £975,000 offered by [Wessex Water Services Limited](#) for an environmental offence involving sewage spills at Swanage in Dorset. The funds will benefit Dorset Waste Partnership (£400,000), Dorset Litter Free Coast and Sea Project (£100,000), Purbeck District Council/Swanage Town Council (£400,000) and Durlston Country Park and Nature Reserve (£75,000).

There are another 14 Enforcement Undertakings with payments ranging from £5,000 – £232,000, including:

- United Utilities Water Limited – £232,000 benefitting Mersey Rivers Trust (£90,000) and Community Forest Trust (£142,000) for discharging sewage into a brook
- Yorkshire Water Services Limited – £200,000 benefitting Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for polluting a river.
- Northumbrian Water Limited – £135,000 benefitting Durham Wildlife Trust (£45,000), Wear Rivers Trust (£45,000), Marine Conservation Society (£45,000) for polluting a stream.
- Carlsberg Supply Company UK Limited – £120,000 benefitting the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Northamptonshire (£80,000) and River Nene Regional Park Community Interest Company (£40,000) for polluting a river.
- Tesco Distribution Limited – £100,000 benefitting Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for discharging diesel into a watercourse and ponds.

- Angel Springs Holdings Limited – £24,329 benefitting Marine Conservation Society for not taking reasonable steps to recover and recycle packaging waste.

As well as making a payment to an appropriate charity or project, these companies have accepted liability, demonstrated restoration of harm and will make improvements to avoid future offences.

Peter Kellett Director of Legal Services from the Environment Agency said:

When companies damage the environment whether it is through polluting our waters or breaching permit conditions, we will take enforcement action against them including civil sanctions.

We take these environmental incidents very seriously and these payments of more than £2.2 million direct to charities will help them carry out vital projects to improve our environment right across England.

Ellie Brodie, Senior Policy Manager, The Wildlife Trusts said:

Obviously, we would have been happier if these incidents hadn't occurred at all. However, it's a good principle that polluters should offer redress for the damage they cause. The money will enable work which will benefit wildlife and wild places, and which otherwise wouldn't be funded. We hope these payments serve as a reminder to business of its responsibility towards a clean and healthy environment; and also have a deterrent effect as it's clearly cheaper to do things cleanly, rather than risk creating pollution.

Companies or members of the public are urged report pollution to the Environment Agency's 24/7 hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Environment Agency officers respond to limit damage to the environment and protect people and wildlife.

The Environment Agency is increasingly using enforcement undertakings for suitable cases to restore or enhance the environment, improve practices of the offending business and ensure future compliance with environmental requirements. However prosecutions will still be taken, particularly in the most serious cases.

The full list of [Enforcement Undertakings](#) is now available.

Press release: £66 million for shared and integrated education in Northern Ireland

- Over £300m of funding could provide 2,200 more places at shared and integrated schools
- He will also meet local businesses to discuss how the government's Budget will support them

Pupils at shared and integrated schools across Northern Ireland will benefit from £66 million of immediate funding for capital projects at 23 schools, the Chancellor announced during a visit today (Friday 23 November).

Additionally, a further £160m of projects at 13 previously announced shared and integrated schools will progress through to design and construction phases – once they've passed a final value for money assessment. Some £76m of other school projects have also been identified as suitable for funding and will now begin developing proposals.

The funding helps schools in Northern Ireland, that teach children from different faiths and backgrounds, expand and take on more pupils. The Chancellor announced in the Budget that shared and integrated schools would benefit from over £300 million in funding, which could boost the number in these schools by 2,200.

The Chancellor will visit one of the schools benefitting from the funding where he will meet pupils and teachers.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

The UK Government is backing these vitally important schools so they can offer a shared education to more children across Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland's economy is powering ahead and the UK Government is committed to supporting a bright, shared future, helping more young people here to achieve their full potential.

Today's announcement builds on the UK Government's support for Northern Ireland's education system, infrastructure and economy. Northern Ireland has seen the fastest productivity growth since 2010 in the UK. The Budget announced £350m for a Belfast City Region Deal and opened negotiations for a Derry/Londonderry and Strabane City Region Deal.

Later in the visit, the Chancellor will meet small businesses at an event organised by the Federation of Small Businesses. He will discuss the recently announced budget measures that support growth and investment – and what more

the government can do to support entrepreneurs.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Karen Bradley, said:

I am delighted that the Chancellor has delivered £300 million for shared and integrated education in Northern Ireland. This is a huge boost for young people and will help break down barriers and overcome divisions in society.

The UK Government is delivering on our commitment in the Stormont House and Fresh Start agreements to help build a shared, inclusive future for Northern Ireland.

Press release: £66 million for shared and integrated education in Northern Ireland

Chancellor announces £66 million of immediate funding for 23 schools on visit to Northern Ireland.

Press release: Water company to pay a record £975,000 towards environmental improvements following sewage spills on Dorset coast

Wessex Water has offered to pay £975,000 to achieve equivalent environmental benefits following a series of sewage spills in Swanage Bay, Dorset.

Press release: Water company to pay a record £975,000 towards environmental improvements following sewage spills on Dorset coast

- Highest ever Enforcement Undertaking in England
- RNLI lifeboat crew complained after sailing through raw sewage
- Local community will benefit from £400,000 towards flood defence scheme
- Nature reserve, RNLI and projects to improve water quality will receive payments

More than 142,000 cubic metres of sewage was discharged into the sea during illegal spills in 2016 and 2017. The windfall will be used to fund environmental improvements in and around the coastal town of Swanage.

The package offered by Wessex Water, the highest ever in the UK, includes £400,000 towards a local authority flood defence scheme in Swanage, £400,000 to Dorset Waste Partnership to fund the development of a doorstep recycling service for domestic fat, oil and grease, £100,000 towards the Dorset Litter Free Coast and Sea Project, £75,000 to the Durlston Country Park and Nature Reserve.

The company also offered £25,000 compensation to Swanage RNLI Lifeboat Station as an impacted third party, taking the total pay-out to £1 million.

Wessex Water made the offer as part of a legal agreement known as an Enforcement Undertaking (EU) which is a form of Civil Sanction. An EU involves a company or individual offering to put right what went wrong and compensate people and the environment. After careful consideration, the Environment Agency accepted Wessex Water's enforcement undertaking on the basis that the company accepted breaching the legislation and payments totalling £975,000 would secure improvements to the environment including flood defence and measures to tackle fats, oil and grease – which can cause pollution to rivers and coastal waters if poured down the sink.

Mark Sitton-Kent from the Environment Agency said:

When water companies damage the environment by illegally polluting water the Environment Agency will take tough enforcement action against them including civil sanctions.

This record pay-out will secure a range of environmental improvements for the local community, tourism and future water quality.

Swanage town centre falls within a flood risk zone where temporary defences

are deployed to help protect local business and property. The contribution offered by Wessex Water will benefit local residents and businesses by improving the level of flood protection in the town.

The financial contribution to Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) will fund the development of a doorstep recycling service for fats, oil and grease. The money will be used to help determine the facilities needed for the service and fund additional resources to assist with recycling. The donation to Durlston Country Park will enable provision of equipment for animal surveys and raise awareness and promote management of the rich local environment.

The financial pay-out arose from a series of unconsented discharges from Swanage Sewage Treatment Works into Swanage Bay where it is estimated more than 142,000 cubic metres of sewage was discharged into the sea.

Notes to editor

As owner and operator, Wessex Water admitted failing to comply with the site's environmental permit on various dates between 31 July 2016 and 3 August 2017. One of the sewage spills occurred during the 2016 Swanage carnival weekend and another was witnessed by a local RNLI lifeboat crew who complained to Wessex Water and the local authority after sailing through a plume of raw sewage off Peverill Point on 1 August 2016.

The continuing discharges prompted the local council to erect warning signs on Swanage beach on 5 August 2016.

The permit for the treatment works allows for discharges from 3 separate outfalls. Discharges should only occur when flows exceed limits specified in the permit. The works had previously operated to a high standard, but its performance deteriorated around the time of the discharges resulting in a loss in storage capacity.

A storm on 1 August 2016 caused extra flows to enter the works resulting in unconsented discharges into Swanage Bay. The pollution occurred because there was no where to store the incoming flows. Wessex Water failed to report the discharges until 3 days later. Swanage Sewage Treatment Works works is now operating in compliance with its permit and has been since April 2018.

The previous highest EU was £650,752 paid by Costcutter Supermarkets Group Limited to WRAP (The Waste and Resources Action Programme) charity in 2017 for offences under the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007. The highest previous financial contribution from a water company EU – which was £375,000 paid by Northumbrian Water Limited in relation to pollution incidents from one of its sewage pumping stations between 2015 and 2016 – which was formally accepted in December 2016.

The Environment Agency has previously accepted 4 other EUs from Wessex Water, the highest of which was £200,000 for an EU relating to Wick St Lawrence, Somerset. The money was split between a number of charities and organisations to help fund environmental projects.