

## **Press release: Somerset haulage firm fined for waste offence**

The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

In 2016 Minster Tippers Limited deposited 4,659 tonnes of non-hazardous soil and sub-soil on a field at Poltimore, Exeter. The waste came from development sites around Exeter and was four and a half times the limit allowed by the Environment Agency under an authorisation known as an U1 waste exemption. The maximum limit for soil and sub-soil permitted under a U1 is 1,000 tonnes.

The waste was used to level off a substantial part of a field, significantly altering its character and that of the surrounding landscape. The defendant told the Environment Agency that while they had obtained a copy of the site's U1 waste exemption they acknowledged they'd failed to comply with its tonnage limits.

Richard Tugwell, for the Environment Agency, said:

The defendant breached the site's U1 waste exemption tonnage limit for commercial gain and undermined legitimate waste operators. Companies who deposit waste must check a receiving site can legally accept their waste and that they comply with a site's tonnage limits.

Appearing before Exeter magistrates, Minster Tippers Limited of Combe St Nicholas, Chard, Somerset were fined £7,000 and ordered to pay £3,746 in costs after pleading guilty to an offence under Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The case was heard on 29 October 2018.

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On 20 April 2017 the Environment Agency received reports that the River Yeo had turned purple downstream of the Pen Mill Trading Estate, Yeovil. Concerned members of the public reported discolouration up to 4 kilometres downstream of the industrial estate.

Environment Agency staff traced the source of the pollution to Ablebox Ltd, a local company manufacturing cardboard boxes and operating its own printing works at a premises in Buckland Road, Yeovil.

The next day officers returned to the premises and saw waste ink being hosed into a drain. They also found inappropriately stored containers of waste ink and spill kits already full of soiled absorbents. Dye testing confirmed the waste ink had flowed through the site's surface water system and directly into the River Yeo via a surface water outfall.

An employee was later found to have poured up to 50 buckets of waste ink down a drain over a 2 to 3 day period. He stated he'd done so on the instruction of management because there was no room left in the waste ink storage containers. Ablebox Ltd claimed the employee had taken it upon himself to dispose of the ink without the company's knowledge.

Magistrates heard that Wessex Water had previously detected unauthorised discharges in the sewerage system and that Ablebox Ltd had been told they were improperly disposing of waste ink through the drain and sewers on at least two occasions. The company blamed the illegal discharges on one of their employees.

Oliver Hill, for the Environment Agency, said:

Businesses must never pour any waste down surface water drains as they are often connected to nearby streams or rivers. By disposing of waste in this way you are committing a criminal offence. This prosecution serves as a timely reminder for businesses to act responsibly. Where we have evidence, we won't hesitate to prosecute offenders.

Appearing before Yeovil magistrates, the company was fined £6,000 and ordered to pay £1,281 legal costs after pleading guilty to causing or knowingly permitting a discharge of noxious or polluting matter into a controlled watercourse contrary to section 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting Regulations.

The company was also ordered to pay investigation costs of £5,566 and a victim surcharge of £170. The case was heard on 7 November 2018.

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## **Press release: Faith Minister calls on religious communities to bridge divides**

People and faith groups urged to reach out to one another and build local networks to support their communities and to bridge divides and extend understanding.