

Press release: River restoration project wins national conservation award

A partnership project between the Environment Agency and the Box Moor Trust in Hemel Hempstead has been recognised with a national award.

The project has transformed a 1 kilometre stretch of the River Bulbourne in Hemel Hempstead from a straight, wide and silty river into a meandering chalk stream, which is a globally rare habitat.

The 'Bringing Back the Bulbourne' project scooped the 'best medium scale' award at The Wild Trout Trust Conservation Awards held at the Savile Club in London. The awards seek to recognise and encourage excellence in habitat management and conservation and celebrate effort, ingenuity and imagination.

Nancy Baume from the Environment Agency said:

We are delighted that our work to restore the River Bulbourne has been recognised by the Wild Trout Trust. This project represents years of hard work for us and our partners.

The Environment Agency is committed to working with partners to protect and restore our chalk streams for the benefit of wildlife so future generations are able to enjoy these unique resources.

The £60,000 project has breathed new life into the river. The natural meander of the river has now been restored, creating new habitats for plants and wildlife. Removing a weir has allowed fish to move along the river, while cutting back trees has allowed more light to reach the river.



An aerial photo showing the straight river before the project works started.



An aerial photo showing the restored river after the project works.

Volunteers have installed woody habitat features along the channel which create refuge areas for fish and other wildlife.

Other works include installing fencing to reduce bank erosion from livestock, creation of kingfisher banks to increase nesting opportunities, and improving ford crossing points across the river. The project has been designed to incorporate natural flood management techniques, and the final phase of the project, to create wetland scrapes, will take place later this year.

People walking through the moors can now appreciate a rare and iconic chalk stream with all of the rich diversity of wildlife that it supports.

The River Bulbourne is an example of a chalk stream, which is a watercourse that flows from chalk-fed groundwater. Chalk streams are a very rare habitat globally, with more than 85% of all the chalk streams in the world found in England.

David Kirk the Chairman of the The Box Moor Trust said:

The Box Moor Trust would like to thank all of those involved at the Environment Agency, in particular Nancy Baume and Jack Herriot, for all of their hard work and dedication over the last few years. The Trust would also like to thank Allen Beechey of the Chilterns Chalk Stream Project for his help and our dedicated team of volunteers whose tireless work has been integral to the success of the project.

This project is part of a wider programme of works which the Environment Agency are working on, alongside partners, to deliver improvements to chalk streams in the Hertfordshire and North London area. These works include river restoration improvements and abstraction reductions.

For more information contact: HNLenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

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News story: First director general appointed to lead new Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)

Major reforms to the IPCC – including its renaming as the IOPC – were announced by Prime Minister Theresa May during her time as Home Secretary. The IPCC oversees the police complaints system in England and Wales and sets the standards by which the police should handle complaints. The changes to the IPCC include a new governance model to improve efficiency.

The IOPC will have new powers, helping it to become more effective and more decisive in addressing public concerns, including to initiate its own investigations without relying on a force to record and refer a particular case for investigation, and to determine appeals and recommend remedies.

Michael Lockwood's crown appointment means he will be the single executive head of the organisation when the IPCC officially becomes the IOPC in January 2018, replacing the current commission.

He will ultimately bear responsibility for all decisions made in the IOPC's investigations and appeals, including the investigation of the most serious and sensitive allegations involving the police.

Nick Hurd, Minister for Policing and the Fire Service said:

I'm delighted to announce Michael Lockwood as the first director general of the IOPC. His appointment is a key milestone in the reform of the IPCC, and will ensure clear accountability and oversight for the running of the organisation.

We are absolutely determined to make the police complaints and discipline systems simpler and more transparent for the benefit of the public, and the new, more efficient and effective IOPC will be a vital part of that.

I am very grateful to the IPCC for its considerable support in developing the proposals for the IOPC.

A board, appointed by the Home Secretary, that includes a majority of non-executive directors, will provide independent support and challenge to the director general as well as oversight of the overall running of the organisation.

Mr Lockwood has a background in both the public and private sectors and has been Harrow Council's chief executive since 2015.

Michael Lockwood said:

It's an honour to be appointed as the first director general for the IOPC.

This is an important time for the organisation, as the IPCC transitions to the IOPC. I look forward to working with the dedicated staff there as we reshape the organisation to ensure the police disciplinary and complaints system is as effective and as clear as possible.

Press release: Directors' conduct in fine wine investment scam leaves sour taste

Customers who thought they were investing in fine wines investment scheme have been left out of pocket by nearly £1 million.

The investigation by the Insolvency Service found that Crimson Fine Wines Limited, based initially in London and then in Sittingbourne in Kent, used cold calling tactics and then failed to purchase or allocate wines to customers who had paid for their investments. The scheme offered investors returns over 12 months to five years, at a time when they claimed the property market and shares were less attractive.

The Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy accepted disqualification undertakings from Craig Cooper and Jefferey Kushner, preventing them from acting as directors for 11 and 9 years respectively.

Kushner was the listed director of Crimson Fine Wines Limited but lived in Canada, and allowed Cooper, who had previous experience in the industry, to run the operation.

As a result of this failure, at the time of liquidation of Crimson Fine Wines Limited there was insufficient wine held in the bonded warehouse to satisfy customers' claims.

Additionally, Cooper used the company's bank account for his own personal benefit, used his own personal bank account for the receipt of company funds and was paid at least one third share of £114,106 in dividends. Kushner was negligent in failing to monitor the company account, allowing it to be used for non-commercial benefits, but also received at least one third share of £114,106 in dividends.

Customer claims in the liquidation totalled £989,258, of the overall debts on liquidation of £1,080,724.

Karen Jackson, Official Receiver, said:

One of the main purposes of the Company Directors Disqualification Act is to ensure proper standards of conduct of company directors are maintained and to raise those standards where appropriate.

These disqualifications should serve as a reminder that the Insolvency Service will investigate unacceptable conduct by company directors.

The Insolvency Service will take action against directors who do not take their obligations seriously and abuse their position.

Notes to editors

Jeffrey Kushner's date of birth is December 1980 and he resides in Ontario, Canada.

Craig Cooper's date of birth is January 1983 and he resides in Chatham, Kent.

Crimson Fine Wines Ltd (CR0 No. 07537346) was incorporated on 15 January 2008 and latterly traded from Sears Business Centre, 3-9 Station Street, Sittingbourne, United Kingdom, ME10 3DU.

Cooper was initially appointed as the company's co-director with Kushner from incorporation on 1 February 2011. Cooper then resigned as a director at Companies House on 22 March 2011 but continued to act as a director until the company went into liquidation on 17 August 2015. The estimated deficiency at the date of Liquidation was £1,080,724.

On 18 July 2017, the Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Craig Cooper, effective from 8 August 2017, for 11 years.

On 25 May 2017, the Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Jeffrey Kushner, effective from 15 June 2017, for 9 years.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies. The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Press release: PM's European Council press statement: 20 October 2017

The United Kingdom will take its seat at the European Council table for another year and a half, and we have important work to achieve together in this time.

But cooperation with our European friends will not stop in March 2019.

The UK will stand alongside the EU, as a strong and committed partner, working to promote our shared interests and values.

Nowhere is this more important than in our approach to the global challenges we face.

Whether security and defence, migration or foreign policy issues – we face common opportunities and risks, and we must continue to address them together.

As I've said before, the UK is unconditionally committed to the security and defence of Europe. We share the vision of a strong, secure and successful EU, with global reach and influence. An EU capable of countering shared threats to our continent, working alongside a confident, outward-looking UK.

Yesterday we discussed a range of subjects including migration, the digital economy and some of the most pressing foreign policy issues, such as North Korea and Iran.

We stand united in our clear condemnation of North Korea's aggressive and illegal missile and nuclear tests and urge all states, including China, to play their part in changing the course Pyongyang is taking.

On Iran, we have reiterated our firm commitment to the nuclear deal, which we believe is vitally important for our shared security.

And last night at dinner, I spoke to my fellow leaders about my vision for a new, deep and special partnership between the UK and the European Union after Brexit.

A partnership based on the same set of fundamental beliefs – in not just democracy and rule of law, but also free trade, rigorous and fair competition, strong consumer rights, and high regulatory standards.

I am ambitious and positive for Britain's future and for these negotiations. But I know we still have some way to go.

Both sides have approached these talks with professionalism and a constructive spirit. We should recognise what has been achieved to date.

The UK and the EU share the same objective of safeguarding the rights of EU nationals living in the UK and UK nationals living in the EU.

EU citizens have made a huge contribution to our country and let me be clear that – whatever happens – we want them and their families to stay.

While there are a small number of issues that remain outstanding on citizens' rights, I am confident that we are in touching distance of a deal.

On Northern Ireland, we have agreed that the Belfast agreement must be at the heart of our approach and that Northern Ireland's unique circumstances demand specific solutions. It is vital that joint work on the peace process is not affected in any way – it is too important for that.

Both sides agree that there cannot be any physical infrastructure at the border and that the Common travel area must continue.

We have both committed to delivering a flexible and imaginative approach on this vital issue.

This Council is an important moment. It is a point at which to assess and reflect on how to make further progress.

My speech in Florence made two important steps, which have added a new impetus to the negotiations. I gave a firm commitment on the financial settlement and I proposed a time-limited implementation period based on current terms, which is in the interest of both the UK and the EU.

Both sides agree that subsequent rounds have been conducted in a new spirit. My fellow leaders have been discussing that this morning and I believe that it is in the interests of the UK that the EU 27 continues to take a united approach.

But if we are going to take a step forward together it must be on the basis of joint effort and endeavour.

We must work together to get to an outcome that we can stand behind and that works for all our people.