

Press release: Official opening of Croston Flood Risk Management Scheme

The Croston Flood Risk Management Scheme, developed by the Environment Agency in partnership with Chorley Council, Lancashire County Council and United Utilities, and in collaboration with the Lower Yarrow Flood Action Group, will benefit residents who flooded on Boxing Day 2015, when 344 properties were affected. In 2012, 30 properties in Croston village flooded.

The scheme, which includes an upstream flood storage area on the River Yarrow and 600m earth embankment is capable of retaining up to 1.3 million m³ of water – equivalent to 520 Olympic size swimming pools.

Chair of the Environment Agency, Emma Howard Boyd cut the ribbon on the gate leading to the new embankment and was shown around the new scheme by Cumbria and Lancashire Area Director of the Environment Agency, Keith Ashcroft.

The opening also included a presentation by Dave Massam from the Lower Yarrow Flood Action Group and Neil Forsythe from the Environment Agency.

The scheme received £5.4 million of Government Grant in Aid funding, including £2.1 million from the Government's Project of Acceleration and Growth (PAG) programme launched after the summer floods in 2012. Chorley Council contributed £1 million, Lancashire County Council £181,000 and £667,000 was received from local levy to finance the scheme.

While the risk is reduced, people living in this and other flood risk area should [sign up for flood warnings](#) and be prepared for flooding.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

In February 2016 I saw the devastating impact of the flooding in Croston and I am so impressed by the village's recovery.

I want to celebrate the partnership between the community, the Environment Agency, the councils and United Utilities, who created the Croston Flood Risk Management Scheme together. Everyone has a part to play in protecting themselves from the risk of flooding, but it is by listening to each other and working in partnership that we get the best results.

Cumbria and Lancashire Area Director of the Environment Agency, Keith Ashcroft, said:

The village of Croston has a history of flooding, with 344 properties affected in the Boxing Day 2015 flood, 20 in 2012 and 205 in 1987 from the River Yarrow. This scheme allows us to control

the flow of the River Yarrow and store water reducing flows downstream.

We have kept the community updated throughout the construction of the scheme, and the Lower Yarrow Flood Action Group was heavily involved throughout the project, including helping us to work with the whole community, who were able to walk along the embankment as part of the opening event.

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[News story: Home Office hosts joint summit on 'acid attacks'](#)

The aim of the event was to explore how acids and corrosive substances are being used in criminal activity and to find ways to reduce it. The different agencies shared information over the nature of attacks and what action is being taken.

Addressing the summit, Sarah Newton, Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, said:

The government is very concerned about the use of acid and other corrosives in violent attacks. They often leave victims with terrible life changing injuries and trauma.

There is no place in society for these sickening attacks and we want to work with all agencies to tackle these and prevent further victims. However, where they do occur we must ensure that victims are provided with all the necessary support they require, in terms of ongoing medical and mental health support and support through the Criminal Justice System.

The meeting heard there was no one driver for acid attacks as cases covered a wide range of motivations for the attacks including gang involvement, domestic abuse or honour-based violence and serious organised crime – in addition to random attacks – and that the joint approach must reflect this.

Sarah Newton stressed the importance of the government and other agencies working together to prevent the horrendous attacks from happening.

The Minister added:

The government's approach to tackling the use of acid and other corrosive substances in violent attacks is centred on four key strands. Firstly, working closely with the police to ensure that the policing response is effective. Secondly, we must ensure that the current legislation is used effectively and that sentencing guidelines reflect the severity of these offences. Thirdly, we are working with retailers to see how they can restrict access to the most harmful products and understand the current requirements under the Poisons Act 1972. Finally, it is important that victims of these attacks are at the heart of our response.

We must ensure that there is appropriate support available to victims, from the initial medical response to giving evidence in court and beyond. We must ensure victims feel confident in coming forward to report these crimes and give evidence and that perpetrators of these horrific crimes are brought to justice.

National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) lead for Corrosive Attacks, Assistant Chief Constable Rachel Kearton, who also spoke at the meeting, said:

The use of corrosive substances to commit acts of violence is an extreme violent crime that aims to cause lasting physical and emotional damage to victims. Police forces are dealing with a number of high profile cases in recent months and we are continuing to collect data from police forces across England and Wales to understand the scale and extent of these attacks and develop our ability to support and safeguard victims.

While it is virtually impossible to ban the sale of all corrosive substances as many are household products available over the counter at supermarkets and DIY stores, including for example bleach and drain cleaner, we are working closely with the Home Office and retailers themselves to determine how we can enhance our intelligence picture to keep these products from people who intend to cause harm.

I am sure that some offences of this type are not reported as a crime to the police. Crimes such as this should not go unreported and I would urge anyone who is a victim of this type of attack to report it so that we can deal with the matter positively and

sensitively.

Speech: Ukraine Reform Conference: Foreign Secretary's press conference remarks

Good afternoon everybody and thank you very much for coming along this afternoon.

Prime Minister Groyzman and I have just been at the London [Ukraine Reform Conference](#) and I think it would be fair to say it was the most fascinating and moving event in the sense that we heard from 30 countries, all the major global financial institutions, the European financial institutions, all supporting Ukraine in the process of reform in Ukraine.

Clearly there was a certain amount of anxiety about keeping that process of reform on track, there was defiance in the face of Russian aggression and everybody was very committed the support and defence of Ukraine. There was an insistence on sticking up for the rule of law, the rules based system in which we believe, and countries saying what they were doing to help Ukraine in all sorts of ways, from supplying medical equipment to helping with the banking system to providing holidays for kids from the Donbass region who have been affected by the conflict.

But there was also a wide measure of agreement about the vital importance of Ukraine to us all and about the importance of the success of Ukraine and I have to say there was also a great deal of admiration for Ukraine's leadership, for Ukrainian politicians for what they are trying to do in spite of all the difficulties and all the challenges that Ukraine faces. And certainly from the international financial institutions a great deal of optimism about what has been accomplished over the last 3 years in spite of the challenges that Ukraine has faced and optimism about the future.

So thank you very much all of you for coming and I think it would be right to say Prime Minister that you have from the London Ukraine Reform Conference a very, very wide measure of support from the international community for your reform programme and you can certainly count on the United Kingdom to be with you shoulder to shoulder for the long term. Thank you very much.

Press release: Poor business practice leaves no way for construction company directors to dig their way out of bans

The Inverness Sherriff Court handed an eight year disqualification to Donald Cameron (37), while his fellow director Steven Cameron (36) signed an undertaking agreeing not to run or control a company for seven years. Both were directors of Highland Groundworks Limited.

On the 28 April 2015 Highland Groundworks Limited, with liabilities of £41,786, was placed into liquidation. Steven Cameron and Donald Cameron were joint directors at that time.

Following the Liquidator's appointment the investigation found that from 1 September 2012 to 29 December 2014 the company books and records were inadequate to:

- verify the position with regards to assets owned by the Company at the date of liquidation, especially with regards to fixed assets held at 31 August 2012 compromising plant, machinery and vehicles with a net book value of £102,194 and Debtors in the sum of £64,098
- verify expenditure from the Company bank account totalling £493,351
- verify whether receipts into the Company bank account between 01 September 2012 and 29 December 2014 totalling £404,639 are a true representation of the total of the total sales achieved by the company.

The investigation found that from at least 7 August 2013 the company traded to the detriment of HM Revenue and Customs, in that VAT returns were submitted up to the quarter ended 30 June 2013 disclosing an outstanding liability, including surcharges, of £9,955 which remained outstanding at liquidation. The Company failed to submit VAT returns for the quarters 30 September 2013 to 31 December 2014 resulting in an estimated liability, including surcharges, totalling £28,844 which remained outstanding at liquidation.

Robert Clarke, Head of Company Investigation at the Insolvency Service said:

Directors have a duty to ensure that their companies maintain proper accounting records, and, following insolvency, deliver them to the office-holder in the interests of fairness and transparency. Without a full account of transactions it is impossible to determine whether a director has discharged his duties properly, or is using a lack of documentation as a cloak for impropriety.

Both Steven and Donald Cameron have paid the price for failing to do that, as they cannot now carry on in business other than at

their own risk.

The public can be assured that where there have been abuses of public finance provisions which result in losses of this type, the Insolvency Service will investigate the conduct of the parties involved and take action to remove the privilege of limited liability trading for a lengthy period.

Notes to editors

Highland Groundworks Limited (SC363452) went into liquidation on the 28 April 2015 with a deficiency to creditors of £41,786. The company operated in the field of construction and civil engineering from the premises at 6 Creraig, Kiltarlity, Beauly, Inverness-shire IV4 7JN.

Steven Cameron's date of birth is 9 November 1981.

Steven Cameron was appointed as director of Highland Groundworks Limited on 3 August 2009 and remained a director throughout the company's trading.

Donald Cameron's date of birth is 26 May 1981.

Donald Cameron was appointed as director of Highland Groundworks Limited on 3 August 2009 and remained a director throughout the company's trading.

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

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.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

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