

# Press release: Farmer fined for illegal waste site

A County Durham man has been convicted of operating an illegal waste site in a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency.

Stephen Anthony Suddes, 53, appeared at Newton Aycliffe Magistrate's Court on Wednesday 13 December 2017 for operating a waste facility without a permit at his Thornley Pit House farm in Bishop Auckland.

Suddes, who has two previous convictions for waste offences, admitted the charges. He was handed a fine of £1,640 and ordered to pay costs of £1,500 and a £165 victim surcharge.

Under the same prosecution, Kevin Gray, 53, of Wear Street, Tow Law, on 6 September pleaded guilty for depositing controlled waste on a site without an environmental permit. He was fined £400 and ordered to pay £1,000 costs.

Acting on behalf of the Environment Agency, solicitor Laura Taylor told the court that Suddes deliberately and flagrantly disregarded the law over several months.

Environment Agency officers visited Suddes farm several times between 24 May 2016 and 31 October 2016. Each time they observed illegal activity including large piles of waste containing metals, wood, plastics, rubble and soils, and clear signs that waste had been burnt. On two occasions they recorded a white van owned by Kevin Gray Building Services tipping construction and demolition waste on the farm.

David O'Toole of the Environment Agency said:

Suddes has repeatedly put the environment at risk by deliberately ignoring the law for financial gain. Illegal waste activity such as this has a detrimental impact on the community and environment, as well as undermining legitimate businesses. We'll continue to work hard to ensure enforcement action is taken against those who flout the law.

Anyone who suspects that waste is being disposed of on an illegal waste fire is urged to report the matter to our incident hotline on 0800 807060.

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# Press release: North East youngster's winning design for flood wardens

A Sunderland youngster flooded with creativity has designed a winning logo for the region's Flood Wardens.

The Environment Agency hosted a special assembly at Hetton Lyons Primary School to present year 5 pupil Sally Lockey with a flood warden jacket.

Her design beat more than 300 submitted across the north east and will now be printed on all of the new blue flood warden jackets in the region.

And the new logo will also be printed on pavements outside north east schools with Rainworks spray – an invisible spray which will only show the logo when it rains.

It means pupils at the school will be reminded of the importance of being floodaware at key times.

Coun. James Blackburn, Hetton Town Mayor David Wallace, and flood wardens from Durham were at the special assembly to congratulate the youngster.



Winner Sally Lockey with her logo design

## Important job for youngsters

Taryn Al-Mashgari, Flood Community Engagement Officer who covers the Tyne and Wear area, said:

The winning logo will be worn by flood wardens right across the north east so it was an important job for these youngsters.

We got more than 300 entries, which is fantastic, and it was tough for the judging panel. But the winning logo incorporated all of the aspects of a flood warden and that's why we chose it.

We're working closely with schools to make sure young people understand what it means to be flood resilient and how they can be prepared, so that communities are prepared for future generations.

We've talked to them about the importance of flood wardens and what they do and it's been fun for the children to come up with this new design.



L-R: Taryn Al-Mashgari, Environment Agency; Flood warden Margaret Horseman; Mayor David Wallace with the flood emergency 'grab bag' given to the school; Flood warden Sue Williams, and Coun. James Blackburn, with logo design winner Sally Lockey wearing the flood warden jacket and with the new Rainworks stencil.



## School presentations

Environment Agency Flood Engagement Officers gave presentations at schools across the north east during the competition to raise awareness of flooding with children and start them thinking about how to prepare for flooding.

Sarah Staward, Year 5 teacher at the school, added:

The children really enjoyed learning about flooding and the role and qualities of the Environment Agency flood wardens. The competition also supports our work as an eco-school.



Flood wardens are community volunteers who support their communities during flooding incidents – including activating a community's flood action plan, ensuring the most vulnerable in their community are safe and working closely with the Environment Agency.

Flood warden Sue Williams, who congratulated Sally at the assembly, said:

These new flood warden jackets are excellent as the blue colour identifies us as flood wardens and distinguishes us from organisations at the scene. The winning symbol is fantastic and captures everything about our role.

[Communities are urged to check their flood risk and find out how they can prepare for flooding](#)

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## **Press release: Regulators approve new nuclear power station design**

The UK Advanced Boiling Water Reactor (UK ABWR), designed by Hitachi-GE, is suitable for construction in the UK, the regulators confirmed today following completion of an in-depth assessment of the nuclear reactor design.

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales, the regulators who undertake the Generic Design Assessment of new reactor designs, are satisfied that this reactor meets regulatory expectations on safety, security and environmental protection at this stage of the regulatory process.

ONR has issued a Design Acceptance Confirmation (DAC) and the environment agencies have issued a Statement of Design Acceptability (SoDA) to Hitachi-GE.

Horizon Nuclear Power is proposing to build and operate two of these reactors in Wylfa Newydd on Anglesey and Oldbury-on-Severn near Thornbury in South Gloucestershire.

Dr Jo Nettleton, Deputy Director for Radioactive Substances and Installations Regulation at the Environment Agency said:

We've concluded that the generic design of the UK ABWR should be capable of meeting the high standards of environment protection and waste management that we require in the UK. We only came to this conclusion after carefully reviewing the submissions provided by Hitachi-GE and their responses to the questions and issues we raised. We've also carefully considered all the comments we received from people during our public consultation and we're grateful for all who took part for taking time to respond.

Mark Foy, ONR's Chief Nuclear Inspector said:

The completion of the generic design assessment of the UK ABWR is a significant step in our regulation of the overall process to construct this type of reactor in the UK, ensuring that the generic design meets the highest standards of safety that we expect in this country. We're already working on our assessment of Horizon's site licence application and on the development of the site specific

safety case to progress, in due course, the construction and operation of these reactors at Wylfa Newydd.

Tim Jones, Natural Resources Wales's Executive Director for North and Mid Wales, said:

It is our job to ensure that any new nuclear power station will meet high standards of environmental protection and waste management, ensuring that our communities and environment are kept safe.

Following a public consultation on our initial findings, we have concluded that the UK ABWR design is acceptable. We will now work on the detailed assessments of the permits, licences and consents that Horizon Nuclear Power will need to have in place to build Wylfa Newydd.

The regulators have documented progress of each stage of their assessment through a series of [reports](#).

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. The regulators began assessment of Hitachi-GE's UK ABWR in 2013.
2. Generic Design Assessment (GDA) is a joint process between the Office for Nuclear (ONR) Regulation, Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales (NRW).
3. The Office for Nuclear Regulation is the nuclear safety and security regulator for the UK.
4. The [Environment Agency](#) and [Natural Resources Wales](#) are the environmental regulators of nuclear sites in England and Wales respectively.
5. Information on Generic Design Assessment on the joint regulators' [website](#)
6. All assessment reports, decision documents and a copy of the Design Acceptance Confirmation (DAC) and Statement of Design Acceptability (SoDA) are available online.  
[Office for Nuclear Regulation](#)  
[Environment Agency](#)  
[Natural Resources Wales](#)
7. The DAC and SoDA are valid for a period of ten years from issue and can be extended subject to review and agreement of the regulators. The Statement of Design Acceptability (SoDA) is being issued jointly by the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales. GDA applies to both England and Wales.
8. The issuing of a DAC and SoDA does not mean that construction of a new nuclear power station can start. In addition to GDA the operator (Horizon Nuclear Power in this case) must obtain a nuclear site licence

and relevant consents from ONR, environmental permits from the Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales and planning permission (Development Consent Order) from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Secretary of State.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-operators-of-new-nuclear-power-stations>

9. Horizon Nuclear Power submitted an application for a Nuclear Site Licence to build and construct a UK ABWR power station at Wylfa Newydd to ONR in March 2017. ONR is in the process of assessing the application.
  10. Horizon Nuclear Power submitted an [application to NRW for a Radioactive Substances](#) Regulation environmental permit in November 2017.
  11. For more information, please contact the ONR press office on [onr@onr.gov.uk](mailto:onr@onr.gov.uk) or 020 3028 0505.
  12. For the Environment Agency media team contact [newsdesk@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@environment-agency.gov.uk) or 020 3025 5623
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## **Press release: Environment Agency's Christmas stocking for Berkshire anglers**

*Updated:* Photos updated.

The Environment Agency is delivering an early Christmas gift to anglers in Berkshire this week, when it carries out a Christmas stocking of young adult fish into the River Cut at Jocks Lane recreation ground in Bracknell.

Thousands of fish, including roach, dace and chub, will be added to the river's existing fish population this Thursday, 14 December. This will provide an immediate boost to numbers, which will be multiplied many times over when the new arrivals settle into their new homes and begin to produce offspring.

Stuart Keable, a fisheries officer for the Environment Agency, said:

We carry out a number of fish stockings every year. Sometimes it is to help fish populations recover when they've suffered from a pollution incident, or through flooding, which can push large numbers of fish downstream, and many never return.

The River Cut has suffered from recurrent pollution near Jocks Lane recreation ground in 2017, where uncontaminated water from a large proportion



of Bracknell drains into the Cut. Environment Agency officers have been working closely with Thames Water, which manages the surface water network, to investigate the source of the pollution. The partnership has also resulted in pollution-prevention visits to nearby industrial estates, where officers advised businesses on oil and chemical storage compliance, hazardous waste disposal and the risk to streams and rivers.

Rachel Brown, an Environment Agency team leader in east Berkshire, said:

The Environment Agency has responded to a number of incidents on the River Cut this year, reported to us through our incident hotline. We have been working with Thames Water to find why the river was polluted, whilst also reducing the impact to the environment. We have carried out pollution-prevention visits at the nearby industrial estates, to raise awareness of the surface water drainage network and correct disposal of waste. Information provided by the public is vital in helping us with these ongoing investigations, and we urge anyone witnessing an environmental pollution to call our 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Christmas is a good time to introduce the fish into rivers, as it enables them to acclimatise to their new surroundings, ahead of their spawning season in the spring. Fish also play a critical role in sustaining a river's finely-balanced eco-system, so the wider natural environment will also get a festive boost.



Environment Agency vehicle with oxygenated tanks for transporting live fish.



Stuart Keable added:

The River Cut has undergone some fantastic enhancements recently. We've done a lot of that ourselves, but we increasingly work with local angling clubs, Bracknell Town Council, community groups and volunteers to get bigger and better results. The council has already installed 10 fishing platforms on the upstream section of the river at Jocks Lane, which will eventually see a wheelchair ramp installed for disabled access to this area. These improvements were made through the Angling Trust's Angling Improvement Fund.

Through the Environment Agency's Fisheries Improvement Programme, we have started on some major habitat improvement work in the river itself. In November, we installed the first of 10 marginal berms to provide a more diverse habitat for fish, insects, birds and plants, as well as push silt out of the system. This work will be ongoing throughout the winter. The collective contribution from our various partners to the wellbeing of the river has been immense.

The fish are being brought to site in oxygenated tanks from their birthplace and home for the last 12-18 months, the Environment Agency's own Calverton Fish Farm in Nottingham. Funded through rod licence fees, Calverton produces some 450,000 coarse fish each year which are used to help the vitality and diversity of fish populations in rivers, lakes and ponds throughout England.

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## **Press release: Pair guilty of illegal fishing in County Durham**

The Environment Agency has prosecuted two County Durham men for poaching and using illegal fishing equipment.

Ian David Cook, 38, of The Grove, Consett, and Michael Fullerton, 22, of Surrey Crescent, also in Consett, were each given a 12 month conditional discharge by Newton Aycliffe Magistrates' Court on 6 December 2017 after pleading guilty to the offences. They were also each ordered to pay £420 costs.

Magistrates heard that on 30 November 2016 Environment Agency fisheries enforcement officers observed Cook and Fullerton shining torches into the upper River Browney near West Butsfield, during a targeted evening patrol.

The River Browney and its catchment is an important and improving area for migratory fish, especially sea trout. Recent improvements to aid fish passage

and water quality and a robust approach to enforcement have led to an increase in returning fish but at present, stocks remain low and vulnerable.

After detaining the men they seized two torches and a landing net containing three dead sea trout, each at various stages of spawning. Under the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, lights are prohibited, as are landing nets if used without an authorised rod and line. It is also illegal to fish during the close season for migratory fish.

During interview, Fullerton admitted to shining the torch into the river and using the net to take fish but denied knowing it was illegal. He also denied knowing it was illegal to take fish during the close season. This was despite him holding a rod licence at the time, which spells out when and how legal fishing can be undertaken. Cook confirmed he understood that using a lamp to either take or assist in taking fish is an offence.

Kevin Summerson of the Environment Agency said:

This was a serious poaching incident using illegal instruments that could have had a severe impact on future stocks of sea trout in the River Browney. At this time of year sea trout are returning to rivers to spawn and protecting returning fish is vital to maintaining a healthy fish population.

That's why our fisheries enforcement officers work hard to target those people flouting the law and we won't hesitate to take action.

The conditional discharge will appear on Fullerton and Cook's criminal record. If either commits another crime within the next 12 months they can be sentenced for the first offence and the new offence.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.