

Press release: Arrests made following dawn raids

Today (Thursday 20 April 2017), the Environment Agency and police carried out 5 dawn raids following an in-depth investigation into illegal dumping of waste. There were 2 people arrested pending further enquiries. A third person will also be helping Environment Agency officers with their enquiries.

Enforcement action took place at 5 separate addresses in Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Hertfordshire this morning following an investigation into illegal dumping of 20,000 – 25,000 tonnes of waste at 17 sites across the Midlands, North West and North East.

More than 25 Environment Agency investigators, supported by over 20 police officers from Staffordshire, West Mercia, Warwickshire and Hertfordshire Police forces were in action at suspects' homes and business addresses seeking evidence as part of Operation Cesium.

The investigation will now continue with the evidence seized today. This investigation is expected to continue for many more months.

Paul Clarke, lead investigator in the Environment Agency's National Investigation Team, said:

The Environment Agency takes waste crime seriously and we will persistently pursue those suspected of illegally dumping waste.

In this case we have 17 landowners and communities blighted by significant amounts of dumped waste. We've already seen some of these sites catch fire, causing significant impact on communities, the environment and our emergency services partners who have to tackle them.

Illegal waste activity of the likes we're investigating here diverts £1 billion from legitimate businesses and the treasury, and at the Environment Agency we do everything we can to bring those responsible to account.

This investigation has been ongoing since last summer and enquiries will continue to examine the evidence to determine the full extent of the suspected offences.

The Environment Agency takes waste crime extremely seriously. This is a live and complex investigation, anyone with further information should contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Press release: More than 400 rod licences checked in Easter crackdown

Environment Agency officers checked more than 400 rod licences in an Easter weekend crackdown on illegal fishing.

Officers patrolling North East river banks checked 421 anglers, reporting 29 offences.

Of these, 21 were for rod licence offences, 7 were byelaw and close season offences and one offence under the Theft Act.

It's currently the close season for coarse fishing, which means fishing for coarse fish on rivers and streams is not permitted. This is done to protect breeding fish, helping to safeguard stocks for the future.

Kevin Summerson, Fisheries Enforcement Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

It's encouraging that the vast majority of anglers abide by the law, but there are still too many that we find during patrols that are fishing illegally.

We take illegal fishing very seriously – it's not fair on other anglers and endangers the future of the sport.

Our work is intelligence led and we work closely with our partners at the police and Angling Trust to target known hot spots and where illegal fishing is reported to us.

We carry out enforcement work all year round and will be continuing throughout the coming weeks, including the upcoming Bank Holiday weekends.

We really want people to get outdoors and enjoy what is a fantastic sport, and the rod licence is great value for money for all the family.

I'd urge people to help us protect the health of our fisheries by reporting any suspected illegal activity to us.

All the money from rod licence sales goes back into maintaining the health of fisheries and waters, angling projects and much more.

Anyone caught fishing without a valid licence could be fined up to £2,500 and fishing during the close season attracts a fine of up to £50,000.

Coarse fishing is still allowed on most still waters and canals, depending on fishery owner agreement, though a valid fishing licence is still required. You can check which still waters and canals still have a close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-fishing-byelaws>

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are available online at www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence.

Environment Agency officers routinely carry out licence checks and anyone with information about illegal fishing activities is urged to report it via the Environment Agency's Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

[Press release: John Millen jailed for 8 months for illegal waste operation](#)

The operator of a waste site in Sittingbourne, Kent has been imprisoned for 8 months for the illegal disposal, sorting and treatment of construction demolition waste.

John Millen, 50, trading as K.M. Millen Grab Hire, received the custodial sentence today (Wednesday 12 April) at Maidstone Crown Court after pleading guilty to using the Gas Road site for illegal waste transfer activities.

The Environment Agency brought charges against Mr Millen following an investigation in December 2014 which established over 40,000 tonnes of waste had been illegally deposited on the site.

Mr Millen was subsequently provided with clear guidance on the action he was required to take and an Enforcement Notice to clear the waste from the site by the end of March 2015 was issued. However, after the three months had expired it was clear that none of the waste had been removed and he continued to crush, treat and deposit waste.

The activities being undertaken by Mr Millen were in clear breach of environmental legislation and would have required an Environmental Permit. Mr Millen did not apply for an appropriate Environmental Permit and continued to operate, avoiding significant costs to his business.

Alan Cansdale, Environment Manager at the Environment Agency said:

Mr Millen was fully aware that he was not allowed to store that amount of waste on the site, but continued to accept more

construction and demolition waste whilst ignoring the advice and guidance issued to him by Environment Agency Officers. His actions put the environment at risk.

Waste crime can undermine legitimate businesses, so we work closely with businesses to help them comply with the law. In cases like this, where illegal operations are connected to licensed businesses, we have no hesitation in prosecuting those involved. We want to make sure that waste crime doesn't pay.

Whilst passing sentence, Judge St. John-Stevens said that Mr Millen was the "controlling mind of the business" and he ignored all advice offered from the Environment Agency regarding his business operations

[Press release: Waste scam now sees Boston targeted](#)

Another farmer has now been scammed by unscrupulous waste criminals in Lincolnshire

This time a Boston farmer faces the cleanup bill for 250 tonnes of waste after being approached and asked if he wanted tarmac road planings that can be used to repair roads and farmyards on their land.

The Environment Agency issued a [warning last week](#) after 2 farmers in the Grantham area suffered the same fate, with one of them facing an estimated bill of £300,000 to dispose of the waste after they found baled rubbish on their land instead of the promised tarmac road planings.

In the recent Boston case, a neighbour made the farmer aware of the scam warnings issued last week after the initial 250 tonnes of waste were left, and this ensured that no further waste was dumped on the site.

The Environment Agency is urging all landowners to be wary and not become the next victim of illegal waste disposal and dumping.

Advice from the Environment Agency includes:

- use reputable agents and brokers
- carry out suitable checks and due diligence, i.e. get the individuals details, vehicle registration, ask where the waste is coming from (address, permit number, waste carriers registration)
- inform them you'll be contacting the Environment Agency or call us whilst they are there
- don't agree to accept any waste until you have carried out some checks

and had a cooling off period to fully consider the offer

Peter Stark, Senior Enforcement Officer, said:

Waste criminals can be very convincing and persuasive, sometimes offering £1000s in cash up front. Don't be tempted by quick money because you could end up with not only a massive disposal bill but also harm to the environment, flies, polluting liquids running out of bales of waste and increased risk of fire.

We will investigate the illegal waste incidents fully and take enforcement action where necessary. The recent case shows that farmers in the region are particularly at risk of this scam.

However, the landowners may have to pay significant sums to remove the waste legally. Waste crime is a serious issue diverting as much as £1 billion per annum from legitimate businesses and Treasury.

Although these specific incidents occurred in Lincolnshire, we want landowners and farmers everywhere to be vigilant.

The Environment Agency provides impartial advice to customers, individuals and businesses to help them grow. Our local officers will be happy to talk to you, can make public register checks whilst you are on the phone or you can make checks on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) for free, or you can call the Environment Agency's customer contact centre on 03708 506 506.

The Highways Agency and county council's highways department and their contractors will always use legitimate waste carriers and sites for the reuse or disposal of waste. They may approach farmers and landowners to see if they want to reuse tarmac road planings or crushed rubble and concrete to repair road and yard areas, but farmers need to register the [UI waste exemption](#) with the Environment Agency and abide by the rules.

The vast majority of waste sites that the Environment Agency regulate are well run and provide essential waste management services. The Environment Agency are there to help the legitimate businesses.

Waste stored inappropriately can create issues for neighbours like smells and pests. It can also have a detrimental effect on the environment and impact on rivers and streams. There is a high risk of waste fires due to the waste not being stored in the correct manner.

Everybody has a part to play to help solve the waste crime problem and make sure waste is managed responsibly. If you see or suspect illegal waste activities, report it anonymously to [Crimestoppers](#) or call 0800 555 111.

Press release: 4 anglers face combined fines of over £2,400 for fishing illegally in Gloucestershire

On the 10 April, Cheltenham Magistrates' Court heard how 4 anglers were caught fishing without a rod licence by Environment Agency officers out on patrol last year. The offences were proved in absence and the 4 fishermen didn't appear in front of magistrates. Each face fines and fees totalling £611.47. And with an annual fishing licence now costing £30 these individuals are probably wishing they'd chosen the cheaper option.

Raymond Cole of Meadowleaze in Gloucester, Tomasz Mizera of The Bailey Lea in Coventry, Matthew Gooding of Garn Road in Nantyglo and Darren Edwards of Verwey Road in Nantyglo were all found guilty for fishing without a licence under Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Magistrates heard that Environment Agency enforcement officers found these anglers fishing without a rod licence at pools in Hartpury, and along the River Severn at Tewkesbury.

Stuart Gamble of the Environment Agency said:

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence. With anglers now being able to buy a licence online for a number of rods to cover any 12 month period it seems ridiculous the minority still risk a fine like these we've seen here.

The minority of anglers that fail to buy a rod licence are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport. Fishing licence cheats risk a criminal conviction, a significant fine and could lose their fishing equipment.

Money from fishing licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing (including illegal elver patrols), pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency rod licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England. Buying a rod licence is easy, simply visit www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it

directly to the Environment Agency hotline, 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.