

Press release: Innovative moveable weirs now in place

The first phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme has reached a major milestone as all three moveable weir gates have now been successfully put in place at Knostrop Weir on the River Aire.

Costing in the region of £50million, the scheme is being led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency.

The final stages of the work at Knostrop include the removal of the remaining cofferdam ahead of it becoming a fully operational flood defence later in May.

The three gates have been constructed as part of an innovative approach using moveable weirs, which can be lowered in flood conditions to reduce river levels and the threat of flooding. This is the first time that moveable weirs are being used in the UK for a flood defence.

The weirs can be lowered, and raised, by deflating and inflating 'bladders' fabricated from a bullet proof neoprene material under each gate, which act like giant air filled pillows.

The first of the weir gates at Knostrop Weir has already been tested. Later this month the cofferdam structure, which was installed to allow a dry working area in the river for the construction of the weir gate, will be flooded with water and the sheet piles then removed.

New fish and eel passes are also being constructed at Knostrop. The structures consist of a number of shallow trays which the fish and eels can swim and jump up, allowing them to migrate upstream. The previous stone weir was approximately three metres high and a barrier to fish and eels moving up the River Aire.

Moveable weirs are also being constructed further upstream at Crown Point in the city centre, where the installation of the first of two weir gates has been completed. Last month, reinforced concrete works were finished which meant the bladders and gates could be fixed in place prior to testing.

Now this gate has been installed and tested, the cofferdam has been flooded and the sheet piles are being removed to allow for work to begin on the final weir gate adjacent to Fearn's Island.

The Leader of Leeds City Council, Cllr Judith Blake, recently visited both sites to see first hand how the weirs will be reducing the risk of flooding to the city.

Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake said:

It was fascinating to see the new flood scheme up close and especially to see the amazing technology and engineering involved in putting these moveable weirs in place to control the flow of the River Aire.

It is such a simple idea but it is fantastic to see Leeds at the cutting-edge of the field using the latest technology in this way.

The value of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme in terms of the reassurance it will offer residents and businesses over the coming years and decades is incalculable, so we very much look forward to seeing phase one complete later this year while we continue to make the strongest possible case for further significant measures to help protect all our communities threatened by flood-risk across the city as soon as possible.

Work on flood defence walls in the Holbeck area are also still underway. Temporary traffic management remains in place and will do so until September 2017. The traffic management has been coordinated with the Bridgewater Place wind baffle scheme in an effort to minimise disruption.

The site works for Phase 1 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation scheme commenced in January 2015 and are due to be completed this summer. It is one of the largest river flood defences in the country. When complete, it will provide an increased level of protection from flooding from the River Aire and Hol Beck for residents and businesses in the city centre. The scheme also includes defences at Woodlesford.

Further information on Phase 1 of the scheme can be found at www.leeds.gov.uk/fas.

Work on phase 2 of the project is currently underway to develop a proposal for how to increase the standard of protection in Leeds including areas such as Kirkstall and Stourton.

News story: New water choice for English businesses

The world's biggest competitive water market officially opened on April 1st, which for the first time gives more than 1.2 million businesses, charities and public sector bodies the chance to choose their water provider wherever they are in the country.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom welcomed the launch of the market, which will deliver up to £200 million of benefits to the economy and water customers over the next 30 years, through improved service and better value for money.

By opening the market, companies ranging from businesses with very few employees to multinationals, as well as charities and public sector organisations, will be able to shop around for the best deal from all water utilities in England.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

Over a million businesses, charities and public sector organisations will now be able to find the water deal that works best for them. Opening the market is an historic milestone, paving the way for innovation and efficiency and giving customers the same choice over their water retailer as they currently have for their energy and other essential services.

Defra has worked with partners Ofwat, which will regulate the new market, and Market Operator Services Ltd (MOSL), which will operate the market on behalf of its water company members, to ensure there is a smooth transition for customers.

Ofwat Chief Executive Cathryn Ross said:

Business customers have been crying out for choice over their provider of water and waste water services for years. From today businesses, charities and public sector organisations in England will be able to choose their retailer to get a better deal.

The opening of the business retail market takes us into new territory. It is the single biggest change to the water sector since privatisation and I am hugely optimistic about the changes that lay ahead and the benefits they will bring to customers.

But it is important that we at Ofwat maintain effective oversight of how the new market is working and what customers are experiencing. This will mean that we can step in if we need to, to make sure customers are protected.

MOSL Chief Executive Ben Jeffs said:

This launch marks the successful delivery of the largest and most complicated transformation programmes undertaken by the water sector since privatisation. Delivering a programme of this scale and complexity has involved a huge team effort across Government, Ofwat and the entire industry.

Competition not only offers non-household customers the prospect of a better price for a better service, it will create new opportunities and challenges for the sector as a whole. The level of engagement we have had to date has been exemplary and, as the market operator, we look forward to working with companies to ensure the new market delivers on its promise to customers.

The new market in England now becomes the biggest of its kind in the world and Defra will continue to support the water sector as the market develops.

Scotland is the only other country with a competitive water market for businesses and this government has been working closely with its Scottish partners in the lead-up to the opening to draw from their learnings and expertise.

Businesses, charities or public sector organisations interested in changing their water retailer should shop around. There is more information available about available water retail suppliers on the [Open Water website](#).

Press release: Illegal waste site and exports uncovered

On Tuesday 28 March, following a two-day trial, magistrates found company director, Mark Paul Stone, and his company, Salhouse Norwich Ltd, guilty of allowing an illegal waste site to operate from a site it owned.

A third defendant, Mark Ian Quinsey, pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to running the illegal operation, failing to clear the site when told to by the Environment Agency, and illegally exporting waste. Yesterday he was sentenced to 20 weeks custody which has been suspended for 18 months, and ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work.

Norwich Magistrates' Court heard that hundreds of tonnes of waste mattresses and mattress textiles were found stored on the site – almost 100 times as many as a registered exemption for the operation allowed.

Stone denied knowing that the waste site, off Rice Way on Salhouse Industrial Estate, run by their tenant, Quinsey, was illegal.

Quinsey, 39, trading as Salhouse Recyclers, had registered exemptions for an operation far smaller than the one he ran and should have applied for a permit.

Nicholas Ostrowski, prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency (EA), told the court that he had deliberately breached environmental regulations

and despite being served an enforcement notice to clear the site, had failed to do so.

Mr Ostrowski said when EA investigators visited the site in August 2015 following a report from a member of the public, they found the site so jammed full of badly stored mattresses and mattress textiles, there was a serious risk to the environment. The fire service was also concerned about the risk of fire.

It was heard that during investigations Quinsey sent paperwork to the EA, which included evidence of a shipment of 27 compressed bales of waste to Egypt for recycling in March the previous year. However Quinsey did not have the appropriate approvals in place for this export.

The court was told that an enforcement notice served on Quinsey in August was only partly complied with when some waste metals were removed.

The EA also approached Salhouse Norwich Ltd and Stone, who were advised to clear the site and an action plan for the removal of the waste was requested but the waste still remains on site.

The magistrates were told the EA made five requests for a voluntary action plan from the company.

Quinsey of The Lane, Briston, Norfolk, told investigators he had found a company in Egypt which would take the fabric for recycling but then there was a problem with Egyptian customs so he had to store the material until he found another outlet, which he was unable to find.

He didn't contact the EA as he was worried his business would be closed down and had hoped to resolve the situation himself.

Quinsey admitted that the site had no environmental management system, no fire suppression system, no fire detection system, no dust suppression system, no litter prevention infrastructure nor sealed drainage system. He also admitted having no insurance for his activities and no official lease on one of the buildings he used.

He said the business had left him in debt, claiming that it grew too quickly. He admitted he probably hadn't done enough research.

Stone, 69, from Marleybone High Street, London, told investigators that Quinsey had said he had relevant permissions to carry out the waste operation. No checks were made to ensure these permissions were in place.

He said his company had concerns about the fire risk and were "horrified" by all the waste on site but were worried if they asked Quinsey to stop operating, he would leave them with a factory full of waste. He also admitted being aware that the operation was out of hand and perhaps should never have started.

An analytical chemist for the EA concluded that any plume from a fire at the site could contain toxic and harmful substances which could affect human

health.

Mr Ostrowski said Quinsey, Stone and Salhouse Norwich Ltd had co-operated with the investigation and Quinsey had removed some waste from the site.

Quinsey pleaded guilty to operating a waste facility without a permit, failing to comply with an enforcement notice and exporting waste to Egypt without the appropriate permissions in place. He was sentenced to a total of 20 weeks custody which has been suspended for 18 months, 200 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay a contribution to costs of £720. He was also ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £115.

Following trial Stone and Salhouse Norwich Ltd were found guilty of knowingly permitting the operation of a waste facility without a permit. Stone and Salhouse Norwich Ltd will be sentenced on 5 May following a pre-sentence report.

After the hearing Environment Agency investigator Lorraine Machin said:

We acted quickly to try to get the occupier and landowner to clear the site because of the environmental and fire risk but the majority of the waste still remained on site.

This case shows how important it is to ensure that any new operation has been fully researched, properly permitted and any site used is adequate for the operation.

Mark Ian Quinsey pleaded guilty to:

1. Between 16 August 2015 and 28 October 2015 at land off Rice Way, Salhouse Industrial Estate, Norwich NR7 9AP, you did operate a regulated facility, namely a waste operation for the treatment and storage of waste, without being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 13 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Contrary to Regulation 12(1)(a) and 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010

1. You failed, without reasonable excuse, by 8 January 2016, to comply with all the requirements in a notice dated 24 August 2015 and served on 24 August 2015 pursuant to section 59 (1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to remove controlled waste from land occupied by you at the date of service of the said notice known as land off Rice Way, Salhouse Industrial Estate, Norwich NR7 9AP in the county of Norfolk.

Contrary to section 59 (5) Environmental Protection Act 1990

1. On 7 March 2014 and by virtue of Article 37 of the European Waste

Shipment Regulation EC 1013/2006, you transported waste namely waste textiles to Egypt, a country to which the OECD decision does not apply as listed in the Annex to EC Commission Regulation 1418/2007

Contrary to Regulation 23A(2) and 58 of the Transfrontier Shipment of Waste Regulations 2007

Mark Paul Stone was found guilty of:

Between 24 August 2015 and 8 June 2016 on land off Rice Way, Salhouse Industrial Estate, Norwich NR7 9AP, Salhouse Norwich Limited did, with your consent or connivance or attributable to neglect on your part as a director of Salhouse Norwich Limited, knowingly permitted the operation of a regulated facility, namely a waste operation for the storage of waste, without being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 13 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010

Contrary to Regulation 12(1)(a), 38(1)(b) and 41(1)(a) and (b) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010

Salhouse Norwich Ltd was found guilty of:

Between 24 August 2015 and 8 June 2016 at land off Rice Way, Salhouse Industrial Estate, Norwich NR7 9AP, you did knowingly permit the operation of a regulated facility, namely a waste operation for the storage of waste, without it being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 13 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Contrary to Regulation 12(1)(a) and 38(1)(b) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010

News story: Inventory of radioactive wastes and materials in UK updated

The Inventory is part of an ongoing programme of research jointly conducted by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

The Inventory provides information on the status of radioactive waste stocks (at 1 April 2016) and estimates of future radioactive waste arisings in the UK.

Information collected for the 2016 Inventory is presented in [a series of reports](#):

- Context and methodology report

- UK radioactive waste inventory report
- Radioactive wastes and materials not reported in the 2016 UK Inventory
- Summary of data for international reporting
- A summary of the 2016 Inventory

All documents have been prepared on the basis of information supplied to the 2016 Inventory contractors.

[UK Radioactive Wastes and Materials Inventory website](#)

[Explained: how much UK radioactive waste is there?](#)

Guidance: Online claims for Countryside Stewardship

Updated: Passed 10 July deadline for late revenue claims and amendments.

Step by step guidance on how to submit a capital claim online using the [Rural Payments service](#).

Revenue claims

The deadline for Natural England to receive late Countryside Stewardship revenue claims and amendments was 10 July 2018. Natural England will not accept any further revenue claims in 2018.