

Yorkshire Water civil sanctions see wildlife charity get funding boost

The company breached its environmental permit with an unauthorised sewage discharge from Bellhouse Way Sewage Pumping Station, which polluted Holgate Beck in York, and two unauthorised sewage discharges from a rising main at Hemsworth Water Park, Hoyle Mill Lane Sewage Pumping Station, causing pollution at Hoyle Mill Stream at Wakefield.

It submitted two Enforcement Undertakings to the Environment Agency, which have now been accepted – £150,000 for the Holgate Beck incident and £250,000 for Hoyle Mill Stream.

An Enforcement Undertaking is a voluntary offer made by companies and individuals to make amends for their offending, and usually includes a donation to a wildlife charity to carry out environmental improvements in the local area.

Bellhouse Way Sewage Pumping Station has an environmental permit to discharge sewage into Holgate Beck in emergencies, which does not include storm conditions and heavy rain. At the start of April 2018 it discharged sewage intermittently due to an electrical failure in the main pump and blockage of the standby pump.

The alarm on the pumping station was activated, but as this coincided with a period of heavy rain it was not differentiated from other assets which are allowed to discharge during storm conditions.

As part of the Enforcement Undertaking requirements Yorkshire Water has improved its monitoring systems so that assets which are permitted to discharge in an emergency only are allocated a code to ensure they are always investigated. This code has been allocated to 670 assets across the county.

At Hoyle Mill Road Sewage Pumping Station a rising main burst in July 2020, discharging raw sewage into Hoyle Mill Stream, visibly polluting the beck for 2.75km and having a detrimental impact on water quality.

On 3 August a repair that had been made to the rising main failed and more raw sewage was discharged into the beck. Further investigation revealed the pipe was severely corroded and the repair was not sufficient to sustain the pressure. As part of the Enforcement Undertaking, Yorkshire Water replaced the whole rising main at the end of last year.

Martin Christmas, Environment Agency Area Environment Manager, said:

We are holding water companies to account like never before and while we will always take forward prosecutions in the most serious cases, Enforcement Undertakings are an effective enforcement tool to allow companies to put things right and contribute to

environmental improvements.

They allow polluters to correct and restore the harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents by improving their procedures, helping ensure future compliance with environmental requirements.

As well as donations totalling £400,000 to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust that will bring great benefits to the environment, Yorkshire Water has made significant improvements to its monitoring system and completed repairs to its assets as part of the civil sanction.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust will use the donations on environmental improvements such as its Askham Bog, River Foss and Living Went projects.

Water companies were handed record fines last year totalling more than £100million following Environment Agency prosecutions, making clear that polluters will pay for damage to the environment.

Most recently, Yorkshire Water was fined £233,000 at Leeds Crown Court on 28 January 2022 for a pollution incident at Tong Beck which happened in November 2017; and on 8 September 2021 they were fined £150,000 at Sheffield Magistrates' Court for a pollution incident at Potteric Carr Nature Reserve. In February this year, they paid £300,000 to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in an Enforcement Undertaking after it breached its environmental permit due to an unauthorised discharge from its Garforth Storm Tanks.

[Russia's war in Ukraine: UK statement on OSCE's second Moscow Mechanism expert report](#)

Thank you very much Mr Chair,

I wish to make a statement in my national capacity, to supplement the statement just delivered by Ambassador Gjermani from Albania on behalf of the 45 States which, with the support of Ukraine, invoked the Moscow Mechanism for a second time.

I would like to welcome back Professor Veronika Bilkova, and welcome Professors Laura Guercio and Vasilka Sancin to the Permanent Council today. Thank you. We greatly appreciate that we have, collectively, been able to call on your expertise, and independence, in preparing this extensive and important report.

Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom strongly supported the invocation of both the first and second Moscow Mechanism on Ukraine due to our grave and ongoing concern about the humanitarian impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine; and the potential for the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity. As with the [first report](#), the second has demonstrated that we are right to remain concerned and that we must remain vigilant in our support for human rights, international humanitarian law and for impartial fact finding during the conflict.

The report is a real life horror story. Due to the actions of the Russian government – a government of an OSCE participating State – this horror is an everyday reality for the people across Ukraine.

Reports of torture. The execution of civilians. Unlawful detention. Enforced disappearances. Targeting civilians on their streets, in their cars, on their bicycles, on their balconies and in their homes. Victim activated booby traps. The rape of women. The rape of children. Violence towards men. The killing of journalists. Targeting of hospitals, of schools. The use of cluster munitions. Shallow graves. The threat of cholera. This is an affront to humanity. It is depravity itself.

I recall with shock, alarm and dismay some of the accounts documented from Bucha in this report. I simply cannot imagine what it is like to have lived through the reality on the ground.

In Vorzel, west of Bucha, where a woman and her 14-year-old child were killed after smoke grenades were thrown into the basement in which they were hiding.

The summer camp in Bucha, repurposed for torture. With bullet holes in the walls, instruments of torture and the corpses of five dead men – burned, bruised, and lacerated.

In Zabuchchya, a village in Bucha district, where 18 bodies of murdered men, women and children were discovered. Some with their ears cut off, some with their teeth pulled out.

Kyiv's regional police force have reported that 900 civilian bodies were discovered after the Russian withdrawal, 350 of them in Bucha. According to police reports, nearly 95% were "simply executed."

It comes as no surprise that after visiting, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor referred to Bucha as a "crime scene."

The value of the second report is demonstrated in its identification of two new and extremely concerning phenomena:

Firstly, the report documents the Russian government's sickening use of 'filtration centres.' Centres where Ukrainian civilians undergo harsh interrogations, humiliating body searches and are often transferred, with or without their consent, to Russian territory or to the so-called "People's Republics."

Secondly, the report documents the Russian government's attempt to bypass international obligations through the use of so-called "People's Republics." Mr Chair, in so doing, the report rightly raises serious concerns about the treatment of Prisoners of War by Russia and Russia's proxies and references the trials and sentencing of Shaun Pinner and Aiden Aslin. As both this report and the Office of the UNHCR confirm – Mr Pinner and Mr Aslin are members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and should be treated as Prisoners of War. They are not mercenaries.

The report makes clear that, despite Russia's best efforts to portray them as independent, the so-called "People's Republics", are controlled by Russia. As such, the UK calls on Russia to take note of these findings, treat Prisoners of War and civilian detainees in accordance with International Humanitarian Law and end the use the "People's Republics" to conduct sham trials and issue capital charges for propaganda purposes. We are fully supportive of the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to secure the release of British Nationals held by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine.

Mr Chair, today we may hear from the Russian Delegation. Sadly, I am sure they will have been instructed to tell more lies and defend the indefensible.

Allow me to take this opportunity to assure them that the United Kingdom remains resolute in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its international recognised borders. We remain firm in our support for accountability measures at the national and international level. Be assured that we are watching, we are documenting, and we will work tirelessly to ensure that those who are responsible will be held accountable for their actions.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Minister of State announces winner of NIO Platinum Jubilee Competition

Emily McMullan, age 11 from Dundonald Primary School was revealed as the winner after she, and her fellow finalists, were invited to a special ceremony at Hillsborough Castle.

Emily's design was chosen from over 2000 colourful and creative entries to the competition, from children in schools from every county in Northern Ireland.

Emily was joined in the final three by Fiadh Rose Kerr, age 6 from Omagh Integrated Primary School and Thomas Porter, age 8 from St Joseph's Primary School.

Emily will visit Ulster Carpets later in the summer, working with their professional designers to turn her 'snapshot' into a wonderful rug.

Once completed the specially designed jubilee rug will be delivered to Her Majesty the Queen as a gift from the children of Northern Ireland in her Jubilee year.

Minister of State for Northern Ireland Conor Burns said:

"I've been overwhelmed by the truly amazing artistic and illustrative talent that I have seen in response to the Northern Ireland Office's Platinum Jubilee Rug competition.

"Emily's design shows some of the very best of Northern Ireland, with its well known landmarks instantly recognisable and synonymous with this beautiful place.

"I can't wait to see Emily and the designers at internationally recognised Northern Ireland manufacturer Ulster Carpets bring the winning design to life over the summer ahead of the rug to be presented to the Royal Household as a gift to mark the incredible and historical 70 years of service of the Queen.

"I'm incredibly proud of Northern Ireland's young people – from schools in every county here – and grateful to their parents and teachers who have helped make this idea such a success. Thank you all."

Group Managing Director of Ulster Carpets Nick Coburn said:

"We are delighted at the wonderful artistry shown by primary school children across Northern Ireland and the fantastic response to the design competition.

"Selecting a winner was an extremely difficult task and we can now look forward to transforming Emily's wonderful design into a rug for Her Majesty The Queen."

Headmaster of Dundonald Primary Julian Byers said:

"We are delighted that Emily's picture has been chosen as the winner. Her magnificent drawing, showing the iconic landmarks of Northern Ireland, transformed into a rug, will be a lasting memory of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, taking pride of place in Buckingham Palace."

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The finalists of the Platinum Jubilee Rug competition are
 - Emily McMullan, P7, Dundonald Primary School & Nursery Unit
 - Thomas Porter, P5, St Joseph's Primary School, Ballycruttle, Downpatrick
 - Fiadh Rose Kerr, P2, Omagh Integrated Primary School

Russia's war in Ukraine: Joint statement on OSCE's second independent Moscow Mechanism report

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of my own country Albania and 45 other participating States: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Mr. Chairperson,

On 11 July OSCE participating States received the second independent experts' report of the Moscow Mechanism. The report documents violations of international humanitarian law, and violations and abuses of human rights law, that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine between 1 April and 25 June 2022.

The mandate for the experts was to:

Consider, follow up and build on the findings of [the Moscow Mechanism report received by OSCE participating States on 12 April 2022](#) addressing "human rights and humanitarian impacts of the Russian Federation's invasion and acts of war, supported by Belarus, on the people of Ukraine, within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders."

We also requested that ODIHR provide any relevant information or documentation derived from the mission to other appropriate accountability mechanisms, as well as national, regional, or international courts or tribunals that have, or may in future have, jurisdiction.

Our [collective invocation of the Moscow Mechanism on June 2, 2022](#), with the support of Ukraine, reflected our shared concerns about the impact of Russia's invasion in Ukraine.

While our capitals and delegations are still reviewing the 115-page report in detail, we would like to highlight a number of critical conclusions made by the experts in the report.

This report has shone a light on two new alarming trends.

The first is the reported “establishment and use of so-called filtration centres [...] by the Russian armed forces”. “ Civilians are detained for at least 30 days as part of a filtration process, with those deemed the most “untrustworthy” [...] obliged to remain for two months.”

The second trend is the reported tendency of the “Russian Federation to bypass its international obligations by handing detained persons over to the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics and letting these two de facto entities engage in problematic practices, including the imposition of the death penalty resulting from trials that fail to meet the basic standards of the fair trial.” These entities have no international or domestic legal authority.

Furthermore, the second mission has “largely confirmed the conclusions reached by the first mission. It has discovered clear patterns of serious violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) attributable mostly to Russian armed forces in many areas which its investigations referred to.” The report emphasises “the magnitude and frequency of the indiscriminate attacks carried out against civilians and civilian objects.” The events concerning the towns of Bucha and Irpin, which were visited by the mission, are two emblematic examples of these grave violations.

The independent experts note that Russia’s invasion has impacted both on Ukraine’s food security and global food security – exacerbated by the theft of Ukrainian grain and the suspension of movement of commercial vessels in the Sea of Azov.

As the report notes, “millions of tons of grain remain trapped in the Ukrainian ports and on ships unable to move, which significantly affects the global food and agricultural supplies threatening to result in a global hunger crisis.”

In terms of recommendations for additional actions, the report expands on the linkages between the Moscow Mechanism report and other accountability mechanisms and notes the role played by justice institutions.

Mr. Chairperson,

We would like to thank Professors Bilkova, Guercio and Sancin for their tireless work in preparing this report in such a short period of time. As stated, this report will require careful consideration and study, in the OSCE region and beyond. The broad conclusions, however, are presented in a clear and compelling manner. We would like to express our support to Ukraine and its citizens. Now participating States and the international community must ensure we undertake the necessary actions – this includes making full use of the OSCE and its tools under the human dimension.

Thank you Mr Chair, and I ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Accelerating our digital transformation

News story

Our Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 reveals a strong year in our transition to a data-driven, digital organisation that is flexible, resilient and responsive to market challenges.



- HM Land Registry delivers its Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22: Accelerating our digital transformation
- Organisation reports significant progress in digitising and automating services, large-scale recruitment and investment in management, systems and training
- On track to meet the challenges of a volatile market

In another year of record demand in the property market, HM Land Registry has accelerated its transformation to a 21st-century, data-driven, digital organisation, as set out in its [Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22](#), published today (14 July 2022).

With a 20% increase in demand for its services over 2021-22 compared with the previous year, HM Land Registry has made significant progress in digitising and automating services. This, together with the largest recruitment exercise in more than a decade and investment in management, systems and training, has accelerated the organisation's transformation.

In collaboration with industry partners, HM Land Registry is building on the advances it has made in digitisation and automation – including digital identity, electronic signatures and its award-winning Digital Registration Service. These, and other advances set out in the Annual Report, are helping the property sector as a whole transform for the long-term future.

The Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 shows the distance already covered. The organisation's forthcoming Strategy 2022+ and Business Plan will lay out

the direction of travel and roadmap towards a new vision for modern land registration.

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