

Press release: Worcestershire man sentenced for waste offences

Yesterday (16 August 2017), Mark Smyth, aged 40, from Pershore, Worcestershire was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months, with 200 hours unpaid work following a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency at Worcester Crown Court. He was also ordered to pay £10,000 compensation to the landowner and disqualified from acting as a company director for 7 years.

Mr Smyth, who was the sole director of Arrow Gypsum Recycling Ltd, pleaded guilty to breaching the company's environmental permit condition and was found guilty of failing to comply with an enforcement notice served by the Environment Agency,

Events leading to the prosecution

During early 2015, the Environment Agency received a report that gypsum waste was being stored outside the building on the site. The conditions of the environmental permit stipulated that waste must be stored within the building, to avoid any risk to the environment.

Further investigations established that Mr Smyth had abandoned the site, leaving 29 tonnes of gypsum plasterboard outside the building and in excess of 5,000 tonnes inside the building. Attempts were made by Environment Agency officers to speak to Mr Smyth about the permit breach and clearance of the material outside. When Mr Smyth failed to respond, a formal enforcement notice was served, requiring him to clear the waste he abandoned on the site he rented at Crucible Business Park in Norton, Worcester. Mr Smyth ignored the enforcement notice.

During the trial the defendant claimed not to have received the enforcement notice. This was not accepted by the Magistrates, who found the defendant did receive the notice, but chose to bury his head in the sand and ignore it.

Environment Agency officers have worked with an agent of the landowner to clear the site, at a cost of £450,000. At Worcester Crown Court, His Honour Judge Cole, found that the substantial clean up costs was a serious aggravating feature of the case. It was clear to the court that once the processing of the gypsum waste ceased and the building became full, Mr Smyth should have stopped accepting the waste, but he did not. He deliberately continued accepting waste, leading to the breach of the permit; waste being stored outside. Mr Smyth ignored his responsibilities as the director of the company and left the waste on the site at considerable cost to the landowner.

In mitigation the court heard that Mr Smyth intended to operate the business in line with the permit when he took over the business in 2013, but when the processing of the waste stopped, he had contracts that had to be honoured, so he carried on accepting the waste.

HHJ Cole suspended the term of imprisonment, taking into consideration the potential impact on Mr Smyth's 12 year daughter and her mother, along with Mr Smyth's previous good character.

Speaking after the case, an Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation said:

Waste crime is a serious offence with tough penalties as it can damage the environment, blight local communities and undermine those who operate legally. This case sends out a clear message that we will not hesitate to take action against anyone that fails to comply.

You can call the Environment Agency on 0370 850 6506 to find out how to responsibly manage any waste your business produces or visit the [manage your waste](#) GOV.UK pages.

Speech: British High Commissioner welcomes Kenya's National Super Alliance's decision to take election challenge to the Supreme Court

Reporter: What is your view on Raila Odinga's decision to go to the supreme court?

British High Commissioner: We in the international community have never had a candidate or a preference in this election, we have strongly supported the constitution and the electoral process, and our work has been to strengthen that. Since the election finished, since the result was announced, we have been very clear that there is a process under the constitution for challenging that result, through the Supreme Court, and anybody who is unhappy should follow that process. So I very warmly welcome the decision by Raila Odinga to follow the Supreme Court process, this gives him and anyone else the chance to present all the evidence that they have, to argue their case, and to let justice decide on the verdict.

Reporter: Do you think the National Super Alliance (NASA) have enough evidence to sustain a case in court, based on what you've observed?

British High Commissioner: I can't determine that... I am here to represent a country that cares about Kenya's institutions and its constitution. The parties will clearly want to produce the evidence that they have, there will

be a process for that, there will be a process for working it through on all sides, and I think that is exactly right; this is how these things are decided under the rule of law and under the constitution.

Reporter: Given most election observation missions have the case the thumbs up, do you think the opposition have a solid case and evidence to present for the court to give a fair and just judgment?

British High Commissioner: I am not a lawyer and I haven't seen the evidence that they have and so I am not going to judge on whether their case is solid or not, that is for the court to decide. [The evidence] is for them to pull together, but as I say we support this process and we very much welcome the opposition's decision to follow the process laid down in the constitution. Meanwhile we call on Kenyans to remain calm, to allow the process to take its course. People have a right to march in the streets, to express their views, but those demonstrations that do occur need to remain peaceful and everybody needs to wait for the case to play out.

Reporter: Initially NASA had said that court was not an option for them, but they have now changed their minds, in your opinion, do you think this will help unite the country in these days of much tension?

British High Commissioner: I think it is a very positive move, as I say your constitution sets out very clearly how this process works, how people can challenge the results, and a number of candidates from both sides have taken that option, in their own races across the country. I very much welcome the opposition's decision to take [this course of action]. We've always been very clear that there is a way of challenging this, as set out in your constitution, and that is the [route] we as friends of Kenya would like to see all parties [take]. We welcome their decision.

Press release: Dovonex Psoriasis Ointment to be available to buy from pharmacies

Today the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) announced the approval of Dovonex Psoriasis 50microgram/g Ointment which will be available through pharmacies without prescription.

Over a million people are estimated to be affected by psoriasis in the UK. The availability of this medicine from pharmacies will increase the choice patients have of where to obtain treatment when their condition recurs.

'Dovonex Psoriasis Ointment' contains calcipotriol, a vitamin D analogue and the medication will be supplied as ointment in a 60gtube.

It will be sold after a consultation with a pharmacist and is suitable for adults aged over 18, with mild to moderate plaque psoriasis which has been previously diagnosed by a doctor.

This treatment can be used for up to 12 weeks after which people will be advised to see their doctor about ongoing treatment.

Pharmacists and their staff will be able to provide suitable advice to the patient to ensure that the product is suitable for them. The outer packaging and the patient information leaflet also include an image of plaque psoriasis which will help both pharmacists and patients in this respect.

MHRA is committed to widening access to medicines for the benefit of public health when it is safe to do so. The product was reclassified following a public consultation held earlier this year.

Dr Sarah Branch MHRA's Deputy Director of VRMM said:

Psoriasis is a chronic disease which can have a major impact on people's quality of life. By making this medicine more widely available, patients will be able to treat flare ups quickly without the need for a prescription.

Ash Soni, the RPS President said:

Widening access to medicine is great news for patients. Pharmacists are experts in medicines and are well trained to ensure safe supply of medicines to the public. Pharmacists are already able to sell products for the treatment of psoriasis with appropriate advice on management, application and side effects. We welcome the addition of Dovonex Psoriasis Ointment to the range of products available.

Pharmacists are more easily accessible than doctors and trained to give advice on medicine use, make sure the chosen medicine is appropriate and check if a person needs to see another health professional. This is an important patient benefit and we would like to see more medicine available through pharmacy in future.

Background

1. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe.
2. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks. MHRA is a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency which also includes the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) and

the Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD). The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Health.

3. Dovonex Psoriasis 50 microgram/g Ointment is a medicine to be applied to the skin to treat mild to moderate plaque psoriasis which has been previously diagnosed by a doctor, for adults aged 18 years and over, for use for a period of not more than 12 weeks. The active ingredient in Dovonex Psoriasis (calcipotriol) is one of a group of medicines called vitamin D analogues. When calcipotriol is applied to skin affected by plaque psoriasis, it can help to reduce the number of cells made by the skin, thereby reducing the silver scaly patches and redness associated with psoriasis.
4. According to the [British Skin Foundation](#) and the [Psoriasis Association](#), 2% of the UK population are affected by psoriasis.
5. Following assessment of the available evidence on the benefits and harms of the proposed product The Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) advised in favour of Pharmacy availability for this product. A public consultation on the proposal followed. The CHM is an advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department of Health that advises ministers on the safety, efficacy and quality of medicinal products.
6. Dovonex Psoriasis 50 microgram/g Ointment has been reclassified from a prescription only medicine to one available in pharmacies. Pharmacists are experts in medicine, and have the necessary skills and training to ensure the safe and efficient supply of pharmacy medicines. The link to the public consultation is [here](#).
7. MHRA involved the public and healthcare professionals throughout the decision-making process. We carefully analysed their contribution in the public consultation phases before deciding how to proceed. The responses to the consultation were predominantly positive. Full set of consultation responses can be seen [here](#).

[News story: MHRA successfully reclassifies Dovonex Psoriasis Ointment](#)

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) have today announced the approval of Dovonex Psoriasis 50microgram/g Ointment, which will be available through pharmacies without prescription .

Following a successful public consultation, Dovonex Psoriasis Ointment tablets will be available through pharmacies without a prescription.

The Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) advised in favour of the product

being available in pharmacies for the treatment of mild to moderate plaque psoriasis which has been previously diagnosed by a doctor in adults aged 18 years and over. The treatment is for application once daily, with maximum duration of use of 12 weeks and maximum pack size of 60g of ointment.

Pharmacists are trained healthcare professionals and will have access to training materials to enable them to identify patients that can be supplied this medicine with reasonable safety.

MHRA always want to encourage people to be involved in their healthcare and are in the process of holding public consultations for conditions that are suitable for self-care. Further information on reclassification can be found [here](#).

Press release: £7 million flood resilience boost for A66 Cumbrian tourist route

In a boost for commercial drivers, tourists, commuters and other local drivers, Highways England has delivered a series of major engineering improvements, including raising carriageways, near and alongside the lake to improve severe weather resilience. In Highways England project manager Peter Gee said:

This is a significant investment in the county's road network and will provide even greater resilience during severe weather incidents – keeping local people and the economy on the move.

Working to deliver these improvements at five different sites has been a major engineering and project planning challenge – not least in raising the height of the carriageway by almost 1.5 metres in places. We'd like to thank drivers and other local people for their patience over the last 11 months with temporary traffic lights and overnight carriageway closures. We hope they'll appreciate the benefits through many winters to come.

Although the A66 generally copes well with prolonged rainfall it was affected by flooding from the lake during the storms of November 2009 and again in December 2015 and Highways England has been determined to reduce the risk of future disruption.

In all, five sections of the route, a mix of dual carriageway and single carriageway sections, have improved since the project started last September.

The phases included:

- £1.5 million spent on raising the eastbound and westbound carriageways by 70 centimetres at Embleton where it runs alongside Dubwath Beck. This work was completed in February
- a further £600,000 realigning and raising the westbound carriageway alongside the lake near Smithy Cottage which was also completed in February
- £2 million and £1.7 million projects to raise the carriageway alongside the lake's 2 Osprey-watching sites alongside the lake near Thornthwaite which were completed with the removal of temporary traffic lights on Friday
- £1.1 million stabilisation work along the rock face along the westbound carriageway to prevent severe weather land slippage which was completed in April

New drainage culverts under the road show how high the carriageway has been raised

Traffic management for the final phase was removed last week but temporary traffic lights were placed near Thornthwaite on Tuesday (15 August) for some safety-related finishing work.

During the project, Highways England also delivered extra resurfacing – along other sections of the route – to save closing the road again, cleared 40 tonnes of storm debris from a large culvert underneath the road, improved pedestrian crossing facilities at Dubwath crossroads, and built a new bus shelter complete with bat roosts. An improved and enlarged layby at Blackstock also opened this week.

The work has included installing new and improved facilities such as this layby

Raising the carriageway alone – over a total length of 1.6 km – plus resurfacing a total of 3.2 km of the road, has involved using 31,000 tonnes of surfacing material. The work has also involved installing:

- almost 2 km of new safety barriers
- 1 km of new kerbs and drainage
- 250 metres of gabion wall
- 6 new flood relief culverts and 800 metres of filter drain
- 1600 large soil nails to improve embankment stability
- 2,550 square metres of rock netting

The completion of the work around Bassenthwaite Lake follows the delivery of a similar, £1 million project in March along the A590 at Lindal-in-Furness.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.