

Press release: Man given suspended jail term over illegal Wakefield waste site

A Dewsbury man has been handed a 26-week prison sentence, suspended for 12 months, for illegally dumping waste on disused land in Horbury, Wakefield.

Samuel Joseph Stringer Hunter, 25, of Boothroyd Lane, Dewsbury, was sentenced by Kirklees Magistrates' Court on 27 January following an Environment Agency investigation.

Hunter had denied two environmental offences but was found guilty after a trial.

Lorna Matchett, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that investigating officers discovered the illegal activities in July 2014.

Hunter had been storing waste on land near Bridge Road, near the River Calder behind the Horbury Bridge Industrial Estate, although no environmental permits were in place for the operation.

There were several piles of mixed waste containing treated and untreated wood waste and plastics, and skips belonging to the Hunter Group or Huddersfield Skip Services, both of which Hunter was involved with at the time.

The defendant claimed that these waste activities were allowed because they were covered by waste permitting exemptions. But the Environment Agency said the waste was being stored in breach of the exemptions: there was too much waste, it was of a type not compliant with the exemptions and it was stored for too long.

Hunter was told to clear the waste from the site, but inspections between October 2014 and January 2015 revealed that much of it remained. There were also signs that waste had been deposited into the ground, which was contaminated with plastic, glass, a trainer and mixed construction and demolition waste.

The court heard that through running the site illegally, Hunter avoided £4,120 in permitting fees and £5,148 by not installing the correct surfacing to prevent pollution to the ground. It is estimated that Hunter received between £6,400 and £18,720 for the waste he brought onto the site.

In sentencing, the chair of the bench said:

These offences were so serious that custody was the only option.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said after the hearing:

Environmental permitting regulations exist to protect the environment and local communities from the risk of harm. Hunter's activities on this site posed a pollution risk and a fire risk that could have affected the nearby railway line. Hunter also undercut legitimate businesses by avoiding mandatory permitting and infrastructure costs.

We hope this case demonstrates the importance of environmental compliance. Anyone who breaks the rules will be pursued. Anyone who believes waste is being dumped illegally is urged to report the matter to our incident hotline on 0800 807060 so we can investigate.

Prior to sentencing, Hunter told the court in mitigation that he had cleaned up the waste in the shortest possible time.

In addition to the suspended jail term, he was ordered to undertake a rehabilitation activity of 15 days under supervision, and to carry out 300 hours of unpaid work within the next 12 months. Hunter must also pay legal costs of £4,640 and a victim surcharge of £150.

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[News story: Precision medicine in South Africa: apply for funding](#)

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30 January 2017

Part of:

UK businesses can apply for a share of £1.5 million to work with South African partners on non-communicable diseases and child health.

Innovate UK has up to £1.5 million to invest in business projects to develop affordable gene-based diagnostics for non-communicable diseases and child health in South Africa.

The competition aims to encourage innovative partnerships between the UK and South Africa. It is co-funded by Innovate UK and the [South African Medical Research Council](#) (SAMRC).

Projects should seek to develop affordable gene-based diagnostic solutions and targeted treatments for one or more of the following health challenges in South Africa:

- diabetes
- cardiovascular disease
- cancer
- child mortality

The competition is administered by the [Newton Fund](#). Projects must demonstrate how they can have a positive social, economic and/or environmental impact on the wider South African population.

The Newton Fund is part of the UK's official development assistance. It uses science and innovation partnerships to promote economic development and social welfare of partner countries.

- the competition is open, and the registration deadline is midday 10 May 2017
- projects must be led by a UK business working with at least one South African business or research organisation
- we expect projects to range in size from £300,000 to £500,000 on the UK side and to last up to 36 months
- UK businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs
- South African partners will be funded by SAMRC
- a briefing event for potential applicants takes place on 3 February 2017

[Bill on Frank's Law to be brought forward if SNP drags heels](#)

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- Bill on Frank's Law to be brought forward if SNP drags heels

30 Jan 2017



The Scottish Conservatives have announced they will bring forward a bill on Frank's Law if the SNP continues to drag its heels on the matter.

Public health spokesman Miles Briggs said it was essential the campaign – which would enable those under the age of 65 suffering from conditions like dementia to access free care – was made law.

And he said if the Scottish Government doesn't take action, he will introduce a Private Member's Bill at Holyrood, which is likely to win majority support.

Last week, leaders of all parties except the SNP united outside the Scottish Parliament to call for the law to be introduced.

Ruth Davidson, along with Kezia Dugdale, Patrick Harvie and Willie Rennie, were presented with party-themed campaign t-shirts by Amanda Kopel, the wife of former Dundee United player Frank, who the appeal is named after.

However, the yellow SNP t-shirt remained empty, as the party failed to send a single representative to the event.

But Mr Briggs said, now there's a parliamentary majority in favour of Frank's Law, he will act if the Scottish Government doesn't.

Last month, the Scottish Conservatives revealed the number of under 65s being treated for dementia was increasing, another indication that the law had to be introduced.

Scottish Conservative public health spokesman Miles Briggs said:

“There is a majority in the Scottish Parliament in favour of Frank's Law and ministers need to recognise this and implement it without further delay.

“Hopefully the Scottish Government will see sense and put this in place without me having to go through the parliamentary process of a Member's Bill.

“But if it does not, I will bring forward such a bill and invite all MSPs to support it to get this put into legislation.

“When you talk to Amanda Kopel and other campaigners you find out there are a lot of people who really need Frank’s Law to happen.

“For so many families across Scotland, time is of the essence. As such, I will arrange a meeting with the Scottish Parliament’s Non-Government Bills Unit to start early work on a potential bill.”

For more information on Frank’s Law, visit:

<http://frankslaw.org/>

The Scottish Conservatives have consistently supported the introduction of this legislation:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/12/sharp-rise-in-u65s-with-dementia-shows-need-for-franks-law/>

[Scotland needs more vocational colleges](#)

30 Jan 2017



The Scottish Conservatives are calling for Scottish Government to get behind community efforts to promote vocational education, Ruth Davidson said on a visit to Newlands Junior College in Glasgow today.

The brainchild of entrepreneur and philanthropist Jim McColl OBE, the college supports young 14-16 year-olds who are not learning well in the mainstream education sector – and instead gives them a chance to develop and learn new skills.

The college is the only one of its kind in the country – but the Scottish Conservatives are now calling on ministers to work with both the private and voluntary sectors, as well as other philanthropists, to set up similar colleges across Scotland.

Such a network would ensure thousands of youngsters who are in danger of dropping out might instead learn skills and be re-motivated.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“Too many youngsters across Scotland either drop out of mainstream education, or leave without the skills needed to make the most of their lives.

“Newlands Junior College is a shining beacon which shows that, with the right

ideas and support, we really can ensure every child makes the most of their abilities.

“Jim McColl is to be applauded for the extraordinary work he has begun.

“But it is hugely regrettable that it took such a fight to make Newlands Junior College happen, and that it is the only example of its kind in the country. This simply must change.

“After years of under-performance and a stubbornly persistent attainment gap, I believe Scotland’s failed one-sized-fits-all education system needs reform.

“We simply cannot allow Scottish education to continue to stagnate. It is time to open ourselves up to new ideas and bring in the support of Scotland’s business community and voluntary sector where they can contribute.

“The Scottish Government is putting together its governance review as we speak.

“We would encourage it to consider great initiatives like Newlands Junior College and focus on what works.”