

Illegal Somerset car dismantler to pay £400,000

Somerset scrap dealer Wayne Hillard has been ordered to pay more than £400,000 for running an illegal car breakers yard.

The case was brought by the Environment Agency following a joint investigation with Avon and Somerset Police.

Appearing before Taunton Crown Court on 2 March 2020, Hillard was warned he would face a three-year prison sentence if he failed to pay the penalty imposed under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Hillard, 42, claimed he was only repairing cars when agency officers visited his premises at Springway Farm, Westonzoyland in January 2015. They suspected he was dismantling scrap cars. He had previously been told he must obtain an environmental permit if he intended to dismantle vehicles at the site.

Dismantlers are required by law to remove all hazardous components and materials from End-of-Life Vehicles (ELV) including batteries, oils, brake fluids and airbag cylinders. Sites must have special facilities including impermeable concrete floors to ensure spills of hazardous liquids are contained and do not cause pollution.

In February 2017 an agency officer visited Springway Farm and noticed a number of car engines stored on wooden pallets. Hillard said he had purchased them from a business in Manchester, but was unable to provide any receipts.

Suspecting the engines were from vehicles dismantled at Springway Farm, the officer served Hillard with a notice requiring him to supply waste transfer notes for all wastes including hazardous wastes brought onto or exported from the site between 1 January 2016 and 17 February 2017.

Audits of local permitted scrap metal dealers later confirmed Hillard had been paid approximately £84,000 for car shells, engines, batteries, ferrous metals and non-ferrous metals over 20 months from January 2016.

Vehicle dismantling needs a permit as the parts and chemicals are an environmental risk

In addition to payments received from his local scrap metal dealer, Hillard would have made money from the sale of re-usable vehicle parts from his illegal business including the export of components to Greece and Georgia.

Proceeds of Crime investigators discovered Hillard made £1.3m and was still operating illegally including exporting vehicle parts after entering a guilty plea in 2018. The offending took place over six years.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

This prosecution is the result of a prolonged period of offending.

We provided the defendant with advice and guidance over a number of years, yet he chose to ignore us and continued to dismantle vehicles at an illegal site.

This gave him an unfair advantage over law-abiding operators and risked polluting the environment.

Dr Kirstie Cogram, from Avon and Somerset Police Financial Investigation Unit, said:

We're committed to pursuing offenders through the courts using the Proceeds of Crime Act to seize their ill-gotten gains.

We hope this case will act as a deterrent to others and send out a clear message that crime does not pay.

Hillard was ordered to pay £384,100 plus costs of £16,629. He was also given an 18 month conditional discharge. The judge said that if he re-offends and is prosecuted he would then face sentencing for both this and the new offence.

Note to Editors

The charges admitted were:

- Between 1 January 2016 and February 2017, at Springway Farm, Westonzoyland, Somerset, Hillard operated a regulated facility not under or to the extent authorised by an environmental permit, namely the depolluting and breaking of End-of-Life Vehicles (ELV) contrary to Section 12 and 38 of Environmental Permitting Regulations.
- Between 1 June 2017 and 31 August 2017, at Springway Farm, Westonzoyland, Somerset, Hillard operated a regulated facility not under or to the extent authorised by an environmental permit, namely the depolluting and breaking of ELV contrary to Section 12 and 38 of Environmental Permitting Regulations.

The management of ELV is heavily regulated. This is to protect people and the environment from pollution and harm. An ELV may contain component parts that are still fit for their original purpose and these can be removed, sold and reused in other vehicles. Any remaining components containing metals will have a scrap value. The dismantling of ELVs needs to be carried out under a permit issued by the Environment Agency.

British Steel sale to Jingye Group completes

- Sale of British Steel completes, safeguarding more than 3,200 jobs and marking start of new chapter for UK steel industry
- leading Chinese Steelmaker Jingye Group will acquire British Steel and its steelworks at Scunthorpe, Skinningrove and on Teesside, as well as subsidiary businesses TSP Engineering and FN Steel
- Jingye will invest £1.2 billion in sustainable modern technologies and new product lines for UK and global markets

3,200 high-skilled jobs in Scunthorpe, Skinningrove and on Teesside have been safeguarded by the completion of a deal to sell British Steel to leading Chinese steelmaker Jingye Group, the government has welcomed today.

The sale follows extensive discussions between the government, the Official Receiver, Special Managers, unions, suppliers and employees. It marks a critical step in securing a long-term, sustainable future for steelmaking in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East.

As part of the deal, Jingye Group has pledged to invest £1.2 billion over 10 years to modernise British Steel sites and boost energy efficiency.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The sounds of these steelworks have long echoed throughout Yorkshire and Humber and the North East. Today, as British Steel takes its next steps under Jingye's leadership, we can be sure these will ring out for decades to come.

I'd like to thank every British Steel employee in Scunthorpe, Skinningrove and on Teesside for their dedication and resilience which has kept the business thriving over the past year. Jingye's pledge to invest £1.2 billion into the business is a welcome boost that will not just secure thousands of jobs, but ensure British Steel continues to prosper.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma visited British Steel's Scunthorpe site today to meet the CEO of Jingye Group, Mr Li Huiming, CEO of British Steel, Ron Deelen, the Chinese ambassador to the UK, Mr Liu Xiaoming and employees, union representatives, local MPs and stakeholders.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The sale of British Steel represents an important vote of confidence in the UK's steel industry. It also marks the start of a new era for those regions that have built their livelihoods around industrial steel production.

I would like to pay tribute to everyone who has been involved in getting this deal over the line, in particular to British Steel's workforce for whom I recognise the uncertainty will have been challenging.

I also want to reassure British Steel employees who may be facing redundancy that we are mobilising all available resources to give immediate on the ground support and advice to those affected.

British Steel has been used to build everything from sports stadiums to bridges, ocean liners and the Jodrell Bank space observatory.

The company entered into an insolvency process in May 2019 and following thorough negotiations, the Official Receiver and Special Managers from Ernst & Young (EY) have confirmed the complete sale of British Steel to Jingye Group – including the steelworks at Scunthorpe, mills at Skinningrove and on Teesside – as well as subsidiary businesses TSP Engineering and FN Steel.

Roy Rickhuss, General Secretary of the steelworkers' trade union Community, said:

Today marks the start of a new chapter for British Steel. It has been a long and difficult journey to get to this point. In particular, this acquisition is a testament to all the efforts of the world class workforce, who even through the uncertainty, have broken production records. Today would also not have been possible without the government recognising the importance of steel as a key foundation industry. The decision to support the business through to new ownership is an example of positive industrial strategy at work. The government can build on this with more action to create the right environment for all our steel producers to thrive.

We look forward to working with Jingye as they bring forward their investment plans, which have the potential to transform the business and secure a sustainable future. Jingye are not just taking over a business, they are taking on thousands of workers and giving new hope to steel communities in Scunthorpe and Teesside. We know there is a lot more work to do, most importantly supporting those who have not secured employment with the new business.

For the 449 employees facing redundancy as part of the sale, the government's Rapid Response Service and National Careers Service has been mobilised to give on the ground support and advice. This service will help those affected transition into other employment or take on new training opportunities.

The government continues to provide support to the steel industry – including more than £300 million relief for electricity costs, public procurement guidelines and details of a steel pipeline on national infrastructure projects worth around £500 million over the next decade.

[Africa business opportunities encouraged by HMTC UK tour](#)

The Department for International Trade (DIT)'s HM Trade Commissioner (HMTC) for Africa, Emma Wade-Smith OBE, and her team met with businesses of different sizes to discuss investment and export opportunities in Africa. They visited companies in regions across the UK, from Scotland to South West England.

Africa is predicted to be home to 8 of the world's 15 fastest growing economies in the world this year. This growth brings an increasing range of business opportunities, including strong and growing demand for clean, sustainable and innovative investment.

DIT has worked to support a range of UK businesses from various sectors to embrace exports and investment opportunities in Africa over a week-long tour across the UK.

Home to some of the world's most enterprising technologies and the global financial centre of the City of London, the UK is well placed to meet the growing demand from countries across Africa, and be the continent's business partner of choice.

The HMTC's tour follows work started at the UK-Africa Investment Summit, hosted by the Prime Minister in January in London.

That Summit celebrated the £36 billion of trade between Africa and the UK, showcased some of the £38.7 billion of long-term investment and paved the way for lasting partnerships between the UK and African countries to deliver more investment, jobs and sustainable growth.

As part of her visit, HM Trade Commissioner for Africa, Emma Wade-Smith OBE, chaired the inaugural Africa Investors Group (AIG) meeting in London, which brought together some of the UK's long-term investors in Africa.

This initiative – which was announced alongside more than £6.5 billion of commercial deals on Summit day on 20 January – will help ensure the right support for existing UK investors in Africa and will bring this experience to bear in supporting more UK companies to invest in the African continent.

Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Africa, Emma Wade-Smith OBE, said:

There are a wealth of opportunities for UK companies across the diverse and dynamic markets of Africa.

It was important to me to meet companies from across the UK so soon after the UK-Africa Investment Summit, to hear from businesses and understand how we can continue to strengthen our support for UK companies – of any size and from any sector – to help them do good business in Africa.

What I have heard is a strong and growing interest from UK businesses to better understand and explore the opportunities Africa's fast-growing economies and young, highly urbanised populations are generating.

This includes education and skills; healthcare; agri-tech; infrastructure; and energy, all underpinned by technology.

I believe our shared values and ambitions to create jobs and build shared prosperity through inclusive and sustainable economic growth make the UK and Africa natural partners in business.

By working collaboratively across the private and public sectors, we can drive more investment flows and create bankable investment opportunities for UK companies across the African region.

Coarse fishing on rivers is off limits for three months

The close season is in place to allow an uninterrupted spawning period, which increases fish breeding success.

Environment Agency officers will be carrying out enforcement patrols during the close season and if anyone is caught fishing illegally, they may be prosecuted.

Officers are supported by members of the Angling Trust's Voluntary Bailiff Service, operating under Operation CLAMPDOWN8, to assist with identifying illegal fishing activity during the close season.

Lesley Robertson, Enforcement team leader in East Anglia, said: "Our fisheries enforcement officers will be carrying out regular patrols of the

waters during the close season between March 15 and June 15 inclusive.

“The close season for coarse fishing is there for a reason and those who break the rules may be prosecuted and given a hefty fine.”

Fishing is still permitted on many canals and stillwaters, depending on landowner agreement.

All anglers need a valid Environment Agency fishing licence. Fishing licences run 365 days from the day of purchase, regardless of when it is purchased in the year.

This offers 12 full months of fishing. Fishing without one can lead to a fine of up to £2,500.

Lesley added: “The money raised through the sales of fishing licences is re-invested and enables us to improve all fisheries including rivers for anglers.

“Our officers routinely undertake licence checks and we urge anyone with information about illegal fishing activities to contact us.”

UK and Mexico commit to collaboration on climate change and trade

Today (9 March 2020) UK and Mexican Ministers met in London for the UK-Mexico High-Level Economic Talks.

Following the signing of a Partnership Agreement during the visit of the Foreign Secretary to Mexico City in August 2019, the latest talks focused on delivering those commitments to sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as promoting future collaboration in trade and investment.

Minister of State responsible for trade and economic diplomacy, Nigel Adams said:

The UK-Mexico relationship has gone from strength to strength over the last decade, and this latest set of talks offer the opportunity to boost our ties even further.

Our focus on prosperity, climate change and sustainable development demonstrates both our nations are striving to tackle the global challenges that will affect the next generation and be a force for good in the world.

In the Minister's meeting with Mexican Deputy Foreign Minister, Julián Ventura, both committed to pursuing an ambitious future trading relationship.

UK Government investment and collaboration in activity in Mexico has grown from £1 million in 2013 to now being worth up to £250 million over the next four years, covering health, education, climate change and sustainable development.

A decade after Mexico hosted COP16 in Cancun, the UK will gather world leaders in Glasgow for COP26. Representatives at the talks today discussed ways in which both Governments can work closer together on tackling climate change and boosting sustainable development.

Notes to editors:

- In the four quarters to the end of Q3 2019, total UK exports to Mexico amounted to £2.6bn (an increase of 1.6% compared to the four quarters to the end of Q3 2018). In the same period, total UK imports from Mexico were £2.7bn (an increase of 17.8% on the previous year). Source: ONS