

# Press release: Somerset farmer ordered to pay nearly £4,000 for stream pollution

A Somerset farmer has been ordered to pay £3,996 in fines and costs for polluting a stream with contaminated water.

On December 4, 2017 Environment Agency officers paid a routine visit to Meare Green Farm, Stoke St Gregory to check the farm's pollution prevention measures. Before entering the site they noticed a nearby watercourse was heavily discoloured. Sewage fungus was clearly visible – a sign of organic pollution. A yellow pipe was discharging dirty water from the farm into the stream.

The pollution occurred near the Sedgemoor Old Rhyne that lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area for Birds. The watercourse also joins the West Sedgemoor Main Drain, an important fishery.

The farmer, James Pine, explained the yellow pipe took roof water from the farm buildings and ran under a track between a slurry store and silage clamp. Officers saw a dark liquid leaching into the ground from the silage clamp. Dirty water then discharged into the stream via the rainwater pipe.

The defendant agreed to block off the pipe to prevent any further pollution. He explained the silage clamp had been extended over an area previously occupied by an old slurry lagoon. However, he had failed to install an impermeable base as required by the regulations and simply filled in the old lagoon and put down some hardstanding. This meant liquid silage waste could leak into the ground. He had also failed to remove a connecting pipe from the old slurry lagoon and this resulted in slurry overflowing into the ground when the new lagoon was full.

Magistrates heard the pollution had a 'significant impact' on several kilometres of watercourse.

Ian Withers at the Environment Agency said:

Farmers must ensure they have the correct pollution prevention measures in place and that their slurry stores and silage clamps are compliant with the regulations. The defendant had received two previous warnings before this latest pollution incident as well as guidance and advice from the Environment Agency. It was all the more regrettable the pollution occurred in a sensitive and highly designated part of the Somerset Levels.

Appearing before Taunton magistrates, James Pine was fined a total of £996

and ordered to pay £3,000 costs after pleading guilty to one offence under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 and two offences relating to the Silage Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil Storage Regulations. The case was heard on December 19.

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## **[News story: Healthcare Environmental Services: information for employees](#)**

Employees of Healthcare Environmental Services Limited (HES, company number SC173861) were made redundant on 27 December 2018.

We appreciate this is a very distressing time for former employees.

If you have worked for HES for at least 2 continuous years under a contract of employment you can apply to the Insolvency Service for your redundancy pay.

We are in contact with the company about the information we need so that we can fast-track the assessment of redundancy claims.

[Factsheet: Healthcare Environmental Services Limited Factsheet – what to do when you've been made redundant](#) (PDF, 237KB, 2 pages)

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## **[Press release: Helping hand to set up new businesses](#)**

More than 200,000 new businesses have used a new one-stop cross-government service allowing new start-ups to register their company and also register for tax at the same time.

The Streamlined Company Registration Service, which has been set up in a collaboration between HMRC and Companies House, will ease the burdens on new businesses, enabling them to concentrate on what they do best – producing goods, providing services and contributing to the UK's reputation as one of the best places in the world to start a business.

When registering with Companies House, companies can also register for tax and HMRC's digital services, making it easier for new start-ups to fulfil all their legal obligations in one go.

The change, which came into effect last year, removes the need for businesses to send duplicate information to both Companies House and HMRC.

The new service is part of the government's modern Industrial Strategy's commitment to reduce administrative burdens on small businesses, enhancing the UK's reputation as one of the best global environments for small businesses to thrive in.

Mel Stride MP, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

It's never been easier to set up a business in the UK. Reducing the administrative burden on small businesses is all part of this government's commitment to support small business growth.

HMRC and Companies House are working hard to make business registration and tax easier. Previously, the same information would need to be entered into a number of different platforms to register a company and register for tax, we have simplified that process.

The government is committed to ensuring we can deliver a modern, digital tax system for all businesses and their agents, supporting them to get their tax right and reducing the amount of tax lost through avoidable error.

Small Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst said:

British small businesses, and the entrepreneurial spirit behind them, are the backbone of the UK economy employing over 16 million people up and down the country.

Through our modern Industrial Strategy we are making it easier for small businesses to grow and flourish by investing in modern industries, infrastructure and skills, and making it easier to access finance. Anyone thinking of starting a new business in 2019 should check out the huge wealth of Government advice and support available, and go for it.

There's only one more thing you need in order to start a business in the New Year: passion. You have a new idea that you, and those around you, truly believe in, that excites you and that you are motivated to bring to life. Get your start-up in gear. After all, New Year, new you, and a new business too!

## **Further Information**

The joint service known as the Streamlined Company Registration Service supports the government objective to reduce administrative burdens on small businesses to support growth and was announced as part of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015

Companies House and HMRC worked together on the joint service to both set up a limited company and register for Corporation Tax, and register an employer for Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax

A formation agent can still be used to register businesses, and formation agents can continue to act for their clients

For more information, visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

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## **News story: Nomination for Coastguard Rescue Teams who saved a life on St Kilda**

It became clear that the helicopter from Stornoway would not be able to get him out. Step forward the coastguard rescue teams, who've been nominated for an award and have been retelling the story of that day.

Ask station officer Willie Campbell about the geographic challenges the teams faced that day and he'll shake his head. 'Imagine the most remote place you can think of,' he said, 'And even then it's probably not as remote as this cliff in St Kilda.'

The call came in around 12.20pm on 26 June 2018. Stornoway coastguard operations centre was told that an 87-year-old man had slipped and fallen. It was quickly decided to send a coastguard rescue team with rope rescue equipment so the man could be loaded to the helicopter for transfer. Stornoway, South Lochs, Bragar, Tarbert and Scalpay coastguard rescue teams were despatched and the HM Coastguard helicopter from Stornoway put on standby to move out.

On scene, it became very clear, very quickly that while the man was still alive, his position was precarious, to say the least. If he moved, there was a 200 foot drop awaiting him. Those on scene saw that sending in the helicopter could prove fatal to him – the down draft could blow him over the edge. There were no safe helicopter options. A back up team was called to make the journey with extra equipment, along with Leverburgh RNLI lifeboat.

Rope technician Nathan Harris had been sent down because it was clear the man had slipped further. His position was becoming increasingly more precarious. As Nathan arrived, two things were apparent – the first was that the injured man's legs were dangling dangerously over the edge of the precipice above the 200-foot drop and the second was that the man was too exhausted and hurt to be able to do much to help those helping him. Nathan secured him with a rescue strop.

Senior coastal operations officer Ronald Maclean, along with his fellow coastguards and the helicopter crew decided that they couldn't wait for back up. The rescue needed to be carried out as soon as possible. It was already nearly half past two and time was running out. The challenge was immense. They only had one set of rope rescue equipment and it would mean having to adapt normal procedures to get to the man. If they waited, there was the distinct danger the injured man might die. It was a stark choice. In fact there was no choice.

Ronald said: 'The conditions were difficult. It was a very hot day making the hard work seem even harder. But we had to move as fast as we could or the man could have died.'

A second technician – the station officer – Willie Campbell was sent down with a stretcher to work alongside Nathan to bring the man back up. Working together in the kind of teamwork that saves lives, the two men made the man safe on the stretcher and he was gently raised to the top. It took some time. He was finally back at the top along with the two technicians just before 4.50pm.

He was taken on board the helicopter and taken to Western Isles hospital. The man has recovered well and is apparently planning his next adventure.

Coastal operations area commander Murdo Macaulay has nominated all those involved for a special award.

He said: 'We often talk about the professionalism of our teams in difficult spots. This was one of those occasions where this coupled with decision making in life or death situations undoubtedly saved this man's life.'

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## [News story: Coastguard helicopter rescues fallen walker on Isle of Skye](#)

Just before 10:30am on 29 December we received a call from police Scotland asking us to support Skye mountain rescue team SCIO after receiving a report of the injured walker on Quiraing, Isle of Skye.

We sent in our helicopter who airlifted the man and took him to Stornoway airport for onward transfer to hospital. We wish him a speedy recovery and a good new year!

[Quiraing rescue footage](#)