

Press release: Illegal boaters sunk with fines

Five boaters who did not register their vessels have been landed with penalties totalling more than £5,000.

River inspectors found the boats moored on the Great Ouse, Little Ouse, Old West and Nene – all part of the Anglian Waterways network managed by the Environment Agency.

It is a legal requirement for boaters to register any vessel they keep, use or let for hire on Environment Agency waterways, and to clearly display a valid registration plate. Vessel owners must also have the appropriate Boat Safety Scheme certificates and insurance, as part of the registration process.

Glen Wheatley of Farcet in Peterborough, Geoffrey Turner of Holbeach in Lincolnshire, Stuart Baker of Hockwold in Norfolk, Phillip Sunman of Eynesbury in Cambridgeshire, and Anthony Hague of Soham in Cambridgeshire all failed to register their vessels, as required by law.

Their cases were heard at Peterborough Magistrates' Court on Wednesday 8 March, and resulted in fines and costs totalling £5,166.10. Mr Wheatley was ordered to pay a total of £827.99, Mr Turner £856.98, Mr Baker £898.71, Mr Sunman £1,208.71, and Mr Hague £1,371.71.

Nathan Arnold, partnerships and development team leader at the Environment Agency, said:

Our historic and precious waterways are an important part of our nation's heritage and are enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people every year," says Nathan Arnold, Partnerships and Development team leader at the Environment Agency.

A significant part of caring for them, protecting them, and ensuring people continue to enjoy them is funded by boaters paying their way. Those who don't contribute as they should are threatening the future of our waterways – and we won't hesitate to take action against them.

As well as not contributing to the upkeep of waterways, unregistered boats can be unsafe, hazardous to other river users, and a pollution risk to the local environment and wildlife.

The Environment Agency looks after 353 miles of navigable waterways in the Anglian network, which includes the Ancholme, Black Sluice, Glen, Welland, Nene, Great Ouse and Stour, as well as associated locks and navigation facilities like moorings, showers and toilets.

More information about boating and waterways, including registering vessels, is available at <http://www.gov.uk/ea>. If you suspect a boat is illegal, please contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 or by emailing our [Waterways team](#).

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Glen Wheatley of Peterborough Road, Farcet, Peterborough, pleaded guilty by post and was given a fine of £103, and ordered to pay costs of £250, compensation of £444.99 and a victim surcharge of £30. The total penalty was £827.99. His vessel is Lady Angela.
- Geoffrey Turner of Fleet Road, Holbeach, Lincolnshire, was found guilty in absence. He was fined £220, and ordered to pay costs of £250, £343.98 compensation, and a victim surcharge of £43. The total penalty was £856.98. His vessel is Bianco.
- Stuart Baker of Pearces Close, Hockwold, Norfolk, pleaded guilty in court and was given a 12-month conditional discharge. He was also ordered to pay compensation of £878.71 and a £20 victim surcharge (£898.71 total). His vessel is unnamed.
- Philip Sunman of Washbank Road, Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire, pleaded guilty and was fined £200. He was also ordered to pay costs of £100, compensation of £878.71 and a £30 victim surcharge. The total penalty was £1,208.71. His vessel is unnamed.
- Anthony Hague of Bushell Lane, Soham, Cambridgeshire, was found guilty in absence and given a fine of £220. He was also ordered to pay £250 in costs, £873.71 compensation and a victim surcharge of £30. The total penalty was £1,373.71. His vessel is Quest II.
- Powered-vessel owners will require valid insurance to register their vessels and most will also require a Boat Safety Scheme Certificate.
- Registration must be renewed each year for the waterway on which a person is keeping or using their boat. People can also buy a visitor registration for shorter periods.

[News story: Laser Directed Energy Weapon \(LDEW\) testing](#)

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) scientists are conducting trials that will enable Dstl to characterise the effectiveness of Laser Directed Energy Weapon (LDEW), in support of the LDEW Capability Demonstrator. The programme will culminate in a technology demonstrator in 2019.

The goal of the programme is to demonstrate a standalone laser directed energy weapon system that is capable of acquiring, tracking and engaging

aerial and surface targets at various ranges and in different weather conditions.

The project will enable the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Dstl to advise the MOD on the future procurement programme requirements and to establish a road map to an in-service capability. If it is successful, the first laser weapons could come into service in the mid-2020s.

Watch the video of a test laser melting a mortar bomb.

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Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriet Baldwin has said:

"The UK has long enjoyed a reputation as a world leader in innovation and it is truly ground-breaking projects like the Laser Directed Energy Weapon which will keep this country ahead of the curve.

"The Defence Innovation Initiative and £800M Defence Innovation Fund aim to encourage imagination, ingenuity and entrepreneurship, in pursuit of maintaining a military advantage in the future.

"With a rising Defence budget, and a £178 billion equipment plan, our commitment to innovation will deliver a safer and more prosperous Britain."

[Greens ready to take fight for Manchester Gorton to Labour on May 4](#)



28 March 2017

The Green Party has responded to news the Manchester Gorton by-election will be held on May 4 saying it is "ready to take on Labour".

Jess Mayo, the Green candidate for Manchester Gorton, said:

"The Green campaign for Manchester Gorton has already started. We are the only party to take on Labour here and give voters a real alternative to the status quo. Wherever Greens are elected they make a difference, and we will fight hard to make sure Gorton is never overlooked for left behind."

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, visited Gorton today (Tuesday 28 March) to join the campaign trail and visit Northmoor Community Centre, as well the constituency's Curry Mile.

Bartley said:

“On May 4 Manchester Gorton could make history by electing a Green MP. It’s a privilege to visit this community and meet the people who call it home, and a Green MP would mean there is always someone fighting their corner and defending public services.

“We are ready to take on Labour for this seat.”

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[News story: New route to provide better journeys in Somerset](#)

A new route to upgrade a major south-west road has been proposed today (28 March 2017) by Transport Secretary Chris Grayling.

The A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the A303 Southfields will be made into a dual carriageway, leading to quicker journeys for motorists.

Currently, the road is a mix of single and dual carriageway, leading to bottlenecks and congestion. It also carries more vehicles than it was designed for, causing further delays.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

We are spending £15 billion on upgrading our major roads – the biggest investment in a generation.

This latest announcement is the next stage in our commitment to deliver improvements to the south-west. The A358 is a key route between the south-west and London and provides a vital link to Somerset communities. A dual carriageway will help existing businesses thrive and create opportunities for new companies as well as boosting tourism.

The upgraded route is long overdue, but we are now taking action to cut congestion on the A358 to give motorists quicker, safer and more reliable journeys.

The government is also improving the nearby [A303 at Stonehenge](#) and between Sparkford and Ilchester.

Today, Highways England started its [consultation into the A358 upgrade](#). It will close on 20 May.

Jim O'Sullivan, chief executive of Highways England, said:

This scheme will take us a step closer to transforming the A303/A358 corridor into a new type of strategic road which is as safe and reliable as a motorway and where fast and reliable journeys are the norm.

Our consultation and programme of public exhibitions will give everyone a chance to hear more about the proposal and tell us what they think of our plans to deliver the scheme.

The route would see the existing road upgraded between Southfields and West Hatch, where it will split into a new dual carriageway linking with M5 at a new junction at Shoreditch.

A new junction on the M5 would help support major development opportunities south of Taunton.

Alongside the upgraded road will be enhanced provision for cyclists, equestrians and pedestrians.

This consultation is your opportunity to express your views on the proposals ahead of further development work.

A preferred route will be announced this winter, with work starting in spring 2020.

View the proposed route options at the following events:

Date	Venue	Time
Friday 7 April 2017	Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, Chestnut View, Hatch Beauchamp, Taunton TA3 6TH	10:00am to 6.00pm
Saturday 8 April 2017	Taunton Racecourse, Orchard Portman, Taunton TA3 7BL	10:00am to 6.00pm
Monday 10 April 2017	Holiday Inn, Deane Gate Avenue, Somerset, UK TA1 2UA	12:00 to 8.00pm
Tuesday 11 April 2017	Monks Yard, Horton Cross Farm, Ilminster TA19 9PT	12:00 to 8.00pm
Monday 8 May 2017	Holiday Inn, Deane Gate Avenue, Somerset, UK TA1 2UA	10:00am to 5.00pm

Consultation materials will be available to view from 28 March until 20 May 2017 during normal opening hours at the following places:

- Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE
- Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3XZ
- Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY

- South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2HT
 - Ilminster Town Council, Council Offices/North St, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 0DG
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Our Armed Forces & their families deserve the very best support, it's time for the Government to treat them with the respect that they deserve – Nia Griffith

Nia

Griffith MP, Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary, responding to the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body 2017 Report, said:

"This report highlights the serious effect that changes to pay and conditions are having on our Armed Forces. According to the report's authors, rent rises and changes to tax and benefits have created a "perfect storm" that is putting real pressure on service personnel and their families.

"We have known for some time that Conservative cuts to our Armed Forces have had a crippling effect on morale, but this report issues the stark warning that these pressures must be dealt with, otherwise there will be a widespread effect on recruitment and retention, which could in turn threaten operational effectiveness.

"It is clear from this report that personnel feel overlooked in favour of cost-cutting by the MoD. Our Armed Forces and their families deserve the very best support, it's time for the Government to treat them with the respect that they deserve."