

Permit revoked and two waste sites shut down in waste crack down

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The operator of a waste site that has caused misery for locals has had its environmental permit revoked following day of action.

The operator of a poor performing waste site that has caused misery for local residents has had its environmental permit revoked after a major day of action targeting waste crime at West Lancashire industrial estates.

It comes following reports from residents in Simonswood that piles of illegal waste have been causing horrid smells and dust issues – with some parents choosing to stop their children playing outside.

Monday's (23 March) Environment Agency led multi-agency crack down at Simonswood and Williams Brothers Industrial Estates in Simonswood (bordering Kirkby) - saw two illegal waste sites shut down.

In follow up action, the Environment Agency has served a Revocation Notice on Windmill Services Ltd as part of its enforcement efforts to reduce the impact activities at the site are having on the local community.

After the notice takes effect, Windmill Services Ltd must cease all activities previously allowed by the permit - or risk facing prosecution.

The site hasn't been operational since November following Environment Agency enforcement action. An investigation into permit breaches is ongoing.

Image shows a drone operator at the day of action.

Multi-agency day of action

During the day of action, the Environment Agency, supported by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), West Lancashire Borough Council and Knowsley Council, also inspected five permitted waste sites.

It also included DVSA vehicle checks and drone support from the Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC).

The action comes hot on the heels of the government and Environment Agency announcing a new waste crime crackdown, unveiling a sweeping package of measures targeting illegal dumping.

John Neville, Area Environment Manager for the Environment Agency in Cumbria and Lancashire, said:

We are taking faster, more targeted action against those in the waste sector who we suspect are breaking the rules.

Where we find evidence of illegal activity, we will not hesitate to take enforcement

action – including revoking permits to remove operators from the waste sector and shutting down illegal operations.

Waste crime causes real harm, blighting communities, causing pollution and undercutting legitimate businesses. Together with other agencies we are determined to stop it.

Waste Minister Mary Creagh said:

The people of Kirkby have had to endure this nightmare for far too long, so I'm pleased to see this crackdown by the Environment Agency.

Our message to waste criminals is simple: break the rules and you will face the consequences.

Our new Waste Crime Action Plan sets out this government's zero-tolerance approach after years of dither and delay. We're calling time on the waste criminals, who will now have to clean up and pay up, and face penalty points on their licence for fly tipping. We're giving enforcement officers new police-style powers, and doubling the Environment Agency's waste crime budget.

Image shows an Environment Agency officer outside a site at the day of action.

Follow up action to take place

During the day of action, two waste sites were found operating without a permit, one accepting household skip waste and another taking in inert material. The Environment Agency has required all activity to stop, and the waste be removed.

The operator of a third site received guidance to clear a small amount of tipped waste. Pollution prevention advice was given to the operators of two other sites.

At the permitted sites, where environmental permits authorise waste operations to be carried out under conditions which prevent harm to the environment and human health, there will be some follow up action.

The Environment Agency has ensured that the operator of one of the sites is now compliant with its permit, and another has started moving waste from its site.

Anyone with information about suspected waste crime can report it to the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60, or anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Further background

On Windmill Services Ltd:

- It is an offence to operate a regulated facility except under and to the extent authorised by an environmental permit.
- Under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 (the Permitting

Regulations), revocation cannot take effect in less than 20 working days from the date of the Revocation Notice.

- Any operator may appeal a Revocation Notice before it takes effect.
- All appeals are dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate.
- If an operator makes an appeal against a revocation notice, the Permitting Regulations prevent the notice taking effect until the appeal is concluded. This means that the operator can continue to carry out permitted activities, as if the permit was still in place.

On the JUWC:

The JUWC, hosted by the Environment Agency, was formed in 2020 to tackle serious and organised crime in the waste sector.

Since then, it has grown to include 12 partners:

- Environment Agency
- Natural Resources Wales
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- His Majesty's Revenue & Customs
- Police
- National Fire Chiefs Council
- British Transport Police
- National Crime Agency
- Revenue Scotland
- Welsh Revenue Authority
- Environmental Services Association
- Chartered Institute for Waste Management

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/permit-revoked-and-two-waste-sites-shut-down-in-waste-crack-down>