

Farmer who allowed waste to be dumped at beauty spot sentenced

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A North Yorkshire farmer is sentenced for allowing waste to be dumped on his land following Environment Agency prosecution.

A North Yorkshire farmer who allowed thousands of tonnes of waste to be dumped on his land in a Yorkshire beauty spot has been handed a suspended prison sentence and ordered to clear the eyesore.

Following an investigation by the Environment Agency, Hayden Fortune, 50, of Pyethornes Farm, Wigglesworth, Skipton, was sentenced at York Magistrates' Court on Thursday 26 March after previously pleading guilty to operating an illegal waste site.

The court heard the large-scale waste dump was first reported to the Environment Agency in May 2024 and when officers attended they found the smelly site had large amounts of shredded plastic, metals, electrical items and aerosols.

Follow up visits revealed evidence - including excavators working on site - of the waste being buried.

Despite formal warnings and a statutory notice requiring the removal of all waste from the land, the offending continued for more than a year.

In February 2026 the Environment Agency secured a restriction order at court as it stepped up its enforcement efforts to stop the dumping.

Image shows waste on site

Offending was deliberate

The court determined the offending in this case was deliberate and significant. Fortune was sentenced to 12 months in prison, suspended for two years, and was fined £2,500 for breaching an unrelated suspended prison sentence.

He will also carry out 20 days of rehabilitation activity, pay costs of £10,000 and a victim surcharge of £187.

He was also ordered to clear all waste from the site within two years. If he fails to do this he will be brought back before the courts.

Ben Hocking, Area Environment Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Fortune's deliberate offending showed a total disregard for the law, the environment, and the community where he lives.

He repeatedly ignored warnings and notices issued by our officers, who have worked incredibly hard to take quick and decisive action against him.

I hope this sends out the message to others that we are cracking down on waste crime

and we will take action against those who breach the law.

Fortune's breach of the suspended prison sentence related to an unrelated Trading Standards prosecution. He was sentenced in April 2023 to a 12-week prison sentence suspended for 18 months for animal welfare offences. He also received a lifetime ban from keeping animals.

In the March 26 hearing, the court determined that it was inappropriate for the suspended sentence to be activated due to the impact that his going to custody would have on dependents.

Background

Full charge

Between 14th May 2024 and 3rd October 2025 on land at Pyethornes Farm, Wigglesworth, Skipton, Hayden Fortune did operate a regulated facility, namely a waste operation, except under and to the extent authorised by an environmental permit.

Contrary to regulation 12(1) and regulation 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/farmer-who-allowed-waste-to-be-dumped-at-beauty-spot-sentenced>