

## Environmental and Waste Management Group



### January 2020 Newsletter

#### **LEGISLATION, REGULATORS, GUIDANCE & CONSULTATIONS**

##### **The future of England's water environment**

The Geological Society is seeking ideas on behalf of the Environment Agency (EA) about how to manage England's river basins from 2021 onwards. At the current rate of progress, it will take over 200 years to reach the government's 25 Year Environmental Plan target of at least 75% of waters to be close to their natural state.

If you have views, knowledge and expertise that are relevant to the ongoing and future management of the water environment in England (such as on water contamination, waste, changes to water levels and flows, climate and biodiversity, plastics and the impact of physical modifications to the water environment) the Geological Society wants to hear from you. (Read more: [geolsoc.org](http://geolsoc.org))

##### **Environment Agency enforcement and sanctions policy**

The EA has updated its document on how it uses its enforcement and sanctioning powers to secure compliance with laws that protect the environment, providing new offence response options. (Read more: [gov.uk](http://gov.uk))

##### **European Environment Agency briefing, Emerging Chemical Risks — PFAS**

Per and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) comprise more than 4,700 chemicals. They are a group of widely used, man-made chemicals that accumulate over time in humans and in the environment.

This European Environment Agency briefing summarises the known and potential risks to human health and the environment in Europe. (Read more: [europa.eu](http://europa.eu))

##### **Knee-jerk reactions to plastic could potentially harm the environment**

A "disjointed and potentially counterproductive" approach to solving plastic pollution is emerging, according to a new report. Under pressure from the public to act on plastic pollution, companies are on the verge of swapping to other materials with new, and potentially greater, environmental consequences, including higher carbon emissions.

New research for the Circular Economy Task Force, based on anonymised interviews from leading UK supermarkets and brands, reveals that, in the absence of government direction, a disjointed and potentially counterproductive approach to solving plastic pollution is emerging. (Read more: [circularonline.co.uk](http://circularonline.co.uk))

### **NICE publish guidelines for indoor air quality in residential buildings**

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recently published guidelines that cover indoor air quality in residential buildings. It aims to raise awareness of the importance of good air quality in people's homes and how to achieve this. Download the guidance [here](#).

## **INCIDENTS AND PROSECUTIONS**

### **New taskforce launched to crack down on waste gangs**

The Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC) will for the first time bring together law enforcement agencies, environmental regulators, HMRC and the National Crime Agency in the war against waste crime.

Waste crime, such as dumping hazardous materials on private land and falsely labelling waste so it can be exported abroad to unsuspecting countries, will be among the crimes tackled by the taskforce. Serious and organised waste crime is estimated to cost the UK economy at least £600 million a year and a 2018 Home Office review found that perpetrators are often involved in other serious criminal activity, including large scale fraud and in some cases modern slavery. (Read more: [circularonline.co.uk](http://circularonline.co.uk))

### **Serious assault highlights threat to staff at recycling centres**

Following a routine check on a member of the public's waste to establish its type, an operative was seriously assaulted at a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in south Manchester, suffering a badly broken jaw; the incident highlighting the regular threats of violence and verbal abuse workers suffer. (Read more: [greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](http://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk))

### **Company sentenced following a serious incident in the sewer**

Waste and wastewater company, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, has been fined £300,000 following an incident in 2017 in which three workers were carried along a sewer following the collapse of a 150-year-old sewer gate.

The three workers suffered minor physical injuries but have been affected mentally. One worker has been treated for long-term traumatic stress because of the incident, which has prevented him from continuing work in his specialised career.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector James Goldfinch said: "This serious incident endangered the lives of three workers and caused lasting adverse mental health effects; the workers narrowly avoided death by drowning in sewage... It should serve as a warning and a reminder to all those that work in confined spaces that work in these challenging environments must be properly planned, coordinated and managed." (Read more: [hse.gov.uk](http://hse.gov.uk))

### **Pet food company's recycling negligence leads to charity donation**

Nottingham based firm makes £75,000 environmental donations after being caught not paying recycling costs for 15 years

Nottingham based Kennelpak Ltd has made donations to the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association for its failure to meet its packaging recycling obligations from 2001 to 2016.

The financial contribution is part of an enforcement undertaking (EU) offered to the EA for its failure to register with the Environment Agency, recycle and recover a proportion of their waste by purchasing Packaging Recovery Notes. (Read more: [gov.uk](http://gov.uk))

### **Brothers sentenced for £1.48 million electronic waste fraud**

Brothers Jamil and Saleem Rehman received custodial sentences of 5 years and 4 months, and 16 months suspended for 2 years, respectively, at Birmingham Crown Court in December following an EA prosecution into fraud involving electronic waste.

Between January 2011 and December 2012, Jamil Rehman, who was the sole director at Electronic Waste Specialists Ltd (EWS), submitted fictitious claims for the recycling of approximately 10,600 tonnes of electronic waste with the company receiving payment to the value of £1.48 million from a producer compliance scheme, Weelight Ltd. (Read more: [gov.uk](http://gov.uk))

### **Waste manager receives prison sentence for flouting the law**

The manager of a waste transfer station has been given a 12 month suspended prison sentence for running an illegal waste site at Torpoint, Cornwall. (Read more: [gov.uk](http://gov.uk))

## **OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST**

### **England's 2018 recycling figures show 0.5 per cent decline**

The official England 'waste from households' recycling rate for 2018 was 44.7 per cent, down 0.5 percentage points from 45.2 per cent in 2017.

Official figures, released by Defra, show that total waste from households in England decreased by 1.8 per cent in 2018 to 22.0 million tonnes, down from 22.4 million tonnes in 2017. This is equivalent to 394 kg per person, down from 403 kg per person in 2017, a decrease of 2.2 per cent. (Read more: [circularonline.co.uk](http://circularonline.co.uk))

### **Changing the colour of bins can increase recycling**

Changing the colour of bins makes a difference when it comes to increasing "on-the-go" recycling in public spaces, according to the lessons learnt from #LeedsByExample. The #LeedsByExample project was launched in October 2018 by environmental charity Hubbub and Ecosurety, introducing 186 new recycling points and new technology in the square mile of Leeds City centre to test the impact of new bin designs, bin locations and communications over the course of a year. The trial found that simply changing the colour and messaging of the bins had a significant impact on the amount of recycling collected. (Read more: [circularonline.co.uk](http://circularonline.co.uk))

## **Flood risk maps 2019**

The Environment Agency has published updated flood risk maps for England. The maps show the potential risk and impacts of flooding in the flood risk areas. (Read more: [gov.uk](#))

## **Demolition workers must be better protected in 2020, says Unite**

Construction union, Unite, has said 2020 must bring safety improvements for demolition workers after a rise in deaths and major accidents in 2019.

Unite has said it will write to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to request that demolition incidents are investigated correctly and that lessons are learnt from errors. The union also stated that it would add pressure to enforcement agencies and employers to enhance their efforts to safeguard demolition workers.

Major incidents in 2019 include the deaths of four demolition workers at three different sites and the collapse of scaffolding around a derelict shopping centre in Reading. (Read more: [pbctoday.co.uk](#))

## **SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES**

### **The Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum: Taking it to the next level – WISH conference 2020**

'A new strategy to take the waste and recycling industry's health and safety performance to the next level' is the theme of the WISH conference 2020. The conference will take place on Thursday 12 March 2020 at a London venue, and will be the fourth WISH (Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum) strategy event.

Places are limited and the conference will be by invite. To register your interest in attending please send an e-mail to [info@wishforum.org.uk](mailto:info@wishforum.org.uk) stating your name, the organisation you work for and your job title.

**Health and Wellbeing Show, Birmingham NEC, 10-11 March** (Read more: [connecthealth.co.uk](#))

**Health and Safety Event, Birmingham NEC, 28-30 April** (Read more: [thenec.co.uk](#))

**Safety and Health Expo, ExCel London, 19-21 May** (Read more: [safety-health-expo.co.uk](#))

**XXII World Congress on Safety and Health at Work: Prevention in the Connected Age, 4-7 October 2020** (Read more: [ilo.org](#))

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Global energy use projected to nearly double by 2050**

The worldwide consumption of energy is projected to increase by nearly 50% between 2018 and 2050, led by growth in Asia.

That's according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), which suggests most of this growth will come from countries that are not in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) but will be focused in regions where strong economic growth is driving demand, particularly in Asian nations.

The total growth in energy consumption will result in a 79% increase in electricity generation between 2018 and 2050, with renewables – including solar, wind and hydropower – being the fastest growing energy source.

Worldwide renewable energy consumption is projected to increase by 3.1% per year, compared to a 0.6% rise in petroleum and other liquids, 0.4% growth in coal and 1.1% annual increase in natural gas usage. (Read more: [energyliveneews.com](http://energyliveneews.com))

### **Global recycling day, 18 March**

Global Recycling Day was created in 2018 to help recognize, and celebrate, the importance recycling plays in preserving our precious primary resources and securing the future of our planet. It is a day for the world to come together and put the planet first.

The mission of Global Recycling Day, as set out by the Global Recycling Foundation, is twofold:

1. To tell world leaders that recycling is simply too important not to be a global issue, and that a common, joined up approach to recycling is urgently needed.
2. To ask people across the planet to think resource, not waste, when it comes to the goods around us – until this happens, we simply won't award recycled goods the true value and repurpose they deserve.

(Read more: [globalrecyclingday.com](http://globalrecyclingday.com))