



**ABLE INVESTIGATION
& ENFORCEMENT SOLUTIONS**

Press release – for immediate release, Tuesday November 19th, 2019

ABLE ENFORCEMENTS REMOVES SQUATTERS FROM FRACKING PROTEST SITE, IN ‘OPERATION BLACKPOOL’



An aerial view of the site at Preston New Road in Blackpool

Specialist evictions experts Able Enforcements have successfully undertaken the removal of a dozen squatters from an anti-fracking protest camp on private land near Blackpool.

Illegal trespass and fears of contamination of the land prompted the local business to call the Bristol-based firm to the site, after the protestors repeatedly refused requests to leave.

A team of over 30 officers from Able Enforcements – bailiffs, security guards and dog handlers – joined up with Specialist Group International, specialists in removing protestors from trees to execute the eviction at daybreak on Tuesday November 19th.

The eviction was undertaken, following consultation with Lancashire Constabulary, without the need for a court order but using Common Law rights to remove trespassers from private land. Police were in attendance throughout the eviction.

Operation Blackpool took place at the so-called Camp of New Hope, private land in a small copse off Preston New Road and around a mile from Cuadrilla’s nearby fracking site. The Government recently announced a moratorium on fracking, until or unless the activity is proven safe.

Steve Wood, operations director at Able Enforcements, said: “This was a challenging job and a complicated site – these squatters have been here for more than three years, were well entrenched and are experienced protestors.

“Fortunately, we’ve met most of these individuals before – we see the same people at jobs all over the country – so we knew what to expect in terms of aggression, abuse and violence.

“Our main priority was to act with speed and surprise, to prevent them locking themselves to structures or trees, or to call up reinforcements from nearby camps.

“The eviction has taken three weeks of planning and I am pleased that my staff showed suitable professionalism in the face of considerable verbal provocation and physical abuse.

“We set strict guidelines for our personnel of how to treat the protestors, to avoid any false accusations that they’ve been mistreated in any way. Our expertise is in managing these situations quickly, securely and according to the law which we are employed to uphold.

“We understand that the local community here is against the fracking industry – that’s not our concern. There is a private landlord here who has suffered from the illegal activity of these squatters and it is our job to remove them.”
Able Investigations and Enforcements is marking its 25th year in business with the aim of reaching an unprecedented £1.5m in annual turnover in 2019.

Mr Wood said the company is dealing with around 20 evictions of squatters, travellers and protestors from public and private sites each month, with clients across the UK including local authorities, private landowners and oil and gas firms.

Earlier this year the company invested more than £20,000 in training, equipment and accreditation for the new Able Enforcements Security Division, which has recently achieved Approved Contractor status from the Security Industry Authority (SIA).

Mr Wood, who is the Past President of the Certificated Enforcement Agents Association (CEAA), works for Able Investigations and Enforcements in Bristol alongside Georgina Wood, who is the South West Chairman of the CEAA.

She said: “We are all excited about the potential we have to further develop our reputation as one of the leaders in our field and to continue providing a service which we feel is professional and plays an important role in maintaining the laws by which society functions.”

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Notes to editors:

1. Steve Wood at Able Investigations is available for interview. Please contact Rupert Janisch at Elmhay PR to arrange.
2. Please note, a full statement from the landowner in questions is available on request.
3. For further information on Able Investigations please visit <http://ableinvestigations.com/>.

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