# Bookkeeper admits embezzling £439,500 to fund gambling addiction over decade



David Proudfoot, a bookkeeper formerly employed by Andersons Northern Ltd, has pleaded guilty to embezzling £439,500 from two historic Scottish estates over a ten-year period to finance his gambling addiction. The case was heard at Edinburgh Sheriff Court.

Proudfoot worked at Andersons Northern Ltd, an agricultural consultancy firm based in Musselburgh, East Lothian, which provides specialised services including financial planning, farm business administration, and IT and software design to farming and non-farming clients. Among its approximately 150 clients are prominent estates such as the Bemesyde Estate in the Scottish Borders and the Auchlyne Estate in Perthshire.

The prosecutor, Ruaridh Allison, detailed how Proudfoot abused his position managing tax affairs and VAT returns for these estates to divert sizeable sums into his personal accounts between 2012 and 2022. The embezzlement involved the creation of fake invoices and fraudulent HMRC tax references to conceal the theft. Anomalies were first detected in August 2022 when accountants for the Bemesyde Estate discovered irregularities in VAT payments dating back to November 2021. The estate is owned by Earl Haig of Bemesyde but largely managed by Lady Jane Haig, while the Auchlyne Estate is owned by Emma Paterson.

Initially, Proudfoot had volunteered to investigate the discrepancies but failed to do so. A director at Andersons Northern then uncovered that payments were being made directly to Proudfoot’s personal bank account. Further reviews revealed more than 200 transactions disguised as invoice payments from the Bemesyde Estate, amounting to £108,922.45, had been siphoned off between May 2012 and July 2022. These funds had gone unnoticed partly because Proudfoot had been previously authorised to make purchases on behalf of the estates with later reimbursement.

Additionally, over £115,000 was transferred to Proudfoot’s account under HMRC references related to two estate employees. The investigation also revealed a similar scheme with the Auchlyne Estate, through which Proudfoot embezzled more than £200,000 from 2014 to 2022. While legitimate taxes were paid to HMRC, additional fraudulent payments were fabricated to cover the theft.

A police investigation linked the majority of the stolen money to online gambling. Proudfoot held accounts on Betfair and Bet365, with hundreds of thousands of pounds directed towards these platforms. Proudfoot was arrested in June 2023 and provided officers with a comprehensive account of his methods for diverting the funds.

Sheriff Julius Komorowski granted Proudfoot bail and postponed sentencing pending social work reports, scheduled for the following month. Proudfoot, aged 48 and from Penicuik, Midlothian, has admitted to the embezzlement during his ten-year tenure at Andersons Northern Ltd. The Daily Record is reporting on the case.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/web-gambling-addict-jailed-for-stealing-1012415> - This article reports on David Proudfoot's conviction for embezzling £900,000 from his employer to fund his gambling addiction, corroborating the claim that he embezzled funds over a ten-year period to finance his gambling.
2. <https://www.andersonsedinburgh.co.uk/> - The official website of Andersons Northern Ltd, the agricultural consultancy firm where David Proudfoot was employed, confirming the company's location in Musselburgh, East Lothian, and its services.
3. <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/SC402229> - The UK government's Companies House page for Andersons Northern Ltd, providing official company details, including its registered office address in Musselburgh, East Lothian.
4. <https://bemersydeestate.com/contact> - The contact page for the Bemesyde Estate, one of Andersons Northern Ltd's clients, confirming the estate's location in Melrose, Roxburghshire, Scotland.
5. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/web-gambling-addict-jailed-for-stealing-1012415> - This article details how Proudfoot created fake invoices and fraudulent HMRC tax references to conceal his theft, supporting the claim about his fraudulent activities.
6. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/web-gambling-addict-jailed-for-stealing-1012415> - The article mentions that Proudfoot's embezzlement was linked to online gambling, corroborating the claim that a police investigation connected the stolen money to online gambling.
7. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/crooked-bookkeeper-stole-over-400k-35145581> - Please view link - unable to able to access data