

## **OVERVIEW OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS**

### **AT POLEGLASS Sept 2020-21**

#### **Project Overview**

The area of land managed under this Contract is 70 acres located entirely in the Poleglass area, within the Belfast City Council catchment area. To deliver the agreed outputs of the DfC Poleglass Land Management Contract, TCV's Laurel Glen Team complete a range of litter removal, community engagement and environmental duties within the Contract's designated area.

The land managed can be subdivided into specific areas; Laurel Glen, Bogstown Glen, Old Colin Woodland, St. Kieran's, and Good Shepherd. The areas managed is a combination of wooded areas, open glen between housing areas and more formal public areas.

TCV's Laurel Glen team operate from a Unit base within Springbank Industrial Estate, equipped with a minibus, trailer, dumper truck, full kit of practical work tools and PPE. The team, who all live locally, have been working together since 2001 have built a positive reputation, understanding of local issues and presence within the area, working closely with local people and community representatives to ensure health & safety, safe access and environmental standards are maintained.

On a daily, weekly, and monthly basis the Team work to standards of TCV's extensive Policies and Procedures, including Health & Safety, Safeguarding and GDPR. Each Team member has completed all appropriate internal and external training certification to deliver on this Contract to high standards.

#### **TCV's management to the ongoing challenges of Covid19**

The challenges of covid have continued to be managed by TCV through additional covid H&S measures in our working practice to ensure staff and public remain as safe as possible. TCV with agreement from DfC, continued to provide a certain level of land management across the Poleglass area.

Under TCV's Land Management Contract we have a H&S responsibility for DfC Poleglass land. With the Government guidance recommending the public to take daily outdoor exercise in their local area as strict lockdown restrictions remained in place, TCV viewed a complete stop in land management would pose a risk to the public. Approval was given by DfC and TCV's Senior Leadership Team for the local team to continue to manage litter and fly-tipping across the Poleglass Lands, with the Team observing additional H&S measures to protect themselves and others. This was reviewed on a regular basis as government updates were announced.

Since March 2020, at the start of the lockdown TCV recorded several changes in local behaviour with regards to volume and trends in litter and antisocial behaviour. These trends continued throughout the lockdown periods and are outlined below under the relevant headings of Schedule of Service.

Schedule of Service	Outputs
<p><b>(1) General Duties</b>  General litter remains a huge issue consuming a high percentage of man hours in litter removal across the Contract area. Keys points to report this year are the increase in ASB levels and volume of burning at key hotspot sites.</p> <p>As lockdown continued TCV recorded a huge increase in the volumes of cardboard being dumped on DfC lands. This volume of cardboard is generated by ongoing high levels of online shopping. Large cardboard boxes tend to be used regardless of the size of the items shipped meaning large unmanageable pieces of cardboard being dumped (with address labels removed). TCV have recycled over 90% of this cardboard to our Tree Nursery and horticulture projects which are following permaculture 'no-dig' methods.</p> <p>The levels of anti-social behaviour and related damage to DfC lands are higher than previous years. Young people continue to gather in large numbers at specific hotspots, stealing bins from local shops and residents, traffic cones and barriers from local building sites, burning these, causing damage to paths and woodland sites. The volume of bins being burnt is significantly higher, with TCV removing 171 burnt wheelie bins alone. Shop bins and crates are also being dragged onto DfC lands and burnt on an increasingly frequent basis. These are set against trees before being burnt, causing extensive damage to local nature. The largest single incident was 20 shop crates burnt together, producing heat which caused them to melt together.</p> <p>All types of bin burning is directly increasing the volume of general litter across the site – there is a delay in bins being replaced therefore residents and shop items are dumped on DfC Lands in increasing volumes. TCV know the number of bins burnt from the number of metal wheel axels retained which do not burn / melt.</p> <p>The levels of ASB continues to increase with the easy used Glider transports system, more young people from other areas of Belfast travel to Poleglass to attend parties organised via social media. A higher percentage of TCV time is consumed clearing the aftermath of these mass gathering including drink cans, drug paraphernalia water bottles, plastic bags, broken glass, food packaging, broken trees, shrubs, and burnt materials.</p> <p>Trends and seasonal peaks in litter volume are mapped across the area by the Team, i.e. drink and drug related litter after summer evenings, Christmas house-hold clearances etc. The Team manage these peaks by anticipating them and allocating more man hours to specific problem spots, working flexible and anti-social hours.</p> <p>The number of bonfire seasons has increased to 3 in the past 12 months – St. Patricks Day, 9<sup>th</sup> August and 15<sup>th</sup> August. In the run up to these bonfire dates TCV Team manage their time, working flexible hours to removed items destined for bonfires when it is safest to do so, i.e. early morning. The focused efforts of TCV's Laurel Glen team resulted in zero bonfires or bonfire related damage on DfC managed land during this year.</p> <p>TCV removed over 262 wooden pallets which were destined for bonfires, with over 200 of these recycled between the Allotments, Men's Shed, residents to upcycle into garden furniture, and TCV Community Garden Projects. Removed pallets where also given to the campsite for the West Belfast Festival.</p>	<p>252 days land inspections &amp; general duties</p> <p>Over 90% of cardboard from online shopping recycled</p> <p>171 household burnt bins cleared</p> <p>20 shop crates burnt in a single incident</p> <p>Over 60% of all items lifted are sorted for recycling</p> <p>0 bonfires on DfC lands</p> <p>262 wooden pallets collected in August, over 200 upcycled</p>

<p>Living and working locally allows the team to react quickly and effectively to local issues as they arise, e.g. civil unrest, disposal of dangerous and illegal material. Daily the team start their day with a quick H&amp;S check across the area, prioritising their time to specific H&amp;S issues as required.</p> <p>TCV's Team are connected to local community groups and social media groups which keep them updated of an incidents, ABS hotspots, planned events etc which help them to respond quickly and appropriately as required.</p>	
<p><b>(2) Removal of Fallen Trees Affecting the Access</b>  Being based locally allows the Team to react quickly to these incidents as they happen, to restore H&amp;S standards and minimise disruption to the public at risk. Their strong reputation within the area, local people and community representatives know how to contact them if there are fallen and damaged trees after stormy weather, local accidents, anti- social behaviour etc. Work is completed to environmental standards and to H&amp;S procedures.</p>	<p>14 Trees</p> <p>18 fallen branches</p>
<p><b>(3) Removal of Abandoned/Burnt Out Vehicles</b>  The volume of burnt out vehicles on DfC land continues to remain low but the H&amp;S issues and potential environmental risks make this a time-consuming aspect of the service. The dumper track and cutting equipment have made this significantly easier, quicker, and safer to complete. When burnt out vehicles are made known to the Team, they act to remove these as soon as possible and follow procedure of reporting each incident to PSNI.</p>	<p>0 burnt cars removed</p> <p>2 burnt motorbike</p>
<p><b>(4) Fly Tipping</b>  Fly tipping remains an issue throughout the Contract area, with several key spots used for large volumes of tipping. E.g. continual dumping of builder's rubble, garage waste, high volumes of tyres and shop waste.</p> <p>Although, dumped tyres remains an issue, there has been a slight decrease in the volume of tyres dumped on DfC land, with the Team removing 176 tyres. Over 80% of these were recycled again mainly to the Allotments for various planters, the remained were delivered to BCC Duncrue Street facility. Garage waste has increased during this year with items including; scrap car parts, oil etc.</p> <p>Dumped 'white' and household goods are removed as part of the daily and weekly routine within the easily accessible areas. This includes a wide range of general household items, with a particular increase in; fridges, washing machines, micro-waves, chairs, sofas, prams, beds, mattresses, general wooden furniture and bikes.</p> <p>Working in partnership with local representative, housing bodies and the Council the TCV Team have been granted permission to actively record, pursue and support in the prosecution of illegal dumpers and fly-tippers. The Team have developed a strong working relationship with Belfast City Council Community Officers, providing evidence and reporting dumping offenders.</p>	<p>252 days of land inspection and removal of fly tipping materials</p> <p>176 tyres removed with 80% upcycled</p>
<p><b>(5) Assistance with Community Clean Up Programmes</b>  The Team strive to invest time in community engagement, supporting community clean-ups and promoting anti-litter messages across the area. Due to Covid19 restrictions the number of community lead events was greatly reduced which TCV mainly supporting the outdoor event of replanting Michael Ferguson Roundabout.</p>	<p>6hrs</p>

<p>In general TCV's Team connect and communicate with local people and community groups throughout the year and especially at 'peak' times, e.g. during July and August to remove as many bonfires as possible before it leads to anti-social behaviour or escalates to civil unrest.</p> <p>The Team all live locally and have a very strong network of contacts within the community and with local Politicians which enables them to connect and assist closely with community events / programmes as they are planned.</p>	
<p><b>(6) Implementation of a Conservation Programme</b> TCV complete a range of environmental enhancement projects, e.g. tree, shrub, and wildflower planting, pruning back overgrowth, removal of invasive species, river clearance and path maintenance.</p> <p>As lockdowns remained in place residents continued to use their local green space for walks, outdoor time etc. To ensure 2m social distancing could be observed TCV monitored the vegetation growth, clearing paths as required to enable safe public access. TCV intensively cleared over 750 metres of pathways to ensure social distancing</p>	<p>156 hours of conservation programmes completed</p> <p>750m paths cleared and maintained for social distancing</p>
<p><b>(7) Co-operation and Integration with Local Residents, Local Schools, Community Groups, Statutory Agencies and the Voluntary and Community Sector</b></p> <p>TCV were in the advantageous position of being able to provide support to local Covid19 emergency response plans, in the form of a practical Team with access transport. TCV worked alongside local community groups, government departments and residents' groups to deliver 60 emergency parcels to vulnerable people who were shielding and in sheltered housing. TCV were able to use their vehicle and trailer to transport bulk volumes of emergency packs from the central hub into the local community</p> <p>Covid19 lockdown and restrictions within schools means TCV have not delivered any interactive environmental education workshops. Since Sept 2021 with Schools returning TCV have received an increase in requests for school grounds based environmental activities. We are in the process of finalising plans for the delivery of these.</p>	<p>60 emergency parcels delivered</p>
<p><b>(8) Disposal of Material to Blackstaff Recycling Centre.</b></p> <p>TCV, DfC and BCC have a contract agreement for the use of Blackstaff Recycling Centre. From 01/09/2020 until 31/08/2022, TCV made 266 visits to the facility, averaging between 700 – 800 KGs per trip. TCV continue to ensure on average 60% of daily waste is sorted for recycling. This is predominantly wood, hard plastics, furniture and electrical items. Unrecycled materials is mostly household waste, items cleared from burnt bin sites.</p> <p>TCV have established a strong working relationship with Blackstaff Recycling Centre staff, ensuring as many items as possible are recycled.</p>	<p>266 visits</p> <p>60% daily materials recycled</p>
<p><b>(9) Additional / good-will work</b> Includes phone call, meetings, and site visits</p> <p>The Team are in regular communication with external contractors when they are completing work at DfC BRO's request. TCV Team complete spot-checks on contact grass cutting as requested by DfC. Their local knowledge is invaluable to ensure H&amp;S standards and social</p>	<p>Over 65 hrs</p>

acceptance is met. TCV work in conjunction with the PSNI in the removal of stolen and burnt out cars, including cars which have been used in serious crimes.

The Team also continue to have strong local relationships across all sectors, including  
 Colin neighbourhood partnership.  
 Colin safer neighbourhood project.  
 Footprints Women's Centre.  
 Men shed.  
 Sally gardens.  
 Belfast city council, including Million Tree Programme, Community Relations Officers  
 Colin allotments.  
 Local Residents Groups including BMRG, Belfast Metropolitan Residents Group  
 Sinn Fein Cllrs MLA'S  
 Housing executive.  
 Belfast Hills Partnership.

#### IMAGES SHOWING VARIETY OF WORK COMPLETED BY TCV'S LAUREL GLEN TEAM 2020-2021



Photos show a range of the issues within the Poleglass area which TCV's Laurel Glen Team deal with and manage on a recurring basis. The work they complete, including community Litter lifting, removal and make safe of fallen trees, enhancing local biodiversity by removing invasive species, path work to ensure H&S access, removal and reporting of burnt-out vehicles, clean-up after mass youth anti-social behaviour and removal of ongoing fly tipping.



