

OVERVIEW OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

AT POLEGLASS 1ST April 2017 – 31ST MARCH 2018

Project Overview

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) employs a team of 5 full-time Community Project Officers to deliver the agreed outputs of the DfC BRO Poleglass Land Management Contract. The Laurel Glen Team, complete a range of litter removal, community engagement and environmental duties within the Contract's designated area.

The area of land managed is approximately 25 hectares, located entirely in the Poleglass area, the land, owned by DfC, is within the Belfast City Council catchment area. The specific area includes; Laurel Glen, Bogstown Glen, Old Colin Woodland, St.Kierans' and Good Shepherd. The area managed is a combination of wooded areas, open glen between housing areas and more formal public areas.

The 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, Data Protection. On an annual basis they contribute positively to TCV's ISO 9001 2015 Quality Standard audit, helping TCV's Belfast operations achieve and maintain this International Working Standard.

Performance against Schedule of Service 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018

Schedule of Service	Outputs
<p>(1) General Duties</p> <p>Litter remains a huge issue with a high percentage of man hours consumed in litter removal across the Contract area. During this reporting period 358 visits were made to Blackstaff averaging between 700 – 800 KGs per trip. On average 60% of daily waste is sorted for recycling. This is predominantly furniture and electrical items.</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>During the months prior to August bonfires the Team removed over 350 wooden pallets which were destined for bonfires. 90% of these pallets were recycled between the Allotments Men's Shed, West Belfast Festival Campsite and local residents. The pallets were up-cycled into compost bins, raised beds, seating and furniture making. The focused efforts of TCV's Laurel Glen team resulted in zero bonfires or bonfire related damage on DfC managed land during this season.</p> <p>In general there has been an increase in the volume of bins being burnt, house-hold wheelie bins and food / rubbish bins from local shops. Young people use social media to gather in their</p>	<p>248 days</p>

<p>hundreds on DfC land, stealing bins, traffic cones, barriers and signs to burn. There has been a dramatic increase in the volume of burnt construction materials and road safety barriers with the construction work currently being completed on the Stewartstown road. The result is an increased volume of time spent by the Team clearing at these burn sites. The construction work is due to be completed in June 2019.</p> <p>Being based 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. On a daily basis the team start their day with a quick H&S check across the area, prioritising their time to specific H&S issues as required.</p>	
<p>(2) Removal of Fallen Trees Affecting the Access Being based locally allows the Team to react quickly to these incidents as they happen, to restore H&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&S procedures.</p> <p>During this year there has been a marked increase in anti-social behaviour of young people resulting in an increased volume of damage and burning of trees and hedges across DfC land.</p>	34 Trees 2 hedges
<p>(3) Removal of Abandoned/Burnt Out Vehicles The volume of burnt out vehicles on DfC land continues to decrease year on year but the H&S issues and location of burnt cars can 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>	1 car 1 bike
<p>(4) Fly Tipping 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>There has been a marked increase in the volume of tyres dumped on DfC land, with the Team removing over 400 in a 5 week period. Over 70% of these were recycled again mainly to the Allotments for back filling and bank support, and for various planters. The Allotment gardeners reported a bumper crop of potatoes grown in tyres!</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 chairs, sofas, prams, beds, mattresses, kitchen cupboards, general wooden furniture, bathroom units, as well as bikes, car parts tyres, metal etc. Removal of larger-scale fly tipping in less accessible areas is completed following weekly inspections and / or as soon as possible when brought to the Team attention.</p> <p>Working in partnership with local representative, housing bodies and the Council the 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>	248 days
<p>(5) Assistance with Community Clean Up Programmes</p>	21hrs

<p>The Team continue to invest time in community engagement, supporting community clean-ups and promoting anti-litter messages across the area.</p> <p>The Team connect and communicate with local people and community groups at 'peak' times of the year, 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>(6) Implementation of a Conservation Programme TCV can complete a range of environmental enhancement projects, e.g. tree, shrub and wildflower planting, pruning back overgrowth, removal of invasive species, river clearance, step building and path maintenance.</p> <p>TCV engage volunteers in this aspect of our Contract delivery, to enable them to gain experience of environmental work in a highly populated urban area with multiple social issues.</p>	2 days
<p>(7) Co-operation and Integration with Local Residents, Local Schools, Community Groups, Statutory Agencies and the Voluntary and Community Sector</p> <p>TCV are an active member and contribute to the Colin Safer Neighbourhood Project identifying antisocial behaviour and vandalism hotspots on DfC BRO land. This includes attending community team meetings, site visits and direct interaction with local young people especially during weekend social hours. This group supports preventative action to ensure the safety of all residents in the Area.</p> <p>For example, using their local networks and knowledge they are able to prevent 100's of teenagers from gathering for pre-arranged fights and other anti-social behaviour. This year TCV hold the chair position of CSPN and have expanded the programme of youth outreach work i.e. midnight football, disco' and some training programmes.</p>	167 hours
<p>(8) Disposal of Material to Blackstaff Recycling Centre. TCV completed 358 visits to Blackstaff with an average of 750-800 KG's per trip. This disposal is of a wide mix of materials as detailed in weekly worksheets, broadly categorised into; household waste, play / leisure / recreation items, shop waste, builder's materials, garden and green waste, garage waste including tyres and oil.</p> <p>Please see above for details of recycling of materials taken to Blackstaff Amenity Site.</p> <p>Tyres and oil are compiled and disposed of separately.</p>	358 visits
<p>(9) Additional / good-will work 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. Their local knowledge is invaluable to ensure H&S standards and social 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.</p>	65 hrs



Photos show a range of the issues within the Poleglass area which the 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.