

OVERVIEW OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

AT POLEGLASS 1ST April 2015 – 31ST MARCH 2016

Project Overview

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) employs a team of 5 full-time Community Wardens to deliver the agreed outputs of the 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, although considered part of west Belfast is sited in Lisburn City Council area. The specific areas include; 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 standards are maintained.

Following an issue specific to one Team members security clearance through DFP, TCV ensured the level and standard of contract delivery remained 100%. On a short-term basis TCV were providing additional resources from our wider Belfast Staff Team, and have now recruited a temporary warden until this issue is resolved. Throughout this process TCV have remained in regular contact with BRO, to discuss and give updates.

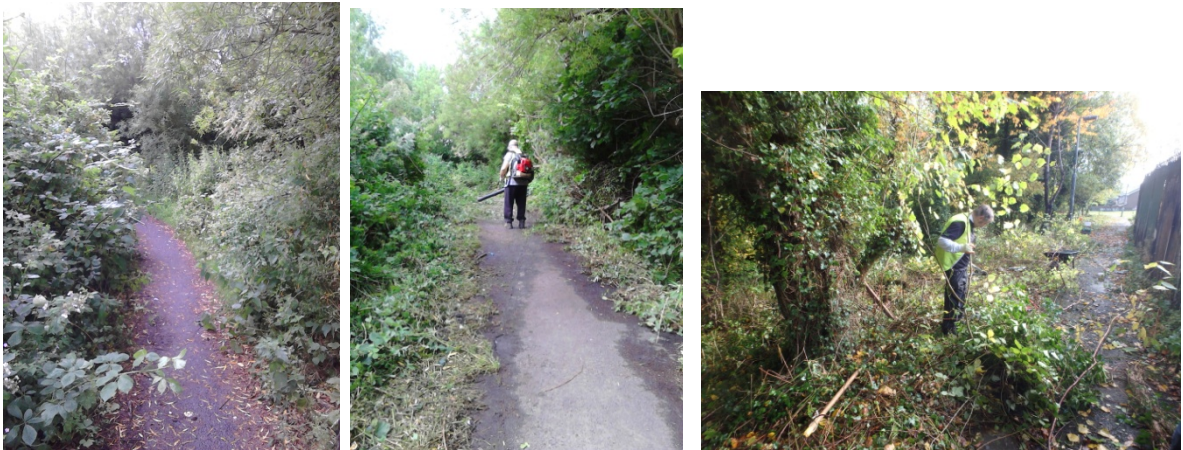
On a daily, weekly and monthly basis the Team work to standards of TCV's extensive Policies and Procedures. On an annual basis they contribute positively to TCV's ISO 2008 9001 Quality Standard audit, helping TCV's Belfast operations achieve and maintain this International Working Standard.

Performance against Schedule of Service 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016

Schedule of Service	Outputs
<p>(1) General Duties Litter remains a huge issue with a high percentage of man hours consumed in litter removal across the Contract area. During this reporting period 372 visits were made to Blackstaff averaging between 700 – 800 KGs per trip.</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 problems spots, when necessary they have brought in TCV's Conservation Action team (CAT) to increase capacity to remove litter as quickly as possible.</p> <p>In addition to the areas checked as part of daily routine, all storm drains and watercourses are checked on a monthly basis and cleared accordingly. Routine river clearance is completed at least quarterly throughout year with ad-hoc checks completed prior to and during periods of extreme wet weather.</p>	253 days

<p>Being based locally allows the team to react quickly and effectively to local issues as they arise, e.g. civil unrest, safe and legal 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 time to specific 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. 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 completed to environmental standards and to H&S procedures.</p>	<p>12 Trees</p>
<p>(3) Removal of Abandoned/Burnt Out Vehicles The volume of burnt out cars 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 has 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>14 cars 4 motor bikes</p>
<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>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 attentions.</p> <p>When fly-tipping has peaked the Team have engaged TCV's Conservation Action Team to increase capacity to remove items and restore H&S standards as quickly and efficiently as possible.</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.</p>	<p>253 days</p>
<p>(5) Assistance with Community Clean Up Programmes 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 continue to communicate with local people and community groups at 'peak' times of the year, e.g. during 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 contact 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>38 hrs</p>

<p>(6) Implementation of a Conservation Programme</p> <p>The Team with support and expertise from TCV's CAT completed a range of environmental enhancement projects, e.g. tree, shrub and wildflower planting, pruning back overgrowth, river clearance, step building and path maintenance. This also enhances experience of CAT team trainees who are undertaking formal training. They are able to gain first-hand experience of environmental work in a highly populated urban area with multiple social issues.</p> <p>Examples of specific practical conservation tasks completed are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearance of sections of badly overgrown river in Laurel Glen (Woodside forest), in St Kieran's. Removal of overgrown invasive vegetation to allow access to remove build ups of debris, litter and fly tipping from river banks and bed. • Access work at Old Colin Woodland and Laurel Glen 1 off Stewartstown Rd. Removing overgrown branches hanging down at head height over paths, steps cleared of debris plus fallen tree cleared by chain saw to allow access to path. <p>Environmental enhancements include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of invasive species will open up the natural areas allowing space and light for native species to grow, therefore benefiting local biodiversity. • Removal of litter and fly tipping cleans the overall course of the river reducing potential for pollution and enhancing the area for wildlife, birds and insects 	16.5 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 Support Colin Safer Neighbourhood Project identifying antisocial behaviour and vandalism hotspots on BRO land. This includes attending community team meeting, site visits and direct interaction with local young people. 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.</p> <p>Plus, in partnership with local community representatives areas where sex attacked had happened were opened up, managing shrub and trees lines to improve sight lines and visibility.</p>	168 hours
<p>(8) Disposal of Material to LCC Amenity Site.</p> <p>TCV completed 372 visits to Blackstaff with an average of 700-800 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, builders materials, garden and green waste, garage waste including tyres and oil. Where possible the Team separate items for recycling. Tyres and oil are compiled and disposed of separately.</p>	372 visits
<p>(9) Additional / good-will work</p> <p>Includes phone call, meetings and site visits</p> <p>The Team are also in regular communication with external contractors when they are completing work at BRO's request. Their local knowledge is invaluable to ensure H&S standards and social acceptance is meet.</p>	45 hrs



Photos show a range of the issues within the Poleglass area which the Laurel Glen Team and Belfast CAT deal with on a recurring basis and 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 and removal of ongoing fly tipping.