

Coastcare Working with Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO) Clients

This particular Coastcare group is made up of controlled substance users whose constant re-offending to feed their addiction has resulted in them receiving a DTTO. All work undertaken goes toward achieving a Duke of Edinburgh award.

The group spend one or two days per month working on projects around the coastline. With supervision and on-site training given by project staff, the group has completed numerous projects including targeting badly littered areas, dune restoration, vegetation clearance and path / access maintenance.

Benefits of the project are hard to quantify, but include physical and mental stimulation and a large element of practical experience. It gives the individuals an opportunity to problem solve both individually and in a team environment which proves a vital stimulus for their recovery and their integration back into society. Some of these individuals have been out of a working environment for some time and the project gives them an incentive to kick-start their careers.

The project also provides an essential source of practical experience which gives them skills which they would find difficult to attain otherwise i.e using tools, planning projects, assessing risks / health and safety and working as part of a team.

Combined with practical experience and mental stimulation, the individuals also gain physical exercise. This is vital as some of these individuals are trapped in a vicious circle of lethargy. The project can break them away from this cycle return them to a more active and positive lifestyle.

(CAD) Communities Against Drugs Team

A similar group to the one mentioned above, but the difference being that this group's clients are recovering from their habit.

They undertake various environmental projects throughout Monmouthshire and Torfaen. Every Wednesday the group work on projects identified for them by their Rivers Project Officer.

All the clients are enjoying their project work and are learning new skills that they hope to use in the future. Two members of the group have signed up for courses at Coleg Gwent in Usk because they want to achieve qualifications in environmental and conservation based subjects. One is studying for a full National Diploma, the other is taking the more practical route of the NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications).

The experience they have already gained through project work with KWT is standing them in good stead and they are excelling with their college work because of it.

Case study – Excluded Young People (Bethesda Rivercare Group)

This rivercare group is made up of excluded and under-achieving pupils from year 10 and 11 at nearby Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, who spend one afternoon per week working on projects around the river and woods. With help and training from project staff and the local landowner the group has completed numerous projects including dry stone walling, tree planting, river clean ups, hedgelaying, fencing, otter holt and bird box construction.

These activities allow the youngsters to gain qualifications such as First Aid Certificates, practical hands-on training, valuable team and life skills. Certificates are given, detailing the time each member of the group spends on activities. The group members are then able to build up a portfolio of qualifications and certificates of achievement. These can be vital as the pupils do not have formal school qualifications.

Benefits of the project include local ownership, breaking down social barriers, the chance to make new friends and learn new skills. There has also been an increase in community spirit, as the youngsters are seen to be doing something useful with their time whilst making a positive social and environmental difference to their local community. On one occasion the group planted approximately 400 trees which were then ripped out and vandalised. The youngsters were very upset, angry and hurt by this. In later discussions, they examined the effect on other people of some of their own similar actions. This served as a valuable lesson and hopefully changed attitudes. The trees have since been replanted, with a big sign produced by the youngsters to let everyone know about their project.

Two of the individuals have also gone on to gain employment and further training in fencing and dry stonewalling. Both of the youngsters had no qualifications and exhibited behavioural problems in the classroom. However, on practical projects they were found to be enthusiastic and hard working. Without the experience they gained on the project they may never have taken this road to employment. An ex group member also recently approached the Project Officer to thank him for the support and encouragement he received, which encouraged him to take up an apprenticeship. For the youngsters in this group, the project means much than keeping rivers clean.

Case Study – Basic Life Skills

The Clean Rivers project works with local community groups on a range of environmental improvement projects. The aim of the project is to ensure the groups are sustainable and so, to this effect, project officers provide advice, support and training on a range of topics to ensure the group has all the necessary skills to carry out their activities unaided.

As part of the project, a small grant is available for groups to purchase tools, equipment, refreshments etc. In order to access the grant, each group must have its own separate bank account and must then apply to KWT for their grant.

Angling Club - anonymous

This fishing club has been in existence from the projects' early days. The fishermen formed a rivers sub-group of the Angling Club to co-ordinate the KWT activities and carry out many riverine activities throughout the year.

Following the retirement of the treasurer, a replacement was needed for the sub-group. This role involved recording all KWT grant expenditure and renewing the group's annual insurance.

When no volunteers came forward, a very active member of the sub-group was approached. He refused to take over the role but was very keen to help with whatever else he could. His refusal was somewhat out of character and so I asked him what the problem was. After some discussion, he eventually admitted that he was dyslexic and did not want the embarrassment of spelling things incorrectly. Also, he had never been into a bank, never had a bank account and did not know how to complete a budget sheet.

After some gentle persuasion and the promise of regular assistance, he accepted the role and took over with immediate effect. He regularly called for advice, but carried out the necessary activities on the forms provided by KWT. We had regular meetings and took the opportunity to check finances, which were very thoroughly recorded.

On a routine check of the group details, I realised that their insurance had expired. The renewal forms had just been updated and were lengthy and confusing. In a panic I called the treasurer to apologise for not bringing it to his attention sooner and told them to cease activities until it was in place – to which he replied that he had been sent the forms and had completed and returned them some 2 weeks before!

With a bit of informal assistance, encouragement and support, the man in question gained the confidence and skills necessary to play a valuable role within the rivercare group, which he previously would never have believed he was capable of doing.

Case Study Fairyland Estate (provided by Communities First)

The estate, through relatively small, has over the years, been synonymous with high levels of arson. The reasons for this are complex and have had far reaching effects that have impacted on day to day life on the estate.

A local resident told me of a fairly typical chain of events:

'Rubbish on the estate was causing many problems. Fairyland had a high turnover of tenants who when they left their properties would leave their sheds full of rubbish and larger items of unwanted household items. The sheds were then broken into and the contents and any left over paint would be strewn all over the estate. When new tenants arrived some innovative young people would offer their services to remove the rubbish and burn it. This imaginative enterprise was also well used by some other residents as an easy way to get rid of waste. The cost was a small amount of money and a can of petrol. The rubbish was then taken to the local burning sites at the bottom of the estate; the young people sniffed the petrol, lit the fire and could then buy drugs from the proceeds from all their crime and disorder'.

Now an active group of residents are committed to developing positive environmental projects to improve the estate. Over the past 18 months, regular community clean ups with Keep Wales Tidy¹ has given the residents the confidence to work in partnership with other organisations to make positive changes. By working in partnership to remove flytipped waste and prevent further tipping² the call-out rate for non accidental rubbish fires has decreased on the estate by 70% (see fire statistics overleaf).

The local authority, in response to local needs, now empties the sheds when properties become vacant and have abolished the £5 collection fee for large unwanted household items. The residents have formed a tenants association and are keen to continue working with Keep Wales Tidy to further the positive regeneration of the estate.

The estate has seen a dramatic transformation with the residents turning the once-no go area into a place where there is a waiting list for properties. The residents have also recently won 1st prize in Keep Wales Tidy's 'TIDY WALES AWARDS' for their efforts.

There is still much work to be done and while the results achieved have been remarkable, issues around fly tipping and better ways of achieving effective and sustainable waste disposal need to be addressed.

Thank you for all your support,

Mari.

Communities First Co-ordinator Fairyland, Brynbryddan & Penllyn

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¹ 10 community flytip clearances have been held resulting in the removal of 30 tonnes of waste

² Organising waste amnesties (free skips) so residents can dispose of waste easily and at no cost

Appendix - Fairyland Statistics

(Years run from April 1st to March 31st)

Year	Total No. Of Fires	No. Of Non Accidental Fires	No. Of Rubbish Fires
2003/2004	21	15	10
2004/2005	11	6	3

- In **2003/2004**, 71% of fires were non accidental, of these 67% were non-accidental rubbish fires.
- In **2004/2005**, 54% of fires were non accidental, of these 50% were non-accidental rubbish fires.
- From April 1st 2003 to March 31st 2005 there has been:
 - 48% reduction in the total number of fires.
 - 60% reduction in the number of non-accidental fires.
 - 70% reduction in the number of non-accidental rubbish fires.

Case Studies – Waste Amnesties

To date 3 rubbish amnesties have been conducted in Neath Port Talbot: Briton Ferry (2 days), Sandfields (1 day) and Aberavon (2 days). The total amount of rubbish collected has been 220 tonnes.

Amnesties have been used to "kick start" communities into action. Accumulated rubbish accrued over many years can be eliminated using by an amnesty but should not be considered on a regular basis in the same area.

The amnesty and preceding leaflets should be used to raise public awareness and to demonstrate to the population their responsibility in maintaining a clean local environment.

Despite constant reminders many people are unaware of the free collection service run by the authority for bulky items. All residents are reminded of this during the amnesty.

Face to face contact whilst conducting amnesties has resulted in greater public awareness of the work of Keep Wales Tidy. Furthermore, a significant number of people have contacted me with an offer of recycling goods that are too good to scrap.

In order to be of maximum benefit an amnesty should establish a "base line" of cleanliness for a community. It is essential that the population be made aware that from now on maintenance of that standard is their responsibility and should be implemented by using the comprehensive provided by the local authority.

Working with the Probation Service and Young Offenders Team (YOT)

Projects with local probation services and the YOT focus on working with offenders serving community service orders. A community service order is a punishment. The Home Offices national standards state that placements should be demanding, (in the sense of being physically, emotionally and intellectually taxing) and that the degree of inconvenience and effort required of offenders should be significant.

Keep Wales Tidy have worked in partnership with the probation service for many years on environmental improvement projects. The assistance of the probation service is requested in 2 instances;

- Where 'unadopted' problem sites have been identified - where KWT does not have any community group in place.
- When community groups need extra manpower to carry out a project eg a flytip that is too large, or too physically demanding for group members.

To date, the Probation Service and the YOT's have carried out a variety of activities including; litter picks, path clearance, vegetation removal, flytip clearance and installation of prevention measures, beach cleans and graffiti removal.



The probation service removing trollies from rivers

KWT project officers select the projects and liaise with probation officers, then the work is undertaken by offenders under the supervision of the probation service officers. KWT provides any specialist equipment that is needed, arranges permissions and organises waste collection.

Since 2000, KWT has worked with over 2500 community service offenders on 800 different environmental improvement projects.