

Volunteers muck in again

VOLUNTEERS did a tidy job of cleaning up a community common for the second successive year.

Gas Environmental Group led the clean-up of Llangeinor Common with the help of youngsters from the girls' and boys' club.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, South Wales Police, the Prince's Trust, and Llangeinor residents also got

by **ANDREW HARRISON**

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involved in the event.

Gas secretary Betty Kettleby said: "This was the largest turnout we have ever had.

"All the participants had a great day and in the space of a few hours we had cleaned the Common, Pandy Lanes, the

cycle path and the land around the swimming pool.

"A big thank you to everyone who took part."

Volunteers enjoyed a community barbecue at the end of the project which was funded by Linc Cymru, V2C and Creation Development Trust.

TIDY JOB: Volunteers got together to clean-up Llangeinor Common



Riverbank is cleaned up too

AN annual riverbank and cycle track clean-up was a great success.

Members of Nantymoel Neighbourhood Watch team targeted areas behind Dinam Street and on the river behind Blaenogwr Farm in Pricetown.

Ten adults and 15 children took part in the clean-up, which filled a large skip and a lorry.

Keep Wales Tidy representative Brian Jones made sure everyone had enough gloves and litter-picking tongs while Ogmoré MP Huw Irranca-Davies and his two

sons were also involved.

Once the job was done the volunteers were invited to Nantymoel Social Club for refreshments.

Nantymoel Neighbourhood Watch would like to thank ACD Skips, Bridgend County Borough Council, Nantymoel Primary School and the Spar shop for supporting the scheme.

GREEN TEAM: Nantymoel volunteers cleaned up their cycle track and riverbanks



Residents' tidying efforts earn fire safety award

HARDWORKING Fairyland residents have helped to cut the number of fires in the area by half thanks to their clean-up work.

Families banded together under the name Forward for Fairyland two years ago and have been doing their utmost to keep the area tidy to encourage a sense of civic pride.

The group has now been given the Fire and Rescue Golden Flame award for keeping a safe and tidy environment.

The fire service has recorded a 50 per cent drop in the number of calls being made for Fairyland because there is no rubbish lying around to burn, and experts say the tidier look of the place promotes better behaviour all round.

Margaret Davies, aged 64, chairwoman of Forward for Fairyland

said: "We've put in a football area and picnic tables where it used to be a place where people would throw their rubbish and burn it.

"Since we've improved the place it's been a lot safer and better."

Neath North councillor and council leader Derek Vaughan said: "Fairyland is making tremendous progress, and it's due to a number of partners working together and due to residents themselves taking an active part in improving the community. That is being demonstrated by the awards they have won recently.

"I would like to congratulate everybody who has been involved in achieving this."

Phil Crayford, County Commander of Neath Port Talbot fire

and rescue said: "I am very pleased we have been able to work with local residents and the achievements they have made.

"We will continue to work closely with them to ensure they have a good clean safe environment to enjoy."

Alan Powis, of Keep Wales Tidy, has been helping the community.

He said: "When we started the work we collected 30 tonnes of rubbish in two days.

"Now if anybody fly-tips in the area the residents know who it is and they let me know. The tenants have taken on the responsibility."

"We believe a clean, safe, respectable environment is the cornerstone of community development.



● **TIDY:** Chairwoman of the Fairyland clean-up team Margaret Davies, receives the award from NPT County Commander Phil Crayford

Amnesty proves a big hit

MORE than 200 tonnes of rubbish has been disposed of properly as part of an amnesty in Aberavon.

Neath Port Talbot Council teamed up with Keep Wales Tidy and Sandfields First to organise the rubbish amnesty, which saw the mass removal of bulky items.

The amnesty was organised to coincide with the Station Terrace repair scheme which is almost complete and to tackle the problem of rubbish and rubbish arson.

Posters were put up, doors and leaflets were distributed to 1,700 homes in advance of the clean up operation and the council had an amazing response.

The council was delighted with the response from residents.

Householders put out their old fridges, freezers, furniture, beds, mattresses, TVs, microwaves and cupboards ready for collection.

On the last day, the team concentrated on visits to homes of elderly, disabled and single parents who cannot put out their rubbish items themselves.

Head of Housing Services, Robert Rees, said the council was delighted with the response. "Feedback from the public is extremely positive," he said.

"Residents are delighted with the clean up operation and welcome the contribution of the council's neighbourhood management team, Keep Wales Tidy, Sandfields First and the renewal area team.

"Members of the public even joined in the cleanup. A normal amnesty would collect between five to 15 tonnes but reaching 200 tonnes was phenomenal.

"It was a most successful couple of days work by all the partners in this project."



CLEANING UP: Pictured with the neighbourhood management team are Yvonne Perry, waste enforcement officer at Neath Port Talbot Council, and Alan Powis from Keep Wales Tidy.

■ A PORT Talbot man has escaped a driving ban after a mix-up over his insurance.

Carl Guydon Cerasuolo was stopped by officers in Margam driving his fiancée's car around

midnight on December 30, 2004. He was driving from her house to his, so that he could pick up his own car.

But his insurance only covered him for driving his car. The

24-year-old Corus worker, of Evelyn Terrace, pleaded guilty to having no insurance.

Defending himself, Cerasuolo said: "I'm sorry I did wrong and I thought my insurance covered

me. "I had no other way of getting my car."

Magistrates fined him £150 with £45 costs and put six points on his licence.

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Fly-tipping clampdown

A NEW officer has been appointed to clamp down on fly-tipping and litter in Cornelly and Caerau.

by STEFFAN RHYS

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The full-time community officer will tackle the illegal dumping of waste, which is estimated to cost taxpayers between £100m and £150m a year.

It also poses a threat to humans and wildlife, damages the environment and spoils the enjoyment of towns and countryside - and can even affect house prices.

Assembly minister for the environment, Carwyn Jones AM, welcomed the news.

He said: "The new appointment has come about as a result of a meeting I called some time ago at Marias Estate in Cornelly, where residents have faced huge difficulties with irresponsible people causing environmental damage there.

"Following discussions with Environment Agency Wales, Bridgend County Borough Council, Valleys to Coast Housing and Keep Wales Tidy, money has been found to employ a dedicated community officer.

"This is the first time such a partnership has been established

between the four organisations and, if the pilot is successful, hopefully it can be expanded into other areas."

Caerau councillor Ken Hunt is leading a local fight against fly-tippers alongside fellow councillor Steve Smith.

Coun Hunt said fly-tipping is a big problem in his ward but the situation has improved.

"With the introduction of the amenity site and the abolition of charges to dump rubbish, the problem has improved," he said.

"There are people who are still abusing the system but they are few and far between, and as far as Caerau is concerned I can see a big improvement."

Coun Hunt heads the Llynfi Valley River Care Group, a team of volunteers which combs the Caerau area to remove rubbish that people have illegally dumped.

Although there is still rubbish to be found in the village, the team's intervention is making a big difference.



MAKING A CHANGE: Harry Fenney and Warren Jones at work as part of the Llynfi Valley Rivercare group



Dyfed-Powys community work officer Heather Phillips, surrounded by junk dumped in the grounds of the Ty Bryngwyn Hospice at Prince Philip Hospital, Llanelli.

Teens clear tyres

TEENAGERS helped clear 100 tyres and several fridges from a forest.

The Fast Forward youth group joined Environment Agency Wales, Keep Wales Tidy, Caerphilly council and the Forestry Commission, to remove waste from Fochriw Forest in the Rhymney Valley. Environment Agency Wales' Gary Inight said: "It shows that local people are no longer prepared to allow the minority to treat their own backyard as a rubbish dump."

Offenders' big clean-up

OLD fridges, mattresses and doors were among the huge amount of rubbish found in the grounds of a Llanelli hospice for terminally ill patients.

But now it is starting to look spick-and-span after a clean-up by offenders doing community service.

The grounds of Ty Bryngwyn Hospice at Prince Philip Hospital were picked for the start of a big clean-up week organised by Dyfed-Powys Probation Service, as part of a national event which then moved on to Llanelli's Llys yr Omen estate.

Staff from the service worked in partnership with Keep Wales Tidy and the Pride in Our Communities project to clear up the hospice grounds which had

become overgrown and a hot-spot for fly-tippers.

Offenders carried out the work under supervision as part of their community orders. They spent the weekend clearing brambles and undergrowth from the grounds, then collecting rubbish and putting it in a skip.

Dyfed-Powys probation community work officer Heather Phillips said: "You just wouldn't believe the amount of rubbish we found — it was horrendous. There were things like old doors, fridges and mattresses. It must have been a wonderful place for rats."

"And it was not very nice for the people at Ty Bryngwyn and people visiting."

Offenders join clean-up

A DRAMATIC facelift has been given to a housing estate thanks to a team of young offenders.

Neath Port Talbot Young Offenders team have removed more than 12 tonnes of dumped junk and rubbish from a fly-tipping hotspot in Gwam-cae-Gorwen.

The team linked up with Keep Wales Tidy to revamp land near the estate and spent more than a month cleaning up Maes Gareth Edwards.

Over the years the area has been used as a dumping ground and the clean-up was part of the Pride in Our Communities Project, jointly funded by Keep Wales Tidy, Environment Agency Wales and Neath Port Talbot Council.

Furniture, cookers and other rubbish littered the site, which has been given a complete revamp.

Alan Powis, of Keep Wales Tidy, said the area had to be cleared by a JCB before a lot of the work could be done.

"The land adjoining the housing estate had been habitually fly-tipped for years and the

By Rachael Misstear

Youth Offending Team was responsible for removing 12 tonnes of accumulated debris which included furniture, electrical appliances and tonnes of ashes from coal fires.

"The problem was so big at one stage that a JCB had to be used to move the ash mounds which were eight feet high and 12 feet deep.

"It is incredible what has built up there over the years.

"It seemed that the worse the area became, the more rubbish was being dumped there.

"The team did fantastically well and made a huge difference to the area."

Councillor Catrin Llewelyn said she was delighted with the clean-up and praised the efforts of the young people involved.

"The work put in by these youngsters has made a huge difference to the environment in Gwam-cae-Gorwen," she said.

"It is fantastic that their efforts have made such a dramatic difference to Maes Gareth Edwards."



TRANSFORMED: Maes Gareth Edwards before (inset) and after its clean-up.

Praise for anti-social initiative

ANTI-SOCIAL behaviour in part of Neath is down thanks to a project which has now won praise.

Melin Community Action project is aimed at tackling the underlying issues that are associated with anti-social behaviour.

It also focuses on improving the environment.

Funded by a £45,000 grant from the Assembly, the Neath Port Talbot Council scheme is one of only four in Wales and has been running for a

year. During the summer, the council has worked alongside the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership, Keep Wales Tidy, community police officers and Melincryddan Community Conference to clear around six tonnes of rubbish which was later recycled.

Local co-ordinator James Muir said the scheme was "an excellent example of what can be achieved when various organisations and agencies pull together as a team." Leader of Neath Port Talbot

Council, Derek Vaughan, agreed. He added: "This is another example of positive action by the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership," he said.

"The council's neighbourhood management service has removed fly tipped items, cleared gardens, removed graffiti and done some general rubbish disposal and cleaning up around the area.

"The work has made a big difference to the local community and many residents have commented on the improvement."

25 abandoned cars removed from valley

BURNED out and abandoned cars which have blighted an Afan Valley beauty spot for years have been removed.

A major operation to recover 25 vehicles from the valley below the A4107 Bwlch mountain road near Abergwynfi has been completed.

The cars and vans have been removed following a clean-up operation involving police, the fire service, council and Assembly workers, and Keep Wales Tidy.

Fire service vehicle arson officer, Ryland Williams, said: "This project really has been a team effort, a real model of successful partnership working. I'm grateful to everyone for their help.

"The local authority's recovery company, Bayliss Recovery, have

pulled the stops out to remove as many of these vehicles as they can.

"I've visited the site on several occasions to watch the progress of the recovery operation and was very impressed with the enthusiasm of the recovery team.

"This is something that we and our partners have wanted to do for many months, and, by pooling our ideas and resources, have succeeded.

"I really hope that the Afan Valley communities benefit from what we've done."

Mr Williams added work was now underway to identify the vehicles.

The Environment Agency's Alan Jones added: "The agency fully supports operations such as this, as they make a significant improvement to the locality."

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Residents' pride helps boost area

A HOUSING estate where residents were desperate to move out two years ago now has a waiting list for people wanting to move in.

Everyday life in Fairyland is said to have been completely transformed in the two years since a massive clean-up operation started.

The number of nuisance fires has fallen dramatically and residents themselves now turn detective to track down anyone fly-tipping on the estate.

Even drug dealers and violent people have been caught out by the surge in community pride.

Now Keep Wales Tidy wants to replicate that success in part of Skewen, where concerns have been raised about littering and fly-tipping.

The idea is not to bring in workmen to haul the junk away, as organisers believe that would solve the problem.

BY PAUL LEWIS
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Instead, they want residents themselves to take on the job which they think will help foster a stronger sense of pride in where they live.

Keep Wales Tidy fly-tipping officer Alan Powis kick-started the Fairyland clean-up after Communities First asked him to sort out the problems there.

He said that, during the two years since, more than 100 tons of accumulated filth had been removed from the estate.

"As a result, the fire service has seen a 70 per cent reduction in nuisance and non-essential fires," said Mr Powis.

"Two years ago people were desperate to get out of the estate. Now there is a waiting list for people wanting to get in.

"If anyone does fly-tip there now, I know who has done it within 24 hours.

"The same lines of communication we have established for reporting fly-tipping are now used to establish drug abuse, physical abuse and any other form of anti-social behaviour.

"We have done it through the medium of rubbish — but making contact with people like that has enormous repercussions on the well-being of the community, and that is why we like to get the community involved."

Mr Powis has now asked for, and been given, approval in principle to try to set up a similar clean-up operation in Wern Crescent, Skewen.

He had been approached by the council's cleansing team over problems with fly-tipping there.

"I spoke to residents and many of them expressed a wish to clean it up themselves," said Mr Powis.

"I will now be looking to see if I can get funding to assist them."

Wading in to help clean up the canal



By Lorna Phelan

SHOPPING trolleys, law mowers and a garden umbrella were among the items recovered from the canal in Cwmbran during an organised clean-up.

The local Council with Keep Wales Tidy appealed for volunteers of all ages to come and help clear up the area and almost 20 people responded to their call. Together the workers cleared a sludge heap full of litter and discovered 21 shopping trolleys.

Wern's Canal Warden, Hugh Woodhead, said: "Litter and vandalism are the major problems associated with the canal. Some people treat the canal and towpath as a place to drop litter and dump their rubbish. Trying to keep on top of the problem is almost a full-time job in itself. The canal is lined and covered by muck and, as such, should be treated with care and respect by everyone."

Volunteers from groups such as the Learning, Some Communities Against Drugs (CAD) and Kids Water Services (Wales) Ltd used a boat, provided by the Canal Operational Services team, to clear up a section of the canal at Cwmbran Retail Park. Inevitably smaller areas to be removed, while ropes and springing hawks were used to remove large items like the trolleys.



Councillor Neil Lewis, executive member for Regeneration, said: "The success of these cleanup days are down to the enthusiasm of the volunteers and I would like to thank them for getting involved."

The Canal Warden Group also organise events to keep the canal tidy in the last few months. They have painted railings and seats, and kept the undergrowth under control along different sections of the canal.