

TIDY TOWNS



Issue 3
May 2009

Litter picking in Llanfairfechan, Conwy

Welcome to the Second Year of Tidy Towns

As we come to the end of the inaugural year of Tidy Towns, I am delighted to provide the foreword for the first Tidy Towns newsletter of 2009!

I launched Tidy Towns, a partnership between Keep Wales Tidy and Local Authorities, a year ago in Newport, and have enjoyed seeing this innovative project develop and come to life during this time.

The results speak for themselves. In the past year Keep Wales Tidy's dedicated Tidy Towns officers have assisted **577 community groups** in every corner of Wales to carry out over **4,500 environmental improvement projects**. The range of projects they have tackled is vast and I am really pleased to see local residents transforming neglected plots of land into new allotments, community gardens and other valuable community assets for residents to use and enjoy.

Over **19,000 volunteers** have been involved in projects to improve their local community and I would like to personally thank each and every one who has given up their time to date and encourage them to keep up the hard work in the future. Tidy Towns provides us with a great opportunity to make a lasting improvement on the environmental quality of Wales by working in close partnership with Wales' communities, local authorities and other agencies. I am especially pleased to see the success of the many large partnership 'blitz' events that were carried out in the first year which tackled issues such as fly-tipping, graffiti and other anti-social behaviour issues.

We all want to Wales to become a Clean, Safe and Tidy country and while there are issues to address – it is a new programme after all, I am confident that the Tidy Towns initiative will build on the successes of year one, develop and deliver even more in the year to come.

Jane Davidson AM
Minister for Environment, Sustainability
and Housing

In this issue

What's New...

Graffiti - Art or Crime?

News from across Wales

Find out what some Tidy Towns groups have been up to lately.

Community Grants

More groups receive a Tidy Towns grant.

In the Press

Find out how Tidy Towns is reported across Wales.

A day in the life of...

Meet Shane Hughes, KWT's Tidy Towns Officer for Wrexham.



What's New...



Graffiti...Art or Crime?

Some people may consider it art, but graffiti is costing the Welsh taxpayer over £1 million a year to remove, and Keep Wales Tidy are clear that graffiti should be considered a crime. To combat the damage to property Keep Wales Tidy has launched a campaign to help cut the amount of graffiti which is staining our environment.

A recent survey revealed that on average graffiti is present on 12% of Welsh streets. Such acts of vandalism cannot be seen as art when they are proven to increase the fear of crime, devalue house prices and discourage investment. The practice of *tagging*, *etching* and *scribbling* is a very visible indication that many people have lost any sense of pride in their surroundings.

As part of its campaign, Keep Wales Tidy has published an action plan on how to tackle this unsightly act of vandalism. The Graffiti Action Plan will inform residents how to prevent and control the amount of graffiti appearing in their community, encourage them to report any acts of vandalism to their local authorities and convince the perpetrators that their talents should be channelled productively.

If you have a problem with graffiti in your area and you want to do something about it, then Tidy Towns can help. Contact your local Tidy Towns Project Officer for more information about graffiti removal training, kits and projects.



Tidy Towns Project Officer, Kathryn Britton, removing graffiti in Aberavon

Interested in receiving a Tidy Towns grant?

Grants are available to cover the cost of:

- **Tools and equipment**
- **Refreshments**
- **Insurance and training**
- **Awareness raising**



For more information on the small grants scheme or for help when applying for grants, please contact your local Tidy Towns Project Officer or e-mail tidy.towns@keepwalestidy.org

Award Winner!

Congratulations to Lynne John from Bryncoch Environment Group (NPT) who has been recognised by the High Sheriff of West Glamorgan for her contribution to local environmental improvement. Lynne won the 'adults voluntarily helping young people' category for her efforts to integrate young offenders into her group's environmental activities.

Well done Lynne!



Help us raise money by using everyclick

Keep Wales Tidy is registered with everyclick.com. Please use this whenever possible to help us generate additional funds.



Join us on the internet

Become a fan of Tidy Towns on Facebook. You can add links to your group's website, publicise events and share your photos.

Community Grant News

These are some the latest groups to benefit from a Tidy Towns Community Grant

Gilwern Eagles Community Association (Monmouthshire) has been awarded **£500**. The money will enable them to improve a recreational area in Gilwern by developing a bike track, maintaining a woodland area and carrying out regular litter picks.



Gilwern Eagles Community Assoc

Mumbles Green Action Team (Swansea) has been awarded **£500**. They money will fund the group's insurance and enable them to continue to carry out regular litter picks and basic maintenance around areas such as the Community Orchard, Mumbles Way Walk and the Longfields Day Centre. Some money will be used to publicise the group's activities and to recruit new volunteers.



Llangeinor Boys and Girls Club

Llangeinor Boys and Girls Club (Bridgend) will be using their **£471** to buy equipment such as litterpickers, gloves and refuse sacks to enable the young people to carry out regular village clean-ups.

The Clwyd Badger Group (Denbighshire) received a grant of **£347**. They will use the money to employ a tree surgeon to help clear out areas of overgrown vegetation. Once cleared, the area can be accessed and the litter trapped in the undergrowth removed. In the

future, the group plan to create woodland glades to promote local biodiversity and to improve the habitat for dormice. They will also be planting a native hedgerow containing Hawthorn and Rowan.

Saltney Ferry Tenants and Residents Association (Flintshire) are planning to carry out fortnightly litter picks around their village and the grant of **£528** will enable them to buy the tools and safety equipment they need. They will also be using some of the money to buy plants, seeds and containers for their community garden.



Saltney Ferry TRA



Llangyndir Community Council (Powys) has received **£387**. This grant will be used to buy litter pickers and safety equipment enabling them to clean up the hedgerows running along the village lanes, and carry out litter pick along the river bank.

News from across Wales



Cardiff The Devils Community Foundation has recently adopted the International Sports Village, and on a cold Saturday in February, the Cardiff Devils Ice Hockey teams and their fans headed to the area for a huge clean up around the Devils home at Cardiff ice rink. Over 150 volunteers comprising Cardiff Devils youth teams, their parents and fans showed their support, and were joined by local AM, Lorraine Barrett. Together they collected over 30 bags of bottles and cans, which were later recycled, and 25 bags of general waste. All the rubbish and items for recycling were collected by Cardiff Council.

Newport A team of 18 staff from Corus have been volunteering with Keep Wales Tidy on the Tidy Towns Project while production has been temporarily paused at the Hot Mill Plant, Llanwern. They recently removed fly-tipped waste and litter that was obstructing access to the car park and pathways at the Allt-yr-yn Nature Reserve.

Thom Board, Newport Tidy Towns Project Officer with Corus volunteers



Conwy A Rowan Trees Project is finally underway at St Cynbryd's Church. The group have been provided with six trees (two each from Scotland, England, and Ireland). The group are supplementing these with two trees from Wales (Blaenau Gwent and Gwynedd). All trees have been grown from seed in their locality and each will be numbered and monitored to observe relative growth patterns under various conditions.



Volunteer working on the new bridge

Gwynedd The Felin Uchaf group have been carrying out lots of access work at their site. They've used local oak and traditional methods to build a bridge across their river and have created a 250m path to enable wheelchair users to explore the site freely. An Organic Community Garden has also been developed, with a new stone wall built around the perimeter. They have also undertaken some conservation work along the river banks, which will be of benefit to the broad variety of wildlife they boast on site, such as otters, moorhens, herons and wildfowl.

Pembrokeshire

TIDY trip: pupils from Coshwin School at Carew are pictured with Martyn Lewis, Darwin Centre; Riri Howell, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and Mari Williams, Keep Wales Tidy.

Spring comes early as town gets major clean-up

ALMOST 100 volunteers have rolled up their sleeves to give Pembrokeshire Dock a spring clean.

As part of the nationwide Tidy Towns Project residents spent a week on clean-ups and environmental improvements across the town, collecting 70 bags of litter.

School children got involved as well as Pembrokeshire County Council, Pembrokeshire Dock Town Council and Keep Wales Tidy, while staff from McDonalds and other groups also helped with litter picks.

Mayor of Pembrokeshire Dock, ION WATTS, said the partnership between the different groups showed how much could be achieved in one week.

"I hope that the improvements we have made can be sustained over the coming weeks," he said.

Among the areas given a thorough clean were the old railway line at Gordon Street and the line adjacent to Water Street.

London Road also saw a dramatic overhaul, while the tennis courts at Memorial Park were cleared, with the aim of bringing them back into use this spring.

A community skip was provided for residents at Ravanagh Court in conjunction with Llanion Communities First and Bush and Park Tenants' and Resident's Association, with pupils from Pembrokeshire Dock Community School aiding the clean-up.

Members of St John's Community Hall, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, Pembrokeshire Dock Townscape Initiative and Milford Haven Port Authority helped clear more than 30 bags of litter from the dockyard area.

The Darwin Centre and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority took Coshwin School on a tour of Carew Castle and carried out a litter pick, while Pembrokeshire Dock Chamber of Trade launched a Let's Brush Up campaign, to encourage businesses to keep their frontages clean and litter free.

The DVLA was also involved, with enforcement officers and traffic officers patrolling the area. A total of 61 vehicles were clamped for displaying out of date tax disks, while further action will be taken on another six vehicles.

For further information or to get involved with the project, contact Mari Williams on 01446 681968 or e-mail mari.williams@keep-wales-tidy.org

In the Press



CHRISTMAS CLEAR-OUT: Cilfrew Residents' Association, with help from Keep Wales Tidy officer, Alan Powis

Cilfrew's clean start

HALF a tonne of rubbish has been skipped thanks the community in a Neath village.

In support of the National Assembly funded Tidy Towns project, volunteers from Cilfrew Residents' Association rolled up their sleeves to fill a skip.

They organised, advertised and worked together to remove the hoards of accumulated rubbish from gardens, garages and sheds.

Linda Ware, of Cilfrew Residents, said: "It was great to see so many volunteers get involved in this project."

"By working in partnership with Keep Wales Tidy we have made a huge improvement to Cilfrew and shown local residents just how much we can achieve if we all pull together."

For more information on Community Skips or Tidy Towns please contact Alan Powis on 07824 504806.

Alternatively e-mail alan.powis@keepwalestidy.org

Spring clean for beach initiative

THE first beach clean-up of the year has just been completed by Tresaith Mariners Tidy Towns group, with the help of Keep Wales Tidy and Ceredigion County Council.

The Mariners collected more than 20 bags of rubbish as well as several bulky containers, drums



Clean up team at Tresaith

and part of a canoe during the clean up. Ceredigion Keep Wales Tidy officer Richard Wynn Thomas said: "It's great to see volunteers of all ages taking an active and positive approach towards the marine litter problem by cleaning up their local beach and coastline, it is especially encouraging to see so many youngsters involved and taking ownership for their local beach."

The Tidy Towns is a two-part initiative between Ceredigion County Council and Keep Wales Tidy. At the first of their four-times-a-year Beach Clean for the Marine Conservation Society, Cardigan Soroptomists picked up 15.5 kilos of litter over a 100m square stretch from the dunes at Poppit Sands to the tideline.



Soroptomist clean up team at Poppit

Litter army on the attack

NEATH Adeparatory was the target of a two-pronged attack to clean up the Cresswell road stretch on 20 volunteers on 24 logical rubbish.

A litter pick was combined with skip provided by Newportshire County Council and work volunteers joined forces with Tidy Towns, Community First, Community Skips, Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Neath and Porthkerry and Neath and Porthkerry Council. The skip was filled and the litter that escaped the skip bag

was left inside and given a new home.

Two bins special will be sent to Neath for the skip and used to be sent out and used or sent to community development projects.

Time for Tea to tidy up lane

VOLUNTEERS rolled up their sleeves to improve the appearance of a lane in Tonypandy.

Members of the Tonypandy Environment Association (TEA) tackled Ganger's Lane, which is popular with dog walkers, as part of the Tidy Towns initiative.

The Tidy Towns team got away at the beginning that was the wrong to overlook over the lane before they cleaned up all the litter and rubbish that had accumulated there.

They collected about a quarter of a ton of assorted rubbish and filled 23 bags, which were removed by the Tidy Towns team.

Ben Williams, Area Keep Wales Tidy said: "This is a great example of the type of project that can be achieved by volunteers and professional teams working together. It's great to see so many people taking part."

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TIDY JOB: Volunteers who helped to clear a fly-tipping blackspot, meet

Community joins forces to restore blackspot

YOUNGSTERS in Neath shared plenty of civic pride when they cleared up a fly-tipping blackspot.

They joined volunteers and a team of specialists, filling three skips to remove the worst bits of the area known as "litter site" to its former glory.

Thumped items included armchairs, sofas, pieces of carpet, old

hoop chairs, lawn mowers and vacuum cleaners.

The clean-up was part of the ongoing Tidy Towns initiative and saw members of the community joined by staff from YCC, Community First, Bridgend County Borough Council and Keep Wales Tidy.

"This initiative is all about instilling civic pride," said Brian

James, Tidy Towns Officer.

"Without the involvement of youngsters it is very difficult to maintain a level of sustainability. "We have the tools, the expertise, and the funding to help communities improve their environment, but without their involvement the success will only be short-lived."

"The fact the number of volunteers who have come out to help in Neath continues to rise with each event goes to show how much the community want to see their village cleaned up and improved."

For more information on Tidy Towns, or to get involved, call Brian James on 029 2036 1732 or 07824 504829 or e-mail bjames@keepwalestidy.org



GREEN SPACE: Volunteers from the Tonypandy Environment Association with the rubbish they

Clean up gives a sense of pride in community

PICKING up the odd piece of rubbish may be a simple yet charitable deed to clean up your community, however it's not everyday you drag a car out of the River Taff.

But that's just one of a number of jobs a young group of Merthyr Tydfil residents will be doing over the next few months, as they look to clean up the Cefn Ceredi Woodcut and the surrounding area.

The young group are from the Neighbourhood Learning Centre, and the scheme has been run by the Tidy Towns Project, which is funded by

Wales Assembly Government.

They aim to tackle litter, knottweed, poor foot paths and disabled access, as well as developing community gardens.

On top of cleaning up the surrounding woodlands, the team also intends to remove objects dumped into the River Taff, which includes a 1.5-tonne Audi Estate.

Paul Kent, who works with the project says as well as the area, the scheme is also important for the young people involved: "It is a great way to bring people together to

improve the environment they live in. The volunteers from the Neighbourhood Learning Centre have set an excellent example to their community and I hope that even more people will join them on their next project as they continue to make lasting improvements to Cefn Ceredi."

"Over the past few years, since I've been working with the project, I have certainly noticed an improvement. As long as the river remains, the area will continue to change for the better."

Free first aid course to help save lives

VOLUNTEERS from six different community groups across Denbighshire enjoyed a free first aid course arranged by Keep Wales Tidy recently.

The one-day course in Ruthin run by St John's Ambulance will help volunteers deal with any emergencies that may arise during their volunteer work.

Garreth Jones Denbighshire Tidy Towns Officer said: "It is great to see that so many people are taking their

volunteering and community work so seriously and giving up their free time to attend such courses, I just hope they never need to use this new knowledge, but at least they would know what to do if they had to.

"I and everyone that attended would like to pass on our sincere thanks to Vi Hughes for instructing for the day, everyone enjoyed it immensely."

AM Janet Ryder met the

volunteers in the morning to pass on her support and chat to them about their duties.

Volunteers attending the First Aid course came from the Rivers Project, The Clwyd Badger Group, Llangollen Tidy Towns, Rhyd and St Asaph Angling Association, The Elwy Environmental Group and The Rhuddlan Environmental Group.

FIRST AIDERS: Volunteers recently enjoyed a free first aid course.



A day in the life of a ... Tidy Towns Project Officer



My name is Shane Hughes and I'm the Keep Wales Tidy Towns Project Officer for Wrexham. I've been in post since September 2008 and I thoroughly enjoy the work. Before joining Keep Wales Tidy I worked for Denbighshire County Council as a Countryside Warden and with the RSPB where I used to work on farmland bird conservation projects across Wales



Shane working with Maesgwyn Residents Association

Wrexham is a great County to work in – it has a little bit of everything from heavily urbanised/ industrial areas to picturesque, steep sided river valleys and rich farmland. Due to this wide variety of land use I work with a range of different groups. These include Residents and Tenants Associations, environmental groups, Probation and Youth Justice Service, drug and alcohol abuse groups, allotment groups etc. The great diversity of groups means that there is never a dull moment!

One day I could be clearing litter with a community group in the middle of Wrexham and the next I can be helping a youth justice group plant trees. I've recently helped an angling club in South Wrexham apply for, and obtain, a five year licence from the Environment Agency to spray Japanese Knotweed along an eight mile stretch of the River Ceiriog. This highly invasive species is affecting vast tracks of the river basin resulting in biodiversity loss, restricted access and even riverbank erosion, as the exposed ground left by knotweed in the winter leaves the soil susceptible to flood water erosion. Work begins April 2009 on an extensive 3 year eradication program aimed at restoring the natural balance of fauna and flora along this nationally important area.

When not in work, I like to spend as much time as I can outdoors, mostly mountain biking along the hundreds of miles of trails that I'm lucky to have close by. Musically, I listen to the blues most of the time but I also like folk and jazz. I live in Ruthin with my girlfriend Ffion – because both of us are interested in the natural environment, and wildlife in particular, we've spent the last four years taking our holidays in Scotland (Outer Hebrides) and we are off there again in a few weeks.

Shane Hughes



For more information

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