

## Better Places

### Case study 4: Fairyland estate



fairylnd regains  
its sparkle

#### Where?

Fairylnd Estate, Neath,  
South Wales.

#### What?

A community has come together  
to reduce fly-tipping, transforming  
a once rundown housing estate.

#### Benefits

Residents now take great pride in their  
local environment. Three-quarters of  
residents are happy living on the estate  
and over 80 per cent think the area has  
improved thanks to the project.  
Achievements here have led to similar  
projects around Wales. Crime and  
antisocial behaviour have reduced  
significantly – fire-brigade call-outs  
are down by 70 per cent.

## fairyland regains its sparkle



“I had heard all the bad stories about this place, about squatters and drug addicts, but when I drove into the place I just thought... wonderful!”

**Karen Honeybun**  
Local resident

**The Fairyland housing estate in Neath is located in an area that ranks among the fifth most disadvantaged in Wales, according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. Unemployment is a particular problem.**

Several years ago the large numbers of people moving out of Fairyland would often leave their rubbish for the next occupier to deal with. As a result, the estate had a very serious fly-tipping and arson problem. A survey of Fairyland residents showed they wanted something done about the litter as well as more play areas and activities for young children.

In 2002, Environment Agency Wales helped develop a partnership project called ‘Pride In Our Communities’ (PIOC), which had a zero tolerance attitude to fly-tipping.

In autumn 2006 we talked to the residents of Fairyland Estate and other partners to ask them how they thought the project had gone.

You can find a full report of our findings at <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/epages/eapublications.storefront>



“Fairyland is the first place where there’s a real belief by everyone involved that a result has been achieved.”

**Rhodri Thomas**  
Project Co-ordinator  
Pride in our Communities  
South West Wales



“The kids are safer here, it’s a really good community. The kids love the play areas too. It is a very nice place, very community orientated.”

**Ellis Peter Jones**  
Local resident

**What did we do?**

The PIOC project enabled Keep Wales Tidy to employ a fly-tipping officer, who organised a week-long set of spring cleans, with skips supplied by the local council. Local organisations helped such as the Antisocial Behaviour team, the Youth Offending team and the Fire Service. Six months of intensive clean-ups followed. The local authority upgraded the estate’s lighting and made a children’s play area where local people once burned old furniture.

Fun days were set up to involve the public in an informal way. Local children helped design a mural for the centre of the estate. An artist interpreted their ideas and put them together in a final design that was approved by residents. The children even helped her to paint it in the summer holidays.

The reporting of litter and fly-tipping led to residents also reporting drug trafficking and other antisocial behaviours. When the people of Fairyland began to realise somebody was taking an interest in them there was a real change in attitude.

**Who did we work with?**

Communities First, a Welsh Government regeneration programme had already been working in the Fairyland estate. So the Environment Agency pulled together a partnership to work alongside Communities First, which included Neath and Port Talbot Local Authority, the Countryside Council for Wales and Keep Wales Tidy.

The South West Wales Fire Service Arson Fund contributed towards the Keep Wales Tidy project manager post. The environmental charity Groundwork also helped on the site.

**What’s it like now?**

Fairyland is now a more attractive place to live with residents staying for longer. This has led to an improved community spirit, with local people taking much greater pride in their local environment. In 2005, the estate won the Tidy Wales Community Award. It also won a Community Volunteering Services Award, and received a commendation from the Fire Brigade recognising the significant drop in non-accidental fires.

Council-supplied skips are still a common sight in Fairyland. Residents receive more information about how to contact the local authority to have items removed and how to make the best use of local services. Community groups get to speak to housing and police officers at regular meetings. Residents can report things in confidence and fly-tipping is no longer tolerated. The estate has had some negative publicity in the past so residents are encouraged to talk to the local press and give their side of the story.





“The environment is a leveller – it’s nobody’s environment, it’s everyone’s environment.”

**Marie Shufflebotham**  
Communities First

#### What do local people think?

One resident has lived on the estate for 19 years. She said: “If I won the lottery I would not leave this place.”

Karen Honeybun has just moved in to the Fairyland estate: “I had heard all the bad stories about this place, about squatters and drug addicts, but when I drove into the place I just thought... wonderful! I spoke to the Housing Officer about what’s happening here and he said a lot is going on and a lot of money has been put into the area.”

Marie Shufflebotham from Communities First said: “It’s demanding work and there’s lots that still needs to be done. There’s lots of capability and capacity on the estate that’s just not recognised. Recently we have been finding out about people’s aspirations to learn and that has thrown up lots of interesting things about confidence and health issues.”

#### What happens next?

Following the success of Pride in our Communities, Keep Wales Tidy now has four community fly-tipping officers. A recent lottery bid is aimed at putting an officer in every county in Wales.

The plans for Fairyland are now looking at nutrition and linking this back to the environment through an allotment project. Gym access with family memberships is also being considered and there are plans for recycling. Four young mums have started an IT course as well as a fitness programme. A crèche and free transport have been made available to them.



“It’s moved from people saying what’s the point of reporting an antisocial act to people saying that’s an antisocial act and I live in this estate and I am no longer willing to tolerate that.”

**Alan Powis**  
Fly-tipping Project Officer

**Better places** tells the story of how we work with others to improve deprived communities and what this work means for local people.

For more information about **Pride in our Communities**, contact **Rhodri Thomas** 01792 325572  
To find out more about **Better Places**, contact **Mark Funnell** 01454 205707

We would like to thank **Pride in Our Communities South West Wales**, **Communities First, South West Wales Fire Service**, **Groundwork** and **Keep Wales Tidy** for all their help with this project.



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