



11 February 2005

Cleansweep team starts a life of grime

A two-man cleansweep team has hit the streets of Hillfields to tackle litter, fly-tipping and graffiti and crackdown on environmental crimes as part of a £4.6m European funded drive to improve the area.

The Hillfields Partnership Board, a team of dedicated residents who work with local councillors and others, chose Whitefriars as the preferred partner for Coventry City Council to put together a plan and a team to deal with notorious litter problems in the area.

The £360,000 clean sweep is now underway with Whitefriars' staff Neville Ingram and Darren Wilkins already making a difference in the area. Unruly shrubbery, overgrown land, communal areas and litter are just some of the things the pair are set to crackdown on. The money for the project has come from the European Regional Development fund.

Hillfields Partnership Board Member, Councillor Karen McKay (Socialist, St Michael's), said: "This is a fantastic idea. One of the problems we have is that sometimes people don't report litter problems. Hopefully if two people are around the area clearing up, then this will show the public that we are reacting to reported problems.

“Whitefriars was chosen as it has a lot of housing in the area. Before, there used to be an issue of who owned what land and whose responsibility it was to clean it. This removes that issue and just ensures someone does the work.

“It is a brilliant idea and I believe it is going to make a difference.”

Whitefriars, a not-for-profit organisation, has been awarded the cleaning contract until 2008. In addition to clearing areas it has also pledged to educate the community to stop the problems for good.

Posters will be going up across the area and leaflets will be handed out to local businesses to inform them of their rights and responsibilities.

The team will also be on the look-out for persistent perpetrators. It will be working in partnership with the council to gather evidence to use in court against those repeatedly caught dumping rubbish.

Brian Tidman, Whitefriars’ operations manager with responsibility for Hillfields, said: “The main aim is to educate, not prosecute, but the team will be looking out for offenders who regularly dump items in communal areas and wasteland. If we suspect someone is ignoring repeated advice then action will be taken. We have CCTV available in such cases so fly tippers should think twice. We may be watching.

“By tackling the minority who ruin the environment for the majority, we hope Hillfields will be a cleaner place. It is fantastic that the Partnership Board has chosen Whitefriars as their preferred contractor and we are determined to help them give Hillfields a cleaner future.”

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