

Tidy Wales Award – A4107 Project

The A4107, also known as the Bwlch Mountain road, connects Cymmer and other villages in the Upper Afan valley to both Port Talbot and Treorchy. The road provides some of the most picturesque views in an area of outstanding natural beauty. It also is one of the most prevalent hotspots for vehicle arson and road traffic collisions.

In June 2004, a full analysis was undertaken as part of Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Services' Vehicle Arson Reduction Initiative. The analysis identified the Bwlch Mountain road as being one of the most notorious burn-sites in the Neath Port Talbot area.

The Vehicle Arson Reduction Initiative Manager, Ryland Williams, and Sian Morris, Neath Port Talbot's Community Safety Project Officer, visited the site in late June 2004. During the visit, it was established that not only was the area notorious for car fires, but also for abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping.

It also became apparent that the cost of clearing the area of vehicles and the installation of preventative measures would be too much for one organisation, so implementation of the project unfortunately had to be delayed.

Several multi-agency meetings were held at a local level commencing in January 2006 involving M&WWFRS, South Wales Police, both the Highways and Community Safety Departments for Neath Port Talbot, the Environment Agency, Keep Wales Tidy, Bayliss Recovery, as well as Local Authority Members from the area.

The first stage of the operation involved marking all of the existing vehicles at the location with yellow paint. This would allow rescue workers to identify any new vehicles subsequently dumped at the site. This operation was carried out and completed on the 4th April 2006.

The recovery operation commenced on the 23rd November 2006 by personnel from Bayliss Recovery. The operation took 4 days to complete, where a total of 23 vehicles were recovered from a ravine on the Bwlch Mountain road between Treorchy and Blaengwynfi. Of these 23 vehicles, records show that only one had been reported as being stolen. Work is currently under way to install barriers at this location to prevent vehicles being dumped and to prevent road traffic collisions.

The operation was a resounding success, and the location remains clear to this day.

On 12th November 2007, the A4107 project was a Runner Up in the Large Partnership category for the Tidy Wales Awards, which were held at Margam Orangery. The awards are administered by Keep Wales Tidy.