

## **CIPR Pride Awards 2010**

**Entry: Shameless, Filthy, Selfish**

**Category 7: Public Sector**

**Entrant: Falkirk Council**

### **Objectives**

- To raise awareness of the consequences of dog fouling
- To increase the uptake of free dog waste bags by 20%
- To reduce dog fouling
- To increase use of disposal facilities by 10%

### **Strategy**

Local and national surveys indicate that dog fouling is one of the top environmental concerns of the public. The issue is repeatedly raised at community meetings, via our complaints procedures and by other Council Services. Despite the extensive provision of disposal facilities, distribution of free dog waste bags, previous campaigns, information and education on the issue and the application of fines, dog fouling remains a widespread problem across the Council area.

In response to community concerns a high profile six week dog fouling campaign was implemented across the Falkirk Council area from August to October 2009.

The campaign aimed to raise awareness of the consequences of dog fouling, to change the behaviour of those responsible and reduce the problem by increased use of the disposal facilities available.

Billboard and bus shelter advertising was supplemented by our website, a launch stunt, widespread distribution of posters, promotion at community events and in Council offices and by working in partnership with other stakeholders.

### **The Campaign - Shameful, Dirty, Selfish**

The campaign was run on billboards and bus shelters from 27<sup>th</sup> August to 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

Three hard hitting images aiming to shock were used to show the impact of dog fouling-

- An adult wearing a summer sandal inches away from dog mess
- A youngster playing football sliding into dog mess
- A baby reaching towards dog mess.

Each image was accompanied by the same three words to describe, in uncompromising terms, the behaviour of dog owners who don't clean up after their pets – SHAMEFUL, FILTHY, SELFISH.

300 A3 posters, that showed graphically how dangerous and anti social dog fouling is, were distributed to schools, community groups, council offices, veterinary practices and libraries, and displayed at community and school events. Libraries and One Stop Shops carried static displays.

New dog bin stickers and promotional hand wash were produced for awareness raising and give aways at a number of promotional events.

A new campaign webpage was created, linking to an online survey to allow the public to air their views on the campaign. It showed that while many were shocked by the content of the images, they agreed that it was time to take tough action.

An article in the Council's newspaper, Falkirk Council News (distribution 80,000), highlighted the campaign to every household in the area.

A video was made about the impact of dog fouling on Council employees when undertaking grass cutting and strimming duties. This was posted on the Litterzone website and Youtube again demonstrating that dog fouling affects everybody.

### **Creativity**

Together the images and text were designed to confront irresponsible dog owners with the consequences of their actions, addressing them directly and with the intention of shocking them into changing behaviour.

For the launch we used pupils who had been involved in a project to reduce dog fouling near their school, Antonine Primary. Pupils counted the number of dog poops found on a 200 metre of grass, next to a 'safer route to school' walked by the majority of pupils. Flags were placed next to every dog poop, which were sprayed white – not a pretty sight! 173 separate incidents of dog fouling were recorded.

A press release issued prior to the launch led to a GMTV interview with the schoolchildren, aired the following morning. The launch also attracted interest from all our local media – Falkirk Herald, Bo'ness Journal, Falkirk/Grangemouth Advertiser, Central FM and GMTV and BBC online.

And last but not least, creating dog poop can be a messy job but someone has to do it! So with sleeves rolled up the litter team got to work using nutella and peanut butter to produce authentic looking poops. Sorry if you now see these products in a whole new light!

### **Evaluation**

The recent dog fouling campaign owes its success largely to the three shocking images used consistently throughout the campaign. The hard hitting approach graphically highlighted to those responsible the consequences of their actions. This approach has proved to be very successful in gaining public attention and resulted in:

- a 34% increase in the number of free dog waste bags issued (655,000 in the two months during the campaign, compared to 490,000 over the same period in 2008)
- A 53% decrease in the number of poops counted in known hot spots in the first two weeks of the campaign
- A high response to the online survey, indicating that the campaign provoked a strong reaction from the public. 37% of respondents had seen the campaign on the website, 34% had seen the billboards, 17% in Council offices, 16% on posters and 14% in the local press
- Research indicated that 54,000 people saw the billboards and 67,000 the bus shelters (figures supplied by ClearChannel)

- Bins close to the advertising sites were well used
- Six articles were published in the local press in addition to the BBC online article and GMTV interview.

### **Value for Money**

The total cost of the campaign was £6500, funded from the Litter Strategy budget.

The campaign generated an estimated advertising equivalent value of £10k local media coverage. Figures for BBC Online and GMTV are unavailable however the coverage certainly would have added to raising awareness of this highly emotive subject.

### **Final Results Against Objectives**

We nearly doubled our original objective of a 20% increase in the uptake of free dog poop bags during the campaign.

There was a 53% decrease in the number of poops counted during the first two weeks of the campaign.

Research indicated that 54,000 people saw the billboards and 67,000 the bus shelters.

Street cleansing staff monitored dog bin usage in areas close to advertising sites which showed that bins were better used during the campaign.

**Budget £6,500**