

North Lanarkshire Council iDefigo Vodafone Case Study

North Lanarkshire Council invest in iDefigo Smart Cameras to help tackle fly tipping

Issue

North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) has had to deal with a marked increase of fly tipping over recent years which has been an expensive and time-consuming problem for the Council to manage. Recently the Council has pledged extra budget to help tackle fly tipping and littering which includes hiring three additional Environmental Protection Officers to enforce action, up to and including, prosecuting offenders. As with other councils any reported incidents, whether that be in the countryside or towns and cities, cases need to be investigated and cleaned up as rapidly as possible. This also includes the public dumping rubbish outside recycling centres which became more commonplace during lockdown when the sites were closed. Some members of the public do not seem to realise that this is classified as fly tipping which could result in a £250 fixed penalty notice and fine.

Items dumped illegally can be household waste, but organised crime is becoming more prevalent including garden waste, rubble, building works waste which can also include asbestos, adding complexity and cost to the clean-up. David Markey, Housing and Community Safety Co-ordinator at North Lanarkshire Council, says “Fly tipping is both anti-social and illegal and its clear to us that if not removed quickly others follow and also dump next to other rubbish. It’s a constant game of cat and mouse to combat this”. Nicole Patterson, Head of Environmental Assets, at the Council also comments on the increased use of local parks and green spaces “unfortunately this has also seen a rise in littering, dog fouling, vandalism and fly tipping across our communities”.

Like councils countrywide North Lanarkshire has a zero-tolerance policy against such anti-social behaviour and a team of enforcement and environmental officers are on call to manage fly tipping incidents in the county.

Solution

Whilst NLC has a series of CCTV cameras in fixed locations, their use was limited as they require power and fixed broadband and therefore not suitable for use in remote areas.

In association with Vodafone Business NLC discovered that iDefigo had a solution that offered the flexibility they needed to combat fly tipping in remote areas or hot spots where CCTV was not suitable due to no electricity or the prohibitive cost of installing cables.

NLC initially ordered one set of three battery powered GDPR compliant Smart Cameras in 2020 which they have moved between several fly tipping hotspots. In 2021 they bought another ten sets of three cameras (30) and four solar panel kits (covering 12 cameras) which largely negate the need for battery recharging and replacing. In 2022 more cameras have been purchased



Result

It is clear the Smart Cameras have acted as a deterrent in the Lanarkshire communities and are helping to capture offenders. There have been many prosecutions, one involving the illegal dumping of asbestos in addition to multiple £250 fixed penalty notices. Over a six-week period in one location alone eight live incidents were reported.

Much of the fly tipping problem is caused by commercial operators. It is not uncommon for 10 tonnes at a time to be dumped, often in a matter of minutes. One captured a commercial fly tipper within weeks at the same location dumping civil waste and this has resulted a prosecution. Some of this is along dedicated cycle lanes which vehicles can readily access. This a big problem and iDefigo's cameras are particularly useful in this scenario where the remoteness means no electricity is available. The iDefigo battery or solar powered Smart Cameras are ideal for capturing and transmitting images to the iDefigo Surveillance Centre and Platform through the onboard Vodafone SIMs enabling NLC to access the imagery in real time.

It is testament to the additional investment in cameras that NLC is benefitting from the Smart Cameras with the cost being recouped by the prosecutions and fixed penalty fines, which is generating revenue to support the expense of the operational clean-ups.

David Markey of NLC comments "With the help of iDefigo and Vodafone and the state-of-the-art smart cameras this is certainly a solution that is helping the council combat this increasingly frequent problem. Criminals are becoming more sophisticated, for example, there is trend for articulated trailers being left in remote areas which are crammed full of rubbish and just left. iDefigo's cameras are ideal in helping combat this type of crime and with the footage captured we can use this evidence and present it to court in the case of prosecuting offenders. We are looking forward to the positive effect the new cameras will have on keeping our communities safe and clean".

More recently the cameras have been lent to the Environmental Department who monitor littering. It's often the case that 15-20 litterers a week are caught in car parks - cigarettes, takeaway wrappers, cups and other waste - which result in £80 fixed penalty notices being issued through the capture of number plates which has the potential of generating £1.2 - £1.6k a week in revenue.

About iDefigo

iDefigo, a UK-based specialist in hardware and software solutions for remote surveillance, has a AI enabled Smart Camera and Computer Vision solution which directly addresses the challenges that come with monitoring sites for fly tipping. Unlike CCTV, the Smart Camera offers high-grade cameras that are easily installed anywhere at low cost.

The cameras are managed by iDefigo's AI Cloud Based Platform



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