

Reading Borough Council iDefigo Vodafone Case Study

Taking fly tipping seriously at Reading Borough Council

Issue

Like many councils, Reading Borough Council (RBC) experiences regular fly tipping, or street tipping, incidents. Currently this is around five per day, or to put it another way: 1,835 fly tipping incidents were reported to Reading Council in 2019-20. As well as ruining beauty spots, towns, and countryside this illegal dumping affects local residents, and the problem can be a labour intensive and costly one for councils to manage. Each reported incident needs to be investigated before the offending waste can be removed. This consumes council resources and budget as well as causing unpleasantness for residents and passers-by.

Household items such as mattresses, furniture, or bagged waste are abandoned on streets or in parks rather than being taken to a local recycling facility or disposed of through the Borough Councils pay to collect service. Reading Borough Council takes fly tipping extremely seriously and continues to increase its efforts to manage this through a team of four enforcement officers to help combat the issue.

Solution

RBC were contacted by Vodafone Business who have worked with dozens of councils around the country in helping combat their fly tipping problems through their Smart Wireless Camera solution provided by iDefigo.

In partnership with iDefigo, Reading Borough Council are now benefiting from iDefigo's Vodafone SIM enabled remote Smart Wireless Camera solution. The smart cameras are solar battery powered and can be sited at fly-tipping hotspots where a number of cameras can monitor activity and record illegal dumping. All footage is securely transmitted across the Vodafone mobile network to the iDefigo IoT (Internet of Things) Surveillance Platform. The cameras are wireless and easily and rapidly located on lamp posts or in trees, where they can be sited permanently or easily moved from location to location to tackle new fly tipping hotspots as they arise.

Initially three cameras were set up by iDefigo in August 2020 at one site, and then another two sets of three were purchased for other fly tipping hotspots. The council enforcement team has moved the cameras around themselves when required. Warning signs are added to each location to comply to GDPR legislation, and the presence is often a deterrent in itself.



Result

Reading Borough Council have been delighted with the results to date. Cllr Barnett-Ward, Reading's Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods and Communities says, "So far the cameras have worked really well. In the first 4 months over 20 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued from the evidence captured on the smart wireless cameras." she adds "The smart cameras are a great additional deterrent to this anti-social and illegal behaviour. The cameras have been a truly useful asset in certain locations. There have also been several successful prosecutions where we have had to take offenders to court. This is the first time we have used cameras of this type: we initially bought one set of three but have purchased a further two sets as we find them useful in combating illegal dumping."

Reading Borough Council will continue to invest in Vodafone Smart Wireless cameras for areas most susceptible to fly tipping as it is a proven technology that both deters illegal dumping and assists in punishing offenders through providing evidence to support action taken by the council's enforcement officers.

About iDefigo

iDefigo, a UK-based specialist in hardware and software solutions for remote surveillance, has a Smart Camera solution which directly addresses the challenges that come with monitoring the most common sites for fly tipping. Unlike CCTV, the Smart Camera offers high-grade cameras that are easily installed anywhere at a low cost. The cameras capture events that matter and transmit images to any device, 24/7, with no on-site power, networking, or integration required. Importantly, the cameras send alerts when a trigger event has occurred, such as an act of fly tipping.



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