

Litter Picking Event Guidance

If you, your parish council, school or local community group would like to organise a voluntary litter picking event in your area, we can support you by providing bags for the collection of litter and will collect these after the event.

Contact

If you would like to organise a litter picking or community clear up event, please call us on 01636 650000, if you would like bags and need to arrange a collection.

Once you have finished please leave the bags of litter at the pre-arranged collection point, on council land, and we will come to collect and dispose of it.

Further Resources

Keep Britain Tidy - [Big Tidy Up](#) - litter picking advice for community groups

Campaign for Rural England - Litter Action - an online community of voluntary groups and individuals coming together to take action on litter problems locally. [Risk Assessment template](#).

Guidance for volunteer litter pickers

Individuals and groups acting as volunteer litter pickers can be exposed to a number of easily avoidable hazards. This guidance has been produced to help volunteers identify these hazards, making their involvement safe and enjoyable.

Protective Clothing and Equipment

The following items should be used at all times by volunteers undertaking litter picks:

- Reflective hi-visibility waistcoats to clearly highlight volunteers to traffic and pedestrians.
- Litter pickers to avoid direct contact with litter and repetitive bending.
- Gloves to minimise contact with any noxious or dangerous materials.

- Suitable footwear and clothing

Noxious and Dangerous Materials

The following materials may be encountered during litter picks and should be treated with caution:

- Broken glass - remove using a litter picker or a brush and shovel, avoiding contact by hand, and dispose of in a sturdy container.
- Drug related litter/hypodermics - these should not be moved. Note the location and report to the Council for specialist removal.
- Suspect materials and fly tipping - items that are possibly dangerous such as unknown liquids in containers, building materials, asbestos, or fly tipping should not be moved by volunteers. Note the location and report to the Council for specialist removal. If there is any doubt about an item, leave it, and let the Council know.

General Site Safety and Inspection

Litter picking of areas beside roads should be carried out with extreme caution, due to the risk of being struck by vehicles. Do not attempt to litter pick on main roads, such as A-roads, or where the road speed is over 50mph. Litter picking should be restricted to only where there are wide verges or pavements, suitable for pedestrians, and should be carried out facing oncoming traffic.

It is essential that volunteers are visible to road users, for that reason, hi-visibility waistcoats must be worn and litter picks should only take place in clear daylight. Volunteers should not attempt to clear litter from the highway.

Avoid reaching into hedges or undergrowth in such a way as to expose the face, eyes and skin to scratches from thorns or branches. If an item of litter cannot be safely reached with a litter picker, leave it.

Avoid working close to rivers or on steep slopes, as there is an increased risk of slips and falls. When working close to ditches, avoid reaching into the ditch to remove litter, unless it can be safely reached with a litter picker.

Be mindful of wildlife. In the spring time avoid disturbing animals and birds that may be nesting and in the summer time be wary of wasp and bee nests. Do not enter an area, or attempt to litter pick an area, where works are restricted, are already taking place (for example road works) or where the public do not have a right to entry.

Risk Assessment

The level of risk will vary at each location, so prior to commencing a litter pick, it is recommended that a visual site inspection and risk assessment is carried out to establish the above risks and to identify and note other possible hazards.

Volunteers have a duty towards themselves, fellow volunteers and the public to work safely. If there is any doubt about the safety of a site or material, then it should be avoided.

Lifting and Handling Materials

Volunteers should be aware of the risk of injury by carrying bags of collected litter and attempting to lift and carry heavy materials. To avoid injury, the following basic principles of manual handling should be applied:

- Use litter pickers to prevent constant bending and stretching.
- Make sure an item is safe to handle with no sharp edges or noxious contents.
- Decide if an item can be safely moved either by one or two people.
- Only try to move an item if this can be done so without straining.
- When lifting an item, bend the legs and keep the back straight.

Fly-tipping

If you see someone or discover fly-tipping report it 01636 650000.

It will be investigated and cleared up.

Other Dangers

Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis) is a very rare infection carried in rats urine and can be fatal. The symptoms include high temperature, severe headache, flu-like illness or muscle pains. They will appear 3 to 19 days after exposure to contaminated water. It must be treated early.

Extremes of weather

As litter picking is an outdoor event, volunteers need to be appropriately dressed for the weather. If it is hot and sunny applying sunscreen, wearing a cap and long sleeved shirts are advised to protect against sunburn. Bottled water is also advisable to guard against dehydration. If the weather is cold, wet or windy remind volunteers to wear clothing that will keep them warm and dry.

Young Volunteers

While it is beneficial to get young people involved in litter picks, age plays a big part in the ability to recognise and avoid risk. Accordingly, an adult should supervise volunteers under the age of 18 and permission for their participation should be gained from a parent or guardian.

Insurance

Volunteer litter pickers are not working for, or on behalf of, Newark & Sherwood District Council therefore you are not covered by the Council's insurance. Obtaining public liability insurance is very important and strongly recommended. This will provide cover for your legal liability arising from accidental damage or injury that may occur during the event, including damage or injury to a member of the public or their property.

If you are an individual organising a tidy up your current household insurance may cover you for public liability. You will need to check your policy to ensure you are covered. If not you will need to take out a separate public liability insurance.

If you represent an organisation such as a local council or school it is possible that you already have insurance in place but it is important to check that litter picks activity is covered under such insurance.

If not, a suitable extension should be made to the policy. If you are unable to obtain public liability insurance for your event please contact BTCV on 01302 572 244 as they can provide group insurance or visit www.btcv.org.uk

Disclaimer

Volunteers should not participate in litter picks unless they understand and accept that participation is entirely at their own risk. Volunteers are not working for, or on behalf of, Newark & Sherwood District Council, therefore the Council will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of the actions and omissions of volunteers or this guidance.