

A guide for litter pick event organisers

How to organise a community litter pick in council parks and open spaces



Basingstoke
and Deane

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Part 1

Community litter picking guidance

Community litter picking guidance

Thank you for hosting a community litter pick on Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) land. To make your event as enjoyable and safe as possible, we ask that the following health and safety guidance be taken into consideration.

Organising your own litter pick isn't difficult, but it does require you to think through a number of issues. This guide is designed to help you think about what organising and carrying out a litter pick entails, the responsibilities you have and the arrangements you will need to put into place to help maintain the safety of volunteers and the wider community.

As event organiser you have a duty of care to ensure that the health and safety of all taking part is properly considered. You must also make sure your activities do not cause harm to other members of the public who are not participating, or damage to the surrounding natural and built environment.

Planning your event

Prior to the event, the organiser should find out who the landowner is of the area they wish to litter pick and ensure they have permission to carry out the activity. The following guidance refers to council land only. You will need to seek permission and guidance from the relevant landowner if litter picking on land that does not belong to the council.

If the land you are wanting to litter pick is owned by the council, or you are unsure, please contact our Events Team by emailing Events@basingstoke.gov.uk or phoning 01256 844844. They will be able to confirm if it is council land and, if so, explain how to go about planning your event. This will include agreeing the dates - to ensure there are no clashes with other events - as well as requiring risk assessments and a copy of your community group's public liability insurance. They will also be able to confirm agreed locations for litter collection after the event. More detailed information to help you plan your event is found in the following sections of this guide.

General site safety

The organiser should conduct a site visit before the event and undertake a risk assessment to identify any potential hazards that may pose a risk to event attendees or the public on the day. A generic litter pick risk assessment can be found on page 11, which can be used as a template that you can edit and add to if useful.

In addition to undertaking a risk assessment, it is good practice to complete a safety plan for the event. This will detail important information that can help reduce response times in the unlikely event of an emergency. A safety plan template can be found on page 8.

The safety plan details address and access information for the site that might be required by the emergency services. It lists the equipment you need and enables you to record volunteer numbers. It also has a useful prompt sheet, listing the safety information you should explain to event attendees, as well as having a signing-in register.

Litter picks are generally suitable for people of all ages and abilities. Children are usually welcome, but must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times and you should make attendees aware of this when advertising your event.

Suggested litter pick equipment

The council suggests you have the following tools, personal protective equipment (PPE) and other items with you for your event. Some community centres in the borough have litter pick kits available for you to borrow. The council's Events Team will be able to give you more information about who you can contact.

Items for the organiser to bring/arrange:

Item	Purpose
Essential:	
Litter pickers	To reduce the risk of manual handling injuries sustained from repetitive bending and to remove the risk of any direct contact with litter.
Bin bags	For the collection of litter. If you have arranged for the council to collect full litter bags after the event, using the designated bin bags provided for volunteers helps to identify rubbish as coming from an authorised pick.
Work gloves	To reduce the risk of exposure to hazardous material and to protect hands from cuts. Nitrile gloves should also be available for first aid and hygiene purposes.
High visibility vests	To ensure volunteers are highly visible to pedestrians and bicycles if working along footpaths.
First aid kit and water	You must have a first aid kit at your event in case of emergency and water available to wash any cuts or rinse eye injuries. Depending on the size of your event, you may also need a trained first aider present.
Accident book	To record any accidents on site, including a description of the incident, the injuries suffered and the personal details of the injured party.
Dog poo bags	To clear any dog faeces that might be hazardous to attendees, especially young children.
Hand wipes and sanitiser gel	To ensure people can clean hands if washing facilities aren't available at nearby public toilets.
Mobile phones	All event organisers and supervisors to have charged mobile phones in case of emergency.
Dependent upon site and scale of event:	
At work signs	If the litter pick is along a footpath or cycle route, you will need to alert people either end of the section that volunteers are along the track.
Sun cream	Litter picks in summer can be in exposed environments and some people may not bring sun cream. Be mindful of potential allergies when offering sun cream to volunteers.
Refreshments/water	You may ask people to bring their own refreshments, but supplying drinks and biscuits can be a nice way to thank people for their efforts!

Items for the organiser to ask attendees to bring/wear:

Item	Purpose
Essential:	
Work gloves	People might prefer to bring their own gloves, but these must be suitable, hard-wearing gardening or builders' gloves.
Appropriate footwear	Sturdy boots/shoes which have adequate grip and support are essential to reduce the risk of slips/falls and other injuries.
Appropriate clothing	Clothing suitable for working outdoors and appropriate to the weather is essential to help keep people safe and comfortable.
Mobile phones	All attendees should have their own mobile phones in case of emergency.
Water	Attendees should be encouraged to bring their own drink to help prevent them becoming dehydrated during the event.
Medication	For people who may require medication during the event, such as those with allergies (Epi-pen/antihistamine) and asthma (inhalers).

Lifting and handling materials

Volunteers should be aware of the risk of injury due to incorrect manual handling techniques. To avoid injury, the following basic principles of manual handling should be applied and explained to all attendees as part of the safety briefing:

- Use litter pickers to avoid repetitive bending and stretching.
- Keep good posture and avoid twisting.
- To minimise risk, if an item of litter cannot be safely reached with a litter picker, leave it.
- If you have to lift a larger item, decide if it can be safely moved either by one or two people. If it can, keep the load close to the body and lift with a straight back using your leg muscles.
- If the item is too large, then leave it in situ and call the council contact centre on 01256 844844.

Dangerous materials

Please treat all of the following materials with caution (be aware that this is not an exhaustive list):

- Broken glass and nails: avoid direct hand contact; remove using a litter picker or brush and shovel. Dispose of items in a solid container, not a plastic bag.
- Drug-related litter/hypodermics: needles should not be handled unless someone is formally trained to do so. Please leave in situ and phone the council contact centre on 01256 844844 to arrange disposal.
- Dangerous materials: fly-tipped items should not be moved due to the possibility of it containing asbestos, chemicals or other hazardous items, such as batteries.

If you come across any materials that may be dangerous, please refrain from touching them. Record the location and inform the council via the contact centre on 01256 844844, who can arrange for safe disposal. If there is any doubt about whether an object is safe to handle, then it should be avoided.

Litter picking near the highway

Where possible, choose to host your litter pick event in a park or open space that is not accessible by vehicles. Litter picking of areas beside roads should be carried out with extreme caution and you must adhere to the following guidance:

- Volunteers are not permitted to work on the carriageway itself, nor within two metres of the edge of the carriageway.
- No work is to be undertaken on the verges of roads with a speed limit in excess of 30mph.
- Litter picking should be restricted to where there are wide raised pavements suitable for pedestrians and should be carried out facing oncoming traffic.
- It is essential that volunteers are visible to the public, so high visibility vests must be worn and litter picks should only take place in clear daylight.
- Do not work on central reservations.

Environmental considerations

- Avoid reaching into hedges or undergrowth in such a way as to expose the face, eyes or skin to scratches from thorns or branches.
- No litter picks are to take place next to watercourses or on steep slopes, due to the risk of slips, falls and drowning. Do not enter any area where works are taking place, or where the public do not have permission to enter.
- Be mindful of wildlife. In spring/summer, avoid disturbing animals that may be nesting and be mindful of wasp and bee nests. In winter, be mindful of hibernating animals.
- Volunteers should be made aware of zoonotic diseases. Leptospirosis (Weil's disease) is a very rare infection carried in rats' urine and tick bites can cause Lyme disease. If symptoms arise after the event, attendees should seek medical attention immediately.

Collection and disposal

For one-off litter picks, where larger quantities of litter are likely to be collected, the council can arrange for litter collection and disposal after the event on land owned by the council. Please contact the council's Events Team in advance, who can confirm the best collection point for rubbish bags and arrange for their collection. Collections will take place Monday to Friday after the event.

Insurance

Volunteer litter pickers taking part in an event that is not directly supervised by council staff are not working for, or on behalf of, the council and, therefore, are not covered by the council's insurance. Obtaining public liability insurance is very important and required for any events taking place on council land. This will provide cover for any 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 must check your policy to ensure you are covered. If not, you will need to take out separate public liability insurance. Check to see if there are any local community groups set up in your area who may want to help organise the litter pick with you. They may also already have public liability insurance in place to carry out public events.

Further information

For further advice on litter picking and organising events, please visit www.litteraction.org.uk or www.keepbritaintidy.org.

Part 2

Community litter picking event toolkit

Litter pick safety plan

Site name:	Grid reference:
Address:	Emergency access points:
Nearest A&E hospital:	Nearest landline:
Supervisor(s):	First aider(s):
Brief task description:	
Start time:	Expected finish time:
Checklist for session: Litter pickers Bin bags High visibility vests Gloves Nitrile gloves Dog poo bags First aid kit and water Accident book At work signs Hand wipes/sanitiser gel Sun cream Refreshments Risk assessments/safety plan	Equipment count:
Weather conditions:	Number of volunteers:
Completed by:	Date:

To report any dangerous/hazardous issues on site, such as fly-tipping, dangerous trees or sharps, please contact the council via phone on 01256 844844 or online at www.basingstoke.gov.uk/report.

Health, safety and wellbeing routine for litter picks

Before activity

1. Activity overview:

- Explain the task to be carried out and why it is important.

2. Health and safety briefing:

- Supervisor should review the risk assessment and brief participants at the beginning of the event and debrief at the end to discuss any issues.
- Communicate the main hazards today to the group (list here):

3. Equipment and litter:

- Explain use of equipment to new volunteers and to refresh current volunteers.
- Discuss the use of gloves and safe working distances.
- Confirm where to put rubbish bags when full.

4. In case of emergency/first aid:

- Communicate location of first aid kit and identify on-site first aiders for the activity.
- Explain that information for emergency services is detailed overleaf in case leader is injured.
- Request that any medical conditions that may require immediate assistance be made known to supervisor after briefing (e.g. allergies/diabetes).

5. Comfort break:

- Inform the group roughly what time the session runs until and when break time is.
- Inform participants where the toilets are, or where to go wild.

6. Photos:

- Explain that you might be taking photos and ask people to tell you if they would rather not be in them. Be sure to get written consent from those happy to be featured.
- Remember to take 'before' photos to document your efforts.

7. Participants:

- Introduce group if new participants attend and buddy them up with someone suitable.
- All to sign to say received health and safety talk and to include emergency number.
- Check up on participants regularly to ensure they are happy and well.

After activity

8. Debrief:

- Count the tools back in and check they match what was brought out.
- Ensure site is left tidy, with rubbish bags placed safely in designated spot.
- Share with the group any interesting finds/lessons learned.
- Remember to take 'after' photos of the work you have completed.
- Thank all volunteers.

	Name	Emergency contact number	Name	Emergency contact number
1				16
2				17
3				18
4				19
5				20
6				21
7				22
8				23
9				24
10				25
11				26
12				27
13				28
14				29
15				30

Safety is everybody's responsibility, not just the supervisor's. Please write your name in the table below to confirm you understand the safety briefing and will follow the instructions given to ensure everyone has an enjoyable time. If you would like someone to be contacted in case of emergency, please also include their number below (this will be redacted at the end of session).

Attendance list

Risk assessment: litter pick

Location: Basingstoke parks

Assessment of hazards associated with litter picking in open space. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Please note this is a template risk assessment only. You must undertake your own risk assessment, adding any additional hazards following a visit to your event site.

Hazard	Potential harm	Person(s) at risk	Precautions and control measures	Likelihood of occurrence	Hazard severity	Risk factor	Person(s) responsible
General emergency	Injury	Supervisor Participant Public	Supervisors to be aware of nearest Accident and Emergency hospital. A first aid kit must be on site at all times. A mobile phone should be available at all times (if no/poor signal, all supervisors should know the location of the nearest landline). A safety plan should be completed for all sessions. All incidents and near misses to be recorded in an accident book and reported to the council.	1	4	4	Supervisor
Incllement weather	Hypothermia/ Hyperthermia Fainting/ Sunburn/ Sunstroke/ Discomfort	Supervisor Participant	Appropriate clothing to be worn for the weather (layers of warm, waterproof clothing in winter/thin, light clothing in summer, with sleeves to avoid sunburn and sunhats). Suncream available. Drink plenty of fluids and take regular breaks. Stop activity if heavy rain/strong wind and site/task becomes dangerous or participants experience discomfort.	2	3	6	Supervisor Participant

Hazard	Potential harm	Person(s) at risk	Precautions and control measures	Likelihood of occurrence	Hazard severity	Risk factor	Person(s) responsible
Uneven terrain	Slips, trips and falls	Supervisor Participant	Discuss the terrain during the safety talk. Participants to wear sensible, sturdy footwear. Ensure litter and unused tools are left in a designated place, stored neatly. Mark, or cordon off, any major trip hazards that cannot be removed.	2	3	6	Supervisor Participant
Manual handling	Musculo-skeletal disorders	Supervisor Participant	Explain basic manual handling during safety talk (avoid heavy loads/twisting/straining). Use the right tool for the right job. Take regular breaks during the session. Don't over-exert – work within your means. Use mechanical aids or get help when moving heavy loads.	2	3	6	Supervisor Participant
Unfamiliar location	Getting lost	Supervisor Participant	Detailed map to be produced with landmarks labelled to enable people to orientate themselves on larger sites. Where possible main footpaths used. Briefing session available for those less familiar with the site/task. Participants to have a charged mobile phone on them at all times. Lone Working procedures to be followed, including location and expected time back.	1	3	3	Supervisor Participant
Litter	Cuts/Diseases	Supervisor Participant	Brief participants about the risks of handling litter directly. Wear gloves and use a litter picker to pick up litter. First aid kit on site.	2	2	4	Supervisor Participant

Hazard	Potential harm	Person(s) at risk	Precautions and control measures	Likelihood of occurrence	Hazard severity	Risk factor	Person(s) responsible
Litter picking equipment	Muscle strain/ Bruising/ Suffocation	Supervisor Participant	Inspect tools before and after each use, maintain in good condition. Provide users with tool use and safety information. Use correct tool for the job. Ensure firm and stable stance and wear sturdy footwear. Wear gloves. Children to be supervised by a responsible adult, especially when using bin liners (suffocation risk).	1	4	4	Supervisor Participant
Sharps	Puncture wound/ Blood-borne diseases	Supervisor Participant	Brief participants about the risk of finding syringes at the start of the event. No untrained people to handle syringes. Supervisor to cordon off area if unsafe and alert council to sharps location. Participants to wear gloves and use a litter picker.	1	4	4	Supervisor Participant
Fly-tip (asbestos)	Chronic breathing difficulties/ Asbestosis/ Lung cancer	Supervisor Participant	Any fly-tip found on site should be left in situ and cordoned off with warning tape. No participants to pick through fly-tip in case of asbestos contamination. The council contact centre to be called to inform of location (to be dealt with by trained staff).	1	5	5	Supervisor Participant
Dog faeces	Toxicara and general infection	Supervisor Participant	Brief participants before work starts. Clear any faeces found on site using disposable gloves and a dog poo bag. Use wipes/anti-bac hand gel after handling any faeces and before eating and drinking.	1	3	3	Supervisor Participant

Hazard	Potential harm	Person(s) at risk	Precautions and control measures	Likelihood of occurrence	Hazard severity	Risk factor	Person(s) responsible
Other animals	Bites/ Stings	Supervisor Participant	In damp or wooded areas, especially in humid conditions, wear long sleeves, trousers and insect repellent if required. Known allergies to stings to be declared and the location and use of Epi-pens known. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.	1	4	4	Supervisor Participant
Ticks	Lyme disease	Supervisor Participant	Participants to be aware that Lyme disease can be contracted from ticks, especially amongst bracken or within meadows during spring and summer. Wear long trousers and sleeves. Brush clothes down regularly. Check skin for ticks at the end of work. If bitten, monitor for any signs of 'bullseye' rash.	1	4	4	Supervisor Participant
Plants	Scratches/ Puncture wounds/ Skin irritation	Supervisor Participant	Gloves to be worn with long sleeves/ trousers to avoid injury if working amongst thorny vegetation. Avoid working in areas with toxic plants (i.e. wild parsnip). If injury occurs, wash the infected area and do not expose to sun.	2	3	6	Supervisor Participant
Vehicles/ Bikes	Collision/ Death	Supervisor Participant	Unload/load vehicle so people and materials/ tools are away from traffic. Wear high visibility clothing when working by paths. Volunteers are not permitted to work on the carriageway itself, or within two metres of the edge of the carriageway. No work is to be undertaken on the verges of roads with a speed limit in excess of 30mph.	1	5	5	Supervisor Participant

Risk matrix

Risk matrix			Hazard severity					
			1	2	3	4	5	
Doing this activity every day:			Low	Slight	Moderate	High	Severe	
			Minor injury not requiring first aid	Moderate injury resulting in first aid	Injury or disease resulting in >7 days off work	Death or major injury to one individual	Multiple death	
Likelihood of occurrence	1	Unlikely	Injury may occur less than once in a lifetime	1	2	3	4	5
	2	Possible	Injury may occur less than once in a year	2	4	6	8	10
	3	Occasional	Injury may occur two-three times per year	3	6	9	12	15
	4	Likely	Injury may occur more than three times per year	4	8	12	16	20
	5	Very likely	Injury is probably going to occur	5	10	15	20	25

	If control measures are followed as described, risk factor is low enough to continue
	Hazard carries a moderate level of risk. Attempt to eliminate or isolate hazard; if this can't be done, decide whether task is essential and who is competent to ensure it is carried out safely. Additional control measures may be necessary
	Hazard is very high risk. Unless it can be isolated/eliminated, do not carry out task. Find alternative solution.

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