



[Home](#) > [Leisure, parks, sport and culture](#) > [Parks and open spaces](#) > [Wildlife conservation](#)
> [Conservation and wildlife events](#) > [A guide for litter pick event organisers](#)

A guide for litter pick event organisers

Contents

- [Introduction](#)
 - [Planning your event](#)
 - [General site safety](#)
 - [Suggested litter pick equipment](#)
 - [Lifting and handling dangerous materials](#)
 - [Highways and environmental considerations](#)
-

This guide is designed to help you think about what organising and carrying out a litter pick entails and how to make your event as enjoyable and safe as possible.

As event organiser you have a duty of care to ensure that the following health and safety guidance is taken into consideration. It is your responsibility to put arrangements in place to help maintain the safety of volunteers and the wider community who are not participating, and ensure no damage to the surrounding natural and built environment occurs.

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.

This guide refers to council land only.

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. 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
- requesting risk assessments
- requesting a copy of your community group's public liability insurance
- agreeing locations for litter collection after the event

- for one-off litter picks, where larger quantities of litter are likely to be collected, we can arrange for litter collection and disposal after the event on land owned by the council if arranged in advance. Collections will take place Monday to Friday after the event.

If the land does not belong to the council, you will need to seek permission and guidance from the relevant landowner.

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 already have public liability insurance in place to carry out public events.


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.

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 has been provided below, which can be used as a template that you can edit and add to.

 [Litter pick risk assessment \(DOC\)_\[100 kb\]](#)

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 is provided below.

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 includes 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

We suggest 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. Our Events Team will be able to give you more information about who you can contact.

Essential items for the organiser to bring or arrange

Item	Purpose
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.

Item	Purpose
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.

Items that may be useful depending on the site and scale of the event

Item	Purpose
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	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!

Essential items for the attendees to bring or arrange

Item	Purpose
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 (EpiPen/antihistamine) and asthma (inhalers).

Lifting

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 01256 844844

Handling materials

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 call the council 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 by calling 01256 844844, we will then 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 live carriageway itself, nor within 1.5 metres of the edge of the live carriageway.
- No work is to be undertaken on the verges of roads with a speed limit in excess of 40mph.
- 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.

© 2025 Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council