

HOW TO ORGANISE A LITTER-PICKING EVENT

THE #LITTERHEROES GUIDE



#LITTER
HEROES



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Welcome to your #LitterHeroes Guide, designed to help you organise and lead a successful litter picking event for a group of volunteers. By improving your local area you will make it a more pleasant and attractive place to live, work and visit, whilst protecting local wildlife too.

A #LitterHero is someone who is interested in and actively volunteering their time to pick up litter, reduce waste and improve the environment around them.

There is a growing network of thousands of #LitterHeroes around the country and together they are making a huge difference. **To register as an official #LitterHero, receive exclusive resources and receive a quarterly litter-picking focused newsletter visit the [Keep Britain Tidy website](#).**

From all of us at Keep Britain Tidy, thank you very much for volunteering your time and energy to support our cause. Happy litter picking!



**#LITTER
HEROES**



HOW TO ORGANISE A LITTER PICK

Planning ahead is vital to your success. Our advice and tips will help make your event rewarding and great fun.

Preparation

Firstly, you need to decide where you want to tidy up. This could be anything from a local landmark to a well-known 'grot spot' or any area that needs a little bit of love and attention.

You'll need to get permission from the landowner. If you are cleaning up council-owned land, talk to the council well in advance, as their process for approval might take some time.

Rubbish collection

Early on, you need to think about what to do with the waste you collect.

Usually your local authority will help by collecting it or providing large bins for the event.

If you are planning on removing the rubbish yourself, please check your local recycling centre/tip is equipped to take it.

If a commercial waste company is collecting the rubbish or delivering a skip, they will charge you and want to know what the waste is. Always check the company you hire has a waste carrier's license.



Recycling

Encourage people to separate and recycle the rubbish where possible. You could use different bags for different recycled materials.

Check with your local authority about separate recycling collections.

Commonly recycled items are:

- Glass bottles
- Aluminium cans
- Paper / card
- Some plastics

If you are planning a large event, other groups in your area might want to get involved too, such as local community, youth and environmental groups.

Try to find out if any groups are already cleaning the area themselves. It is always better to work together with other groups, than 'step on each other's toes'.

If you are already part of a group, involve everyone at the planning stage and make it a real team effort.

Plan ahead

It is important to visit the site and assess any potential safety risks before the clean-up. This is called a risk assessment, it will help you understand what potential issues you may come across.

The risk assessment can also form the basis of the safety talk you give to volunteers before your litter pick goes ahead. We have a [template risk assessment](#) available for you to adapt for your specific event.

It might be helpful to make a sketch map of the area. Note where litter collection points should be.

If you are expecting a large number of people, you may also want to identify a 'lost and found' point and a 'first aid point'. Mark on the map any toilets or other useful amenities.

You could also note places where volunteers could shelter from the rain if the weather turns against you.

This map can then be used on the day to show different groups where they should be working, the set-up for the event and the facilities available.



PROMOTING YOUR CLEAN-UP



You may already know some #LitterHeroes in your community, or you may have friends, family or colleagues who are passionate about improving the environment. Additionally if you involve existing local groups, they can help you attract volunteers.

We recommend promoting your event online and via social media to reach a wide network of potential volunteers. You could create an event on Facebook and share it via local community and environmental networks. If you plan to host regular events in the area, you might wish to set up a Facebook group to help volunteers stay connected.

As an environmental charity, we don't particularly encourage the use of printed posters as these often become litter. Instead you can find electronic resources on the Keep Britain Tidy website, which can be downloaded, edited and shared online.

You could also send a press release to your local media, such as newspapers and radio stations, calling for volunteers well in advance of your event. Include details of who to contact and how to get involved.

Local councils and Community Volunteer Services might advertise your event too.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Consider the risks

Having chosen a place for your clean-up, visit the site and carry out a full assessment of the risks.

You can download a [risk assessment template](#) from the Keep Britain Tidy website, which details the most common risks (and a more comprehensive list than here) and suggested actions to reduce these.

It's important you consider all of the possible risks to you and your volunteers and how you will mitigate these.

The specific hazards found at your site should form the basis of your health and safety briefing at the start of the event.

Natural dangers

Avoid litter picking near potentially dangerous places, such as steep or slippery banks, fast flowing or deep water or near animals.

Giant hogweed can harm people and animals. Take great care when working near this weed and do not touch it at any time.

Stakes and tape can be used to section off any potentially dangerous areas.

Also consider the weather forecast as it would not be safe to lead a litter pick in extreme weather. Additionally, consider the timing of the clean as you need full light.

Dangerous items

Make sure everyone is aware of potentially dangerous items that they should not pick up. If poisonous or hazardous items are present or you find a pollution incident, contact the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60.

If needles or syringes are spotted at any stage during your litter pick, do not attempt to move them yourself. Make a note of their location and inform your local council.

If you come across fly-tipping, do not attempt to clear it as it could contain hazardous substances. Instead report it to your local authority.

Heavy lifting

- Plenty of spare bags should be available so volunteers do not overfill bags or continue carrying them once they become too heavy.
- Volunteers should be discouraged from lifting large or heavy items alone.
- Once large or heavy items have been identified, consider whether it's practical for volunteers to remove them, or whether they would be best removed by the local council.
- If you decide the item can be lifted by volunteers, this should be done at the end of the event through a separate and coordinated effort.

Hygiene

- To avoid illness from poor hygiene, all those taking part in the litter pick must wear heavy-duty, protective gloves at all times.
- Keep hands away from mouth and eyes while litter-picking.
- Wash hands and forearms as soon as the litter picking has finished.

Please check and follow official Government advice for the most up to date guidance on any Covid-19 measures in place at the time of your event.

Please note this resource is prepared for guidance purposes only as to general risks and hazards that may arise when litter picking. Specific risks and hazards at each location will vary, and it is the sole responsibility of the event organiser to identify those risks and hazards, and have in place appropriate health and safety standards. Keep Britain Tidy cannot be held legally responsible for any personal injury or damage suffered or incurred as a result of participation in a litter pick.



EQUIPMENT

You'll need the right equipment to help you successfully and safely lead a litter picking event.

As well as rubbish bags, volunteers will need litter pickers, gloves (waterproof or heavy duty), high visibility vests and bag hoops (to make it a lot easier).

Other equipment will come in useful, depending on the nature, type and size of your event.

Your local authority may be able to loan you items. Or you can purchase litter picking kit from the [Keep Britain Tidy online store](#) via our website.

Remember to encourage volunteers to bring their own kit if they have it.



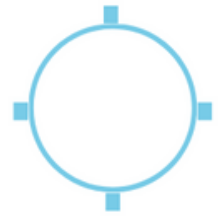
Litter-pickers



Gloves



Bin bags and
bags for recycling



Bag hoops



High-visibility
vests



Buckets for sharp
objects



First-aid kit



Hand sanitiser



Sign-in sheet
(and pens)



Whistle or loud
hailer



Water



Camera



Safe container

Broken glass and sharp metal will break through rubbish bags and can cause injury. Have safe containers, such as buckets, available in case you find this type of litter.

First aid

For even the smallest event, have a first aid kit, water and anti-bacterial gel available. Make volunteers aware of the designated first aider during the briefing.

For a large event you could contact local voluntary first aid organisations such as the Red Cross or St John Ambulance for advice. They may even be able to provide cover and assistance.

As event leader you should always carry a mobile phone in case of emergency.

Suitable clothing

Advise volunteers in advance to dress for the occasion. Wear strong, comfortable boots or shoes. Bring warm, waterproof clothing or sunhats.

Protective gear

It's best to buy or borrow heavy duty work gloves. Choose gloves that are made of a suitable material, that will not tear and will protect your volunteers throughout the litter pick.

It is also advisable to wear fluorescent clothing, such as a high visibility vest, especially when working near traffic.

We would not recommend hosting an event if litter-pickers are not available for volunteers to use.

MANAGING THE CLEAN-UP

Getting funding

Hosting a litter picking event can be done on a very small budget. But if you are planning a large or regular event, you might want to look for sponsorship.

Some of the avenues for sponsorship are:

- Monetary or equipment donations from local companies.
- Funding for local community projects offered by some supermarkets.
- Holding your own fundraising events like car boot sales, summer fairs, car washes, etc.
- Funding from your local authority or parish council.

Insurance cover

Public liability insurance is important as this will cover 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.

You may already have public liability insurance in place if you represent an organisation, like a local authority or school. Always check that this is up to date and will cover your planned event.

Please note, Keep Britain Tidy cannot be held legally responsible for any personal injury or damage suffered or incurred as a result of participation in a litter pick.

On the day

Sign all your volunteers in and brief them before they begin any litter picking. Depending on the type and size of the event, this might include:

- Health & safety risks (identified in your risk assessment).
- Precautions to avoid the identified risks.
- How to use any equipment provided.
- The agreed area or route and litter picking advice.
- Meeting points, start and finish times.
- Toilets and refreshments.
- First aid arrangements and who is carrying the first aid kits.

Don't forget to sign volunteers out at the end to ensure everyone has safely returned.



WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Adult supervision

Always ensure children are closely accompanied by a responsible adult throughout the clean. Children should remain in sight of an adult at all times.

Consider the ages of children involved and make sure a sufficient number of adults are present to supervise. We would advise that there are no more than four children to one adult and that children aged five or under do not take part in the litter picking.

For more information about safeguarding children please see see our safeguarding policy: [keepbritaintidy.org/keep-britain-tidy-safeguarding-policy](https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/keep-britain-tidy-safeguarding-policy)

Health and safety

Ensure children understand which items are potentially dangerous and should not be picked up. Warn them not to pick up any items they are the least bit unsure about.

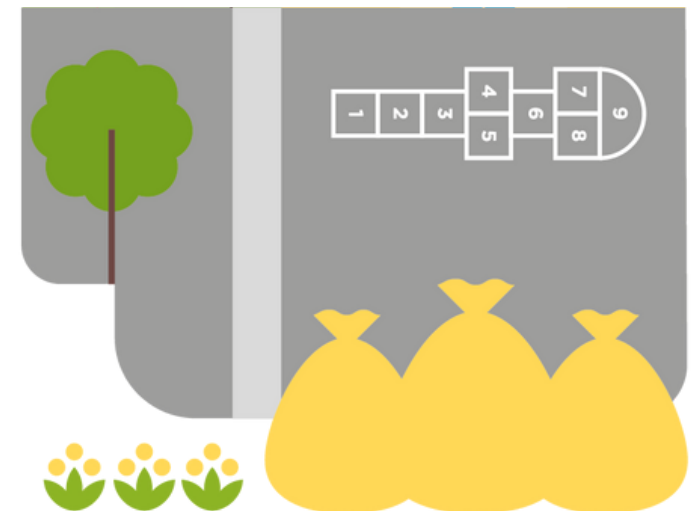
Don't let children attempt to pick up heavy or bulky items, ensure they have adult help for any weightier tasks.

It is important children are provided with well fitting gloves and wear suitable clothing and footwear.

If you are working anywhere near roads, canals, rivers or ponds, make sure that there are responsible people appointed specifically to keep an eye on safety. Don't allow children too close to such areas.

Ensure children don't do too much. We would recommend an hour is enough for them.

If only adults are involved, attempt only what is within everyone's capabilities and allow for rest breaks. Two to three hours of litter picking is usually enough for everyone.



SHARING YOUR RESULTS

Everyone involved will want to know what they have achieved, how much they have cleaned up and what a difference it has made to the local area.

You can monitor the amount of rubbish collected by counting the number of bags. You can also record your progress by taking before, during and after photographs of your event.

Share your clean-up on social

Don't forget to share your photos on social media using the hashtag #LitterHeroes and remember to thank everyone who got involved or supported your litter pick!

Report your results via Collect & Count

Collect & Count is the tool Keep Britain Tidy uses to monitor and demonstrate the scale of the national litter problem and the impact of volunteer action.

After your litter pick, please log your results via the [Collect & Count form on our website](#). This data is invaluable in our campaigning efforts. We'd like to know:

- How many people took part.
- How long they litter picked for.
- How many bags of litter were collected.

Throughout the year, we are also collecting details of smoking-related litter found (this is optional).

Media coverage

If you have previously let the media know about your event, then this is a great opportunity for a follow-up story.

Let them know exactly what happened and how much was collected.

Send a photo of the volunteers (with their permission) and the bags of rubbish. Take particular note of any unusual or interesting items you found.



 **Think before you print.**

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