



East & North Herts Community Litter Pick Toolkit

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1. Introduction

Community litter picking can take place on public land, including:

- ✓ Parks and open spaces
- ✓ Residential roads
- ✓ Play areas

Our street cleaning team has a rolling schedule of street cleaning across East and North Hertfordshire, cleaning most of the public highway on a regular basis. Cleaning frequencies vary according to the type of area and how busy that area is. e.g. high streets more frequently than residential areas. Groups such as Scouts and Guides, WI, Rotary Clubs, schools and businesses add huge value to our work through litter picking activities, looking after and improving our local environments. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, and we hope that this toolkit helps you by providing guidance to safely running your litter picking day.

Please involve the Waste Team in the planning stages by registering with us at least two weeks' ahead (see Section 3). This gives us time to check equipment availability and resources and schedule the pick-up of your waste and recycling bags.

2. Warning, unsuitable locations

Some items and locations are not suitable to be tackled by community groups due to the hazards they pose. These include:

- ✗ Private land or land managed by Housing Associations
- ✗ Garage areas
- ✗ High speed roads (highways or highway verges)
- ✗ Roads with no pavement or footpath
- ✗ Steep slopes, crumbling banks
- ✗ Water courses

These activities are best left for the contractor's staff, who have specialist training to work safely and within guidelines of legislation.

3. Getting started

1. Choose an area to do your tidy up, bearing in mind the guidance in Section 2
2. Visit the location to identify any risks, ways to manage these, and any no-go areas (Sections 4 and 7 help with this)
3. Familiarise yourself with nearby facilities such as public toilets
4. We recommend you provide a site map of the area you are covering, for your volunteers
5. **Book your community litter pick via the relevant [East](#) or [North Herts](#) webpage.** Once your form has been received and processed, a member of our team will contact you to arrange a date for you to collect litter pickers, high vis etc. from a designated location. (NB If another event is taking place the same weekend, or we do not have sufficient equipment, we will arrange an alternative date with you).
6. Once you have decided when you want to do your tidy up and there is enough equipment available – ensure you allow time to promote if you are expecting other people to get involved
7. Community groups are not covered by Council insurance so you may wish to organise your own cover
8. On the day - hope for good weather and some keen helpers!

If the weather is extreme

In Britain, we can never quite rely on the weather. If it is bad, you may need to shorten the event. If it is extreme, you may need to cancel your event. While we know this is frustrating, it is better to do this than risk your group's safety.

If you do cancel your community litter picking event, please let us know on wasteandrecycling@north-herts.gov.uk, so that we can work with you to reschedule the event, and reschedule our waste collection teams that we would have arranged to pick up your litter sacks.

4. Briefing volunteers

A short talk before the clean-up event starts is vital. We recommend including the following information:

- Prior to arrival, strongly recommend that volunteers:
 - bring a fully charged mobile phone and provide the co-ordinator with their phone number (and share the leaders')
 - cover any cuts with a strong waterproof plaster and, ideally, protective gloves (if this is on their hand)
 - wear sturdy footwear and warm, weather-proof clothing
 - wear sunscreen on sunny days, and ideally a hat
 - bring water to stay hydrated
 - under-16 participants need to be supervised by a responsible adult at all times
- Schedule a start and return time that falls within daylight hours only
- Identify appointed group leaders and the event supervisor. Please note persons under 18 should not act in a supervisory role
- Keep a register to tick off to ensure all volunteers return to the identified base location safely at the end of the litter pick
- Highlight any areas to avoid and hazards
- Advise volunteers not to approach strangers or unknown dogs
- Volunteers should not work alone, stay in sight and earshot of others
- Be clear on the location of first aid equipment and provide the telephone number of the individual(s) supporting in this capacity
- Ask volunteers to report any **medical conditions** to the group leader after the introductory talk.
- Advise volunteers to **not touch your eyes or mouth** while they are on the litter pick, and to wash hands thoroughly when finished
- Please ask volunteers to bring their sacks to a final collection point (rather than scattered around the site) so we can pick them up
- Consider circulating safety information for your event, so that latecomers missing the initial briefing will be aware of the advice
- **Advise all that in an emergency, always call 999**

5. Equipment that we can loan your group

- ✓ **Litter pickers**
- ✓ **High vis vests**
- ✓ **Refuse sacks: grey for non-recyclable litter, clear for recyclable**

When you register for your Community Litter Pick (see Section 3), we will contact you to arrange for you to come and collect the items above.

6. Health and safety equipment to consider

- First Aid Boxes with basic bandages
- Plasters
- Antiseptic Wipes
- Eye Wash
- Health and Safety Information and/or boards
- Supply of clean water for hand washing
- Soap
- Paper towels
- Drinking water or warm drink and cups

7. Collecting waste & recycling

Always pick items up one-by-one with the litter picking device provided, do not scoop up handfuls of litter as it may contain hidden needles, broken glass and other sharp objects.

Things not to pick!

- × Anything that cannot fit in the sack or is too heavy to lift. Leave these where they are, and report as fly tipping
- × Any fly tipping (report that, see below, Section 8)
- × Needles or hazardous objects (report that, see below, Section 8)
- × No glass: it may become sharp within the sacks and pose a potential hazard

What can go into your recyclable sacks (if empty and reasonably clean):

- ✓ Drink cans and food tins
- ✓ Plastic bottles
- ✓ Dry paper and cardboard

Regrettably, if the above have liquid in them, or food residue or soil on them, please place these into your non-recyclable waste sacks. This is because contamination will prevent these items being recycled, and these could contaminate other recyclable items if placed in the recyclable sack.

Please ask volunteers to bring their sacks to a final collection point (rather than scattered around the site) so we can pick them up.

8. Reporting fly tipping and possible site hazards

Items such as fridges, tyres, gas bottles, rubble/hard-core etc. should not be picked up but should be reported to your local council. As a rule of thumb litter picked items should fit into the bags provided, anything larger should be left in situ and reported as a fly tip.

Links for reporting fly tipping:

East Herts, click here	North Herts, click here
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These are other hazards you might encounter when carrying out the site-specific assessment:

- Proximity to a main/busy road.
- Location of water, rivers and streams / fast or deep flowing water.
- Steep / unstable banks, slipping and tripping hazards.
- Derelict buildings.
- Electric fences, especially on areas of common grazing ground. Electric fences are identified by black and yellow warning signs.
- Unsafe sites e.g. broken ground, debris, holes etc.
- Building works and site entrances.
- Animal: wildlife, strays etc.
- Illegal dumping of contaminated waste – see signs below



Biohazard



Electricity



Poison



If you find a container displaying a sign including those below, **do not approach, instead contact the Environment Agency Pollution Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.**

9. Thank you, and more information

Thank you for your good work in community litter picking. More guidance is available from the [Keep Britain Tidy website](#). Should you have any further questions, please contact wasteandrecycling@north-herts.gov.uk