

Introduction to Community Litter Picks:

North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) and East Herts District Council (EHDC) have a schedule for street cleansing meaning that almost all of the public highway in North and East Hertfordshire are scheduled to be cleaned on a regular basis. Cleaning frequencies vary according to the type of area and how busy they are; for example, High Streets are visited more frequently than residential areas.

In addition to the work our street cleansing contractor does, we know that groups such as Schools, Scouts and Guides groups, WI and Rotary Clubs, businesses, families and those participating in annual organised clean ups, add a huge amount of value to looking after and improving our local environments. It also has benefits for the participants such as exercise, getting to know others in the community and learning about the impact of litter and other anti social behaviour on the environment. This is why we have developed our toolkit to assist groups to plan and implement their own community tidy ups.

Supply of this toolkit and loaning out litter picking equipment is not intended to supplement or replace any of the Council's cleansing services, but to work in partnership with local communities. Please note that some items and locations are not suitable to be tackled by community groups due to hazards that they may pose. These are best left to the contractor's staff who have received specialist training to work safely and within guidelines and legislation.

Examples of this would be litter picking alongside high speed roads and the removal of fly-tipping. NHDC and EHDC are keen to support community initiatives and are willing to provide help and guidance wherever possible. We would request that Waste Team are involved in the planning stages, and given reasonable notice (two weeks) in order to check equipment availability and resources. We would be grateful if all persons involved read these guidelines prior to undertaking the litter pick.

Getting Started:

1. Choose an area to do your tidy up, please ensure you only litter pick public land (this does not include garage areas, private land, or land managed by housing associations).
2. Visit the area to conduct a risk assessment of your location. A template risk assessment can be found in this toolkit for you to adapt to your own needs. It is also useful to familiarise yourself with nearby facilities, such as public toilets. We also suggest you make a site map of the area you are covering for your volunteers.
3. Fill out your entry form for NHDC from www.north-herts.gov.uk/litter and for EHDC from www.eastherts.gov.uk/. Once your form has been received and processed contact will be made from the waste team to arrange a date for you to collect the litter pickers from a designated location. NB if another event is taking place the same weekend or we do not have sufficient equipment, a member of the waste team will liaise with you to rearrange or suggest alternative dates.
3. 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.

4. Community groups are not covered by Council insurance so you may wish to organise your own cover.

5. On the day - hope for good weather and some keen helpers.

Briefing Volunteers

A short talk before the clean-up event starts is vital. This should include information on:

- Areas to avoid and hazards - keep away from slippery, steep or crumbling banks.
- Location of first aid equipment and emergency telephone.
- Safety advice, you may consider providing a safety information board for your event so that latecomers will be aware of the advice.
- Who the appointed group leaders are and the event supervisor. Please note persons under 18 should not act in a supervisory role.
- What the plan of action is eg. Rest, lunch breaks, areas to be cleared and finish time.
- Ask volunteers to report any **medical conditions** to the group leader after the introductory talk.
- **Do not touch your eyes or mouth** at any time until your hands are clean.

Areas that can be actioned by community groups:

- Litter picking of parks and open spaces
- Litter picking of residential roads
- Litter picking of play areas

Recycling Collection

We are able to provide you with clear sacks for the collection of recyclable litter. We would ask that you only include the following recyclables in the clear bags.

(Glass should not be picked as it may become sharp within the sacks provide and pose a potential hazard). Where possible please ensure recyclables are free from liquid, soil and food waste.

- Cans and tins
- Plastic bottles
- Dry paper and cardboard

All of the litter will be collected together and the recyclable material will be separated out and sent for reprocessing.

Rubbish Clearance

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

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.

Report fly tipping on the below online forms:

NHDC: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/transport-and-streets/street-cleaning/fly-tipping>

EHDC: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/35191/Dumped-Rubbish-Fly-tipping>

What to wear

- Bring plenty of warm clothes and waterproofs, if appropriate.
- Wear sturdy boots or Wellingtons for clean-up activities.
- Sun protection will be necessary in summer

Tools and equipment available on loan:

- Litter pickers
- Non protective gloves
- High Vis vests
- Refuse sacks for recyclable litter and non recyclable litter

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
- Cups

Possible Site Hazards

These are possible hazards that you may identify 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.
- Animals – Wildlife, strays etc.
- Fly tipping – This is fast becoming a common problem.
- Illegal dumping of contaminated waste –
Watch for warning signs and do not approach – These signs may be found on drums etc. If you find a container displaying a sign contact the Environment Agency Pollution Hotline on **0800 80 70 60**



- Warning Signs – These warn of special risks, they are yellow and black with a pictographic symbol



Bio Hazard



Electricity



Poison

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact wasteandrecycling@north-herts.gov.uk