

# Community Tidy Up Toolkit

A guide to organising and running  
community litter picks and graffiti removal



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## **Introduction to community litter picks:**

North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) have a schedule for street cleansing which means that almost all of the public highway and public parks in North 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 for the benefits of everyone in it. 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 this toolkit to assist groups to plan and implement their own community tidy ups.

Supply of this toolkit and loaning out litter picking and graffiti removal equipment is not intended to supplement or replace any of the Council's cleansing services but to work in partnership with local communities and improve the local environment. 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 removal of fly-tipping.

NHDC are keen to support community initiatives and are willing to provide help and guidance wherever possible. We would request that Waste Services Officers are involved in the planning stages, and given reasonable notice (two weeks) in order to check equipment availability and resources.

### **Getting Started:**

1. Choose an area to do your tidy up
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 suggest you make a site map of the area you are covering for your volunteers.
3. Decide when you want to do your tidy up- don't forget to allow time to promote it to others if you are expecting other people to get involved.
4. Contact NHDC by phone on: 0800 3286023 and ask to speak to a Waste Services Officer to confirm your location is suitable, discuss your equipment needs and agree where to leave the sacks of waste for collection. You can also download the litter pick booking form and post a copy to NHDC- Waste Team, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF (If posting, please do this a minimum of 2 weeks before your suggested date to allow us time to receive the information and confirm availability of equipment.)
5. Community groups are not covered by Council insurance so you may wish to organise your own cover.
6. Confirmation from a Waste Services Officer and arrange to come and collect your equipment.
7. Advertise your tidy up and encourage others to join you (community groups) or do some litter themed work with your class or book a litter assembly (schools) with our Education Officer- phone 0800 328 6023 to book.
8. On the day- hope for good weather and see our 'on the day' information.

### **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

Graffiti removal (adult groups only, please confirm with NHDC officer)

### **Tools and equipment available on loan from NHDC:**

Litter pickers

Non protective gloves

High Vis vests

Refuse sacks for non recyclable litter

Clear recycling sacks (for glass, cans, plastic bottles, pots, tubs trays- items that can be placed into the grey bin. No paper or cardboard as generally this will have accumulated dirt and therefore cannot be recycled).

Graffiti removal wipes

### **We can also provide:**

Help with mapping locations and fly tips/dumped rubbish.

Information regarding estimated weights collected.

Assemblies on litter and waste and recycling for schools.

Talks on litter and waste and recycling for youth and adult groups.

A waste awareness officer may be able to attend your school or youth group litter pick dressed as a Womble to encourage your young people and make it more special.

## Community Tidy Up Booking Form

Area to be  
picked:

Date of  
event:

### Details of person requesting kit

Name:

Group or school:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

### Request for equipment

Number of items requested:

Litter pickers:

Hi viz vests:

Disposable gloves:

Sacks:

Graffiti wipes:

Location of waste to be collected:

Additional requests or further information required:

Details of number of pieces of equipment borrowed:

Litter pickers	
High Vis Jackets	

Please sign below as the person responsible for organising the litter pick  
*(This should be completed when the volunteer collects the equipment from NHDC)*

I confirm receipt of the equipment detailed above and accept responsibility for returning the equipment after the event:

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**Please note:** *If any equipment is missing or damaged, the group organiser as detailed above will be charged to replace the equipment.*

*For officer use:*

Number of items returned and confirmation of all returned or number missing or damaged equipment.

	No.	Condition on return
Litter pickers:		
Hi viz:		

Name of NHDC officer responsible:	
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**We would love to see your photos from your event to help us to encourage others to organise their own tidy up too**

Please share any comments you have from participants and photos which you have permission for us to use with your NHDC contact for this event.

If you would also like to share with us how many bags of litter was collected and any other feedback about this tool kit and your tidy up we would love to hear from you.

Thank you for volunteering to improve your local environment

## Template Risk Assessment

<b>Community Group:</b>		<b>Date of Assessment:</b>	
<b>Name of Assessor:</b>		<b>Date of Review:</b>	

No	Hazard and Potential Consequences	Persons at Risk	Control Measures	Additional Control Measures Necessary	Risk Rating (High, Medium, Low)
1	Physical Hazards present at site  e.g. Drowning in river or falling down steep slope	Participants	Organiser to carry out a pre-site visit to ensure that the area is suitable and carry out a suitable risk assessment.  Litter picking should not be carried out in areas where there is a high risk to participants. Areas that would be unsuitable include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anywhere within unguarded access to deep or fast flowing water (e.g. rivers)</li> <li>▪ Highway or roadside areas without vehicle segregation (fencing)</li> <li>▪ Steep, slippery or unstable ground (including those with holes or excavations)</li> <li>▪ Areas around and within derelict (and potentially unstable) buildings</li> </ul>	Where possible, use tape to cordon off any dangerous areas on site and ensure participants are informed that access to taped areas is prohibited.  Where there is a high level of risk, find a more suitable site to carry out the litter pick.  For further information and guidance, please refer to 'the Big Tidy Up' website: <a href="http://www.thebigtidyup.org/tidyups_organise.aspx">http://www.thebigtidyup.org/tidyups_organise.aspx</a>	
2	Sharp Objects - Glass, needles, nails etc.  e.g. Needle stick injury leading to Hepatitis B	Participants	Anyone undertaking litter picks must follow correct procedure and instructions. If discovered, needles must not be picked up or touched under any circumstances. Location should be noted and inform NHDC to remove.  Participants should be informed beforehand of the need to wear strong, sensible footwear (boots, Wellingtons) with adequate grip - no open-toe footwear should be allowed.  Participants to be provided with correct Personal Protective Equipment including Gloves, Litter Pickers, High Visibility Vests.	Organiser/team leader to give pre-activity briefing session with all participants to include procedures/ instructions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Procedure for hypodermic needles</li> <li>▪ Participants instructed not to pick up litter with hands - use Litter Picker at all times</li> </ul>	



No	Hazard and Potential Consequences	Persons at Risk	Control Measures	Additional Control Measures Necessary	Risk Rating (High, Medium, Low)
3	Hygiene and potential contact with Bio Hazards Objects - faeces, vomit and used condoms  e.g. Dog Faeces potentially leading to infection i.e. 'toxocarisis' . Contraction of 'Weils disease' from rat urine.	Participants	Anyone undertaking litter picks must follow correct procedure and instructions. If discovered, volunteers should not attempt to clean up. Make a note of the location and report it to NHDC to remove.  Participants should be informed beforehand of the need to wear suitable outdoor clothing that does not expose bare areas of skin.  Participants to be instructed to wash hands and forearms before eating, drinking, smoking or going to the toilet.  Participants instructed to cover any cuts, however minor, with surgical tape or waterproof plasters	Organiser/team leader to give pre-activity briefing session with all participants to include procedures/ instructions/information, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General awareness of bio-hazards (e.g. what they are and why they're dangerous)</li> <li>Instruction not to pick up or handle any bio-hazard.</li> </ul> <p>Ensure adequate first aid arrangements have been provided (proportionate to the level of risk). As a minimum a first aid kit with waterproof plasters should be available. At least one member of the group should have access to a phone in order to call for emergency assistance in the event of a group member being injured or falling ill.</p>	
4	Contamination from chemicals onsite  e.g. Poisoning from insecticides	Participants	Anyone undertaking litter picks must follow correct procedure and instructions. If discovered, do not attempt to clean up. Make a note of the location and report it to NHDC.	Organiser/team leader to give pre-activity briefing session with all participants to include procedures for the discovery of chemicals or chemical containers on site.	
5	Slips Trips and Falls  e.g. Sprained Ankle from tripping over rough terrain	Participants	Organiser to carry out a pre-site visit to ensure that the area is suitable and carry out a suitable risk assessment.  Anyone undertaking litter picks must follow correct procedure and be wearing correct PPE.  Participants should be informed beforehand of the need to wear strong, sensible footwear (boots, Wellingtons) with adequate grip - no open-toe footwear should be allowed.	Ensure any significant findings of the risk assessment are communicated to participants prior to carrying out activity.  Where possible, use tape to cordon off any dangerous areas, including slip/trip hazards on site and ensure participants are informed that access to this area is prohibited.	

No	Hazard and Potential Consequences	Persons at Risk	Control Measures	Additional Control Measures Necessary	Risk Rating (High, Medium, Low)
6	Manual Handling e.g. Back injury from people attempting to move heavy objects such as Branches	Participants	<p>Participants should be informed of the dangers of manual handling and instructed to assess the load before handling.</p> <p>Wear appropriate PPE including gloves, trousers and sturdy footwear to protect hands, legs and feet.</p> <p>Minimise repetitive bending wherever possible and ensure participants take regular breaks.</p> <p>Prior to activity make arrangements with Council on collection points of rubbish, wherever possible minimising manual handling for participants by suitably locating collection points.</p>	<p>Organiser/team leader to give pre-activity briefing session with all participants to include instructions on manual handling, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not to lift unless comfortable in doing so</li> <li>▪ Young persons and others at significant risk (e.g. persons with a previous back injury) instructed not to lift heavy weights.</li> <li>▪ All lifting by young persons to be supervised.</li> <li>▪ Wherever possible, lift items with assistance rather than alone</li> <li>▪ Be aware and careful in case sharp objects are protruding from sacks.</li> </ul>	
7	Weather Issues e.g. extremes of weather can cause injuries such as wind blown debris	Participants	<p>Participants should be informed beforehand of the need to wear sensible outdoor clothing, including trousers and warm clothing where appropriate.</p> <p>Organiser/team leader to cancel activity if there is extreme weather (e.g. high winds, rain, snow etc)</p> <p>Ensure there is an adequate supply of water to prevent dehydration.</p>	<p>Organiser/team leader to give pre-activity briefing session with all participants to cover, where applicable, working in the heat (need to keep hydrated and avoiding sunburn)</p>	
8	Aggressive People e.g. Assaulted by member of public	Participants	<p>Participants should be informed to cease litter picking if they encounter anyone who makes them feel uncomfortable or that is acting suspiciously and report back to the organiser/team leader.</p> <p>Participants should always work in teams and should not work alone at any time during the activity.</p>		
9	Natural Hazards including pollen, dangerous plants cuts from thorns, Wasp & Bee nests,	Participants	<p>Organiser to carry out a pre-site visit to ensure that the area does not contain any dangerous plants or wasp or bee nests.</p> <p>Participants should be informed beforehand of the need to wear appropriate PPE (including protective gloves) and sensible outdoor</p>	<p>Ensure adequate first aid arrangements have been provided (proportionate to the level of risk). As a minimum a first aid kit with waterproof plasters should be available.</p> <p>At least one member of the group should have access to</p>	



No	Hazard and Potential Consequences	Persons at Risk	Control Measures	Additional Control Measures Necessary	Risk Rating (High, Medium, Low)
	e.g. Skin rash from plants, bee sting resulting in anaphylactic shock		clothing and footwear, keeping hands, arms and legs covered. Participants to be instructed to wash hands and forearms before eating, drinking, smoking or going to the toilet.	a phone in order to call for emergency assistance in the event of a group member being injured or falling ill as a result of an allergic reaction.	
10	Vehicle Movements e.g. Fatality or major injury caused by moving vehicle	Participants	Litter Picking should not be undertaken on highway or within close, unguarded proximity to roads or areas where there are moving vehicles. Participants should be informed beforehand of the need to wear appropriate PPE including florescent high-visibility vests.		
11	Lone Working e.g. Anyone lone working sustaining an injury may not receive medical assistance, and thus condition may worsen as team are unaware they have been injured.	Participants	Participants should always work in teams and should not work alone at any time during the activity.	Ensure there is a facility for participants to sign in and out.	

No	Hazard and Potential Consequences	Persons at Risk	Control Measures	Additional Control Measures Necessary	Risk Rating (High, Medium, Low)
12	Young Persons and lack of awareness  e.g. A young person taking unnecessary risks resulting in injury	Participants, particularly young persons	<p>Organiser to carry out a pre-site visit to ensure that the area is suitable for young persons.</p> <p>Organiser to carry out a suitable risk assessment and ensure all participants (including young persons) are given health and safety checklist and instructions.</p> <p>Age plays a big part in the ability to recognise and avoid risk. Accordingly, where young persons are participating, there should be adequate supervision at all times (e.g. a minimum of 1 responsible adult to every 10 young persons). There should be no groups of children under the age of 16 working in an area without direct supervision of an adult.</p>	Where young persons and/or children are involved, the group leader must take specific time to explain procedures and take particular care to describe and point out the potential hazards identified within the risk assessment.	
13	Use of graffiti wipes	Participants	<p>Only adult participants should be undertaking graffiti removal.</p> <p>Anyone using the graffiti wipes are to be wearing protective gloves provided in the equipment.</p> <p>Graffiti removal should be agreed with an NHDC officer. No removal will be approved if it cannot be reached from the ground without the use of a ladder to avoid falls from heights.</p> <p>Graffiti removal is not to be done alone, volunteers should work as part of a team.</p>		

**On the day:**

Arrive early as the organiser to check the area around hasn't had any major changes to be aware of such as a large fly-tip.

Take some before photos to show what you were doing

Welcome your volunteers and do a safety briefing highlighting any areas to stay clear of and what to look out for.

Count out the equipment to volunteers

Take photos of the hardworking volunteers and interesting items they find

Thank everyone for coming or congratulate young people on how hard they have worked

Count back in all the equipment

Leave the sacks in the agreed location. Please ensure they do not obstruct paths or roads and that they are located away from private property. Collection by the contractor will normally be the next working day

**List of activities not to be undertaken whilst litter picking:**

Please report these to the Council instead: Phone: 0800 328 6023 or use the online report it forms on our website: [www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk)

- Broken Glass
- Dog Fouling
- Dumped rubbish
- Full litter bin
- Full dog waste bin
- Fly posters
- Dead animals
- Removal of fly tips
- Disturbing potentially hazardous material, e.g. asbestos
- Drug/health related waste/needles

NHDC do not recommend that community groups undertake the removal of fly tipped or large amounts of dumped rubbish, as these could require specialist equipment, contain hazardous waste and may also be subject to investigation by NHDC Environmental Crime Officers. If groups come across waste of this kind, please note location and description of the waste, and either report it to the NHDC officer working with you, or through our customer contact centre on 0800 328 6023.

**After your tidy up:**

- Return your borrowed litter picking equipment to the Council.
- Send photos of your event to the NHDC officer you have been working with.
- Record details of the event such as number of people, number of sacks collected, weather etc. and send this with photos to your local community magazine/ parish council for an article in the magazine or newsletter.
- Publicise the good work you all did.
- Organise another one in the future.