

## **GUIDANCE FOR VOLUNTEER LITTER PICKERS**

Individuals and groups acting as volunteer litter pickers can be exposed to a number of easily avoidable hazards. This guidance has been produced to help volunteers identify these hazards, making their involvement safe and enjoyable, and should be followed by all volunteers.

### **Protective Clothing and Equipment**

Volunteers undertaking litter picks should use the following items at all times:

- Reflective hi-visibility waistcoats to clearly highlight volunteers to traffic and pedestrians. (Those provided are only appropriate for areas where the speed limit is 30mph or less) - If working at roadside
- Litter pickers to avoid direct contact with litter and repetitive bending.
- Gloves to minimise contact with any noxious or dangerous materials.
- Suitable footwear/clothing (flip flops or other open toe footwear is not recommended)

### **Noxious and Dangerous Materials**

The following materials may be encountered during litter picks and should be treated with caution:

Broken Glass – remove using a litter picker or a brush and shovel, avoiding contact by hand, and dispose of in a sturdy container.

Drug Related Litter/Hypodermics – these should not be moved. Note the location and report to the council for specialist removal.

Suspect Materials and Fly Tipping – items that are possibly dangerous such as unknown liquids in containers, building materials or asbestos should not be moved by volunteers. Note the location and report to the council for specialist removal.

If there is any doubt about an item, leave it, and let the council know. (Only items on publicly accessible land)

### **General Site Safety and Inspection**

Litter picking of areas beside roads should be carried out with extreme caution, due to the risk of being struck by vehicles; a pre-site inspection should determine an agreed safe working area. Litter picking should be restricted to only where there are wide verges or pavements, suitable for pedestrians, and should be carried out facing oncoming traffic. It is essential that volunteers are visible to road users, for that reason, hi-visibility waistcoats must be worn and litter picks should only take place in clear daylight. Volunteers should not attempt to clear litter from the carriageway.

Avoid reaching into hedges or undergrowth in such a way as to expose the face,

eyes and skin to scratches from thorns or branches. If an item of litter can not be safely reached with a litter picker, leave it and report its location to the council.

Avoid working close to rivers or on steep slopes, as there is an increased risk of slips and falls. When working close to ditches, avoid reaching into the ditch to remove litter, unless it can be safely reached with a litter picker.

Be mindful of wildlife. In the spring time avoid disturbing animals and birds that may be nesting and in the summer time be wary of wasp and bee nests.

Do not enter an area, or attempt to litter pick an area, where works are restricted, are already taking place (for example road works) or where the public do not have a right to entry.

### **Lifting and Handling Materials**

Volunteers should be aware of the risk of injury by carrying bags of collected litter and attempting to lift and carry heavy materials. To avoid injury, the following basic principals of manual handling should be applied:

Use litter pickers to prevent constant bending and stretching.

Make sure an item is safe to handle with no sharp edges or noxious contents.

Decide if an item can be safely moved either by one or two people.

Only try to move an item if this can be done so without straining.

When lifting an item, bend the legs and keep the back straight.

### **Young Volunteers**

While it is beneficial to get young people involved in litter picks, age plays a big part in the ability to recognise and avoid risk. Accordingly, a parent/guardian should supervise those taking part under the age of 18, if a parent/guardian is not taking part with them then they will need to nominate an adult to supervise their children and give their permission for them to take part.

### **Recycling**

Volunteers are not expected to separate recyclable items of litter, but if they are willing to do so this, it would be welcomed. The recyclable items should be placed in yellow bags (where clean and acceptable) and we will take home to recycle.

### **Disclaimer**

Volunteers should not participate in litter picks unless they understand and accept that participation is entirely at their own risk. Volunteers are not working for, or on behalf of, the Parish or Borough Council, therefore the Council will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused because of the actions and omissions of volunteers or this guidance.