



Community Clean-Up Programme

Protect wildlife and the environment by clearing litter

Litter can harm wildlife, pollute soil and waterways, and damage local habitats.

Clearing litter helps prevent plastics and other rubbish from breaking down into microplastics, reduces injury to wildlife, and stops waste being carried into rivers and oceans by wind and rain.

Regular clean-up events also make communities more aware of environmental issues, often leading to less littering and greater care for local green spaces, helping create cleaner, healthier, and more attractive places for both people and nature.

Step 1: Build your team

Just a few motivated volunteers can make a big difference. But if you want to recruit more people you could use social media, community noticeboards, newsletters and local Facebook groups to spread the word.

Top Tip: People are more likely to attend when events are short and well organised. Aim for one to two hours.

Step 2: Choose your area

Start by identifying a location that would benefit from a clean-up.

Focus on areas where everyone will be safe, so avoid busy roads with no verges and with lots of visible litter.



Good locations to consider might include:

- Local park
- Verge on a quiet road
- Riverbank or stream
- A popular walking route

Top Tip: Focus on areas where litter is highly visible. A successful first event helps build enthusiasm and shows immediate results.

Step 3: Contact Your Local Council

Many councils support community litter-picking projects and may even provide litter pickers, rubbish bags and waste disposal or collection after the event for you.

Even if they are unable to support your efforts, it's best practice to let them know what you are doing as they can advise you if there are any restrictions or access requirements, particularly on land they manage. (Or even if there are any existing plans for a litter pick.)

Many councils also have existing volunteer litter picking schemes which you might be able to join.

Step 4: Plan the disposal

Planning ahead for what to do with the litter once you have collected it is important. Even if the council agree to help you dispose of the waste, you will still probably need to arrange a place to leave it (Where it won't be accessible to foxes or other scavengers) or to transport it to a local tip or recycling centre.

If the council are unable to help you should plan where to dispose of it yourselves. Remember, you should only put the litter into bins you have permission to use or which are for public use.

Top Tip: If possible, sorting litter from recycling and non-recyclable waste will reduce what will be sent to landfill.

Step 5: Prepare your equipment

You will need:

- Litter pickers
- Recyclable bin bags
- Gloves
- High-vis vests if collecting on roadsides

You might be able to borrow these from other community groups in your area if the council are unable to supply them.

Why not put a request out on social media for equipment?



Step 6: Give a volunteer briefing

Before starting, give a short safety briefing. You should cover:

- Staying aware of traffic
- Avoiding steep banks and unsafe areas
- Not touching sharp objects
- Reporting hazardous waste
- Washing hands after the event
- How to separate recyclable waste

Children should be supervised by parents or responsible adults.

Top Tip: Never ask volunteers to collect needles, chemicals, asbestos or other potentially dangerous materials.

Report these to the local authority or land owner instead.

Step 7: Start collecting!

For large areas it's worth dividing the space into zones and allocating teams.

As volunteers work through the area, check on them to ensure they are safe, they are separating the recycling from the non-recycling waste correctly and that everyone is having a good time. If volunteers feel well cared for they are more likely to want to help again next time.

Remember to document any dangerous waste so that you can report it to the relevant authorities.

Top Tip: Before-and-after photos are excellent for social media and future funding applications. When you have finished, remember to thank everyone. If you are posting on social media, include how many bags of rubbish you collected and photos.

