



# South Derbyshire Volunteer Litter Heroes Guidance Pack



## Introduction

Individuals and groups acting as volunteer litter heroes' pickers can be exposed to a number of easily avoidable hazards. This guide has been produced to help you organise your event successfully, identify hazards and help keep you and other volunteer litter heroes keep safe.

This guide has been written for volunteers organising litter picks with the help of the Council, but it applies to all volunteer litter pickers in South Derbyshire.

## Volunteer Litter Heroes

Who are Litter Heroes? Volunteers from the local community, businesses, voluntary and public sector organisations coming together to organise and support litter pick events and campaigns that make South Derbyshire a great place to live, visit and invest.

South Derbyshire District Council values the support of Volunteer Litter Heroes helping in reducing the visible presence and impact of litter as well as taking pride in our place, respecting our people and the environment for our future generations.

A little local action can go a long way!

## 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, volunteers under the age of 18 should be supervised by an adult and permission for their participation should be gained from a parent or guardian. In the interest of safeguarding children, adults supervising or working with volunteers under the age of 18 should be Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked.

## Organising your Litter Pick

Planning ahead is vital to your success. Here's a pre-event check list to help you organise your litter pick.

Pre-Event Check List	Notes
Decide where you are going to tidy up. This could be anything from a local landmark to a well-known 'grot spot' or any area that needs a little bit of love and attention.	
Get permission from the landowner. If you are tidying up council-owned land, talk to the council well in advance, as their process for approval might take some time. Visit the location.	
Site safety and inspection. Visit the location and assess any potential safety risks before the day. Use a map to mark these out along with facilities for volunteers, shelters etc.	
Think about the collection and disposal of rubbish. If you want to use the Council make sure you register and contact the Clean Team to arrange a suitable location and time.	



Pre-Event Check List	Notes
Promote your event using social media, posters and press releases. Include location, time and meeting place. Register on the Keep Britain Tidy website <a href="https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/user/register/">https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/user/register/</a> and with the Council.	
Health and safety, make sure you consider the risks and undertake a risk assessment.	
You'll need the right equipment to help you successfully and safely complete your litter pick. Contact the Council to see if they can provide you with a litter pick pack (high vis, litter picks, rubbish bags). Don't forget the first aid kit.	
Insurance cover, make sure you have the necessary public liability insurance in place, further information can be found in the guidance pack.	

## General Site Safety and Inspection

Always use extreme caution when litter picking near roads as there is a risk of being struck by passing vehicles. Roadside litter picking should be restricted to only where there are wide verges or pavements, suitable for pedestrians, and you should always face oncoming traffic. It is essential that volunteers are visible to road users – wear hi-vis clothing and only work in clear daylight. Volunteers should not attempt to clear litter from the carriageway. Any area with a speed limit above 30mph should be avoided due to the increased risks associated with passing vehicles. Spotters should be used to identify and possible hazards whilst people are picking litter.

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 cannot be safely reached with a litter picker, leave it.

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 springtime avoid disturbing animals and birds that may be nesting and in the summertime 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. Have a clear understanding of who the land belongs to prior to planning a litter pick.

The level of risk will vary at each location, so before you start a litter pick, carry out a site inspection and risk assessment so you're fully aware of the risks and other possible hazards. Volunteers have a duty towards themselves, to fellow volunteers and the public to work safely. If there is any doubt about the safety of a site or material, then it should be avoided.

A risk assessment should be completed before the event and any identified risks highlighted to people who take part before they start. Volunteer Litter Heroes Risk Assessment is readily available online [www.southderbyshire.gov.uk](http://www.southderbyshire.gov.uk).



## Collection and Disposal of Litter

For one-off litter pick events / campaigns, where larger quantities of litter are likely to be collected, the Council can supply bags and arrange for collection of the litter and dispose of it after the event. Please register using the online form or email the Clean Team [waste.cleansing@southderbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:waste.cleansing@southderbyshire.gov.uk) to arrange.

Volunteers are not expected to separate recyclables from the litter collected, but if you are willing to do this it is a big help. The recyclable items should be separated into clear plastic bags (where clean and acceptable).

Small amounts of litter collected should be disposed of by the volunteers through their own household waste and recycling collections or they can take the litter to their nearest Waste Recycling Centre (WRC) in South Derbyshire.

## Equipment and Protective Clothing

The following items should be used at all times by volunteer litter pickers:

- Reflective hi-vis bibs to clearly highlight volunteers to traffic and pedestrians.
- Litter picker sticks to avoid direct contact with litter and too much bending over.
- Gloves to reduce direct contact with noxious or dangerous materials.
- Suitable footwear and clothing

The Council has some hi-vis bibs and litter picking sticks it can loan to litter heroes picking groups, subject to availability. Please contact the Clean Team by email [waste.cleansing@southderbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:waste.cleansing@southderbyshire.gov.uk) for more details.

## 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 principles 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.

## Public Liability Insurance

Obtaining public liability insurance is very important and strongly recommended. This will provide cover for your legal liability arising from accidental damage or injury that may occur during the event, including damage or injury to a member of the public or their property. If you are an individual organising a tidy up your current household insurance may cover you for public liability. You will need to check your policy to ensure you are covered. If not, you will need to take out a separate public liability insurance.



## Disclaimer

If the litter pick is being organised or supported by a ward councillor or an officer of the Council, it will be covered by the Council's insurance.

If the litter pick is not organised or supported by the council 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, South Derbyshire District Council, therefore the Council will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of the actions and omissions of volunteers or this guidance.

## What should you have on the day?

In your Volunteer Litter Heroes event pack, you should have:

Risk assessment	
Registration form for volunteers	
Litter Pick Health & Safety (including code of conduct and report it)	
Map of litter pick area including facilities for volunteers and waste disposal	
Event report to inform the Council how you got on	
Safety equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First aid kit</li><li>• Litter picks</li><li>• High vis jackets</li><li>• Gloves</li></ul>	
Rubbish bags	

## On arrival

Make sure everyone has signed in and relevant people have been assigned associated equipment i.e. litter pick, rubbish bags, gloves.

Brief all your volunteers before they start with an introduction. Depending on the type and size of the clean-up, this might include:

- Health & safety risks (identified in your risk assessment).
- Precautions to avoid the identified risks (identified in the safety check list).
- How to use any equipment provided.
- The agreed area or route and clean-up procedures.
- Meeting points, start and finish times.
- Toilets and refreshments (depending on the length of your litter pick).
- First aid arrangements and who is carrying the first aid kits.
- The nearest public telephone or mobile phones in case of emergency

Double check everyone has appropriate sunscreen, clothing, and footwear for the weather and terrain and issued with a vest.

Ask volunteers to make you aware of any medical conditions, medication they need to take or extra support needs.

Ensure there is sufficient supervision for young/vulnerable volunteers.



## Share your success

After your litter pick, share your results with the Council using the event report and if you've registered with Keep Britain Tidy return to your dashboard on their website and report on your results. You'll need: How many volunteers took part. How many bags of litter were collected. What type of litter was collected (plastic bottles, aluminium cans or general waste).

Lastly, don't forget to share your photos on social media using the hashtag #SDLitterHeroes and remember to thank everyone who got involved or supported your litter pick!

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Can I borrow litter picking equipment from the Council?** Yes. The Council has litter pickers and hi-vis clothing available to borrow. Please contact [waste.cleansing@southderbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:waste.cleansing@southderbyshire.gov.uk) if you would like to loan and use this equipment.

**Am I insured by the Council when litter picking at a community organised pick?** No. Volunteer litter pickers are not working for, or on behalf of the Council and are not covered by the Council's insurance. If you are representing an organisation, check that you are covered by the organisation's insurance.

**What is the difference between litter and fly-tipping?** There is no clear definition of the difference between litter and fly-tipping. Litter is generally considered to be waste associated with eating, drinking and smoking, which has been improperly discarded and left by members of the public, or waste that is spilt during business operations. Fly-tipping is controlled waste (household, commercial, industrial or clinical waste) which has been dumped illegally rather than being disposed of correctly. Fly-tipping should not be moved by volunteers.

**Can I leave litter pick bags next to my bin for collection?** No. It is the Council's policy not to accept side waste next to bins, so any bags you leave next to your bin will not be collected. Either put the bags in your bin once it has been emptied or take them to your local Waste Recycling Centre.

**What do I do if I find evidence of where litter may have come from or witness someone dropping litter?** Please report this information to the Council's using the online form <https://www.southderbyshire.gov.uk/our-services/street-care/fly-tipping#How can I report it?>, who will follow up your report, and will take enforcement action depending on the strength of the evidence available.

