



## The Borough of Poole and Poole Enviroteers Presents a Guide for Organising Cleanups

### Helpful Hints and Safety Advice for Litter Pickers

#### **Planning Ahead**

Decide where you would like to do your litter pick. You could clean up and enhance a local landmark, or take on a well known 'black spot' in the borough. Get permission from the landowner for your activities. If you wish to litter pick on Council land you will have to ask permission via contacting [environmentvolunteers@poole.gov.uk](mailto:environmentvolunteers@poole.gov.uk).

Make your litter pick unique and engaging by choosing areas not usually picked or forgotten beauty spots.

#### **Essential Contacts**

Our Environmental Engagement Officer can help you with your litter pick, from finding an area to engaging volunteers in it and promoting it, and they can be contacted on the environment volunteers e-mail address. It is a good idea to advise them of what you are doing whether you require support or not. They can also support you by providing gloves, litter pickers, and litter sacks for your event as well as arranging for the disposal of the waste collected upon completion.

#### **Call for Volunteers**

Try to get as many people, of all ages and abilities, to join in your litter pick. You may already be part of a group, so involve them at the planning stage and make a real team effort.

Look to other groups for support, schools, scouts, environmental groups, and churches, are just a few of the many organisations who could be interested in making an impact on their local environment.

Nearer the event, establish a rallying point where people can meet up on the day. Choose a well-known spot, which will be familiar to everyone.

#### **Publicise Your Event**

Use word of mouth, posters on community notice boards to advertise your event locally, as well as asking to be listed and promoted via Poole Enviroteers by e-mailing [environmentvolunteers@poole.gov.uk](mailto:environmentvolunteers@poole.gov.uk).

Your clean up event is an excellent opportunity for you, your group or organisation to get some publicity.

### **Preparations and Precautions**

Before the event starts, note any particularly littered areas, the siting of a litter collection point and a meeting/information point. Make a note of the nearest toilets and any other useful public amenities. This map can then be used to show where volunteers should be working, the set up for the day and the facilities available.

### **Risk Assessment**

Having chosen a place for your clean up, visit the site and carry out a full risk assessment. This is a careful examination of the possible risks that could cause harm to you or your volunteers. When assessing the risks, look for the following hazards:

- Unidentified cans and canisters, oil drums, poisons, insecticides, clinical waste, other hazardous substances, broken glass, condoms, syringes etc
- Deep or fast flowing water, currents or tides, steep, slippery or unstable banks, sharp rocks, mud holes, derelict buildings, busy roads, electric fences (which are identified by yellow warning signs) etc
- If the area carries too many risks for you and your group choose somewhere else

### **Hazardous Waste**

Make sure everyone is aware of potentially dangerous items, which they should not pick up.

If nasty or dangerous pieces of litter such as unidentified drums, cans, or canisters of chemicals, poisons, or insecticides, or if syringes are spotted at any stage during our litter pick, **do not attempt to remove them yourself**. Make a note of their location and contact The Borough of Poole – Refuse and Cleansing on 01202 261700. Alternatively if the litter pick is taking place “out of hours” (e.g. weekends) contact phone number 0800 506050.

### **Natural Dangers**

Avoid holding your litter pick near potentially dangerous places such as steep or slippery banks, fast flowing water or derelict buildings. Tape can be used to section off any potentially dangerous areas.

Consider the ages of any children involved in your clean up and make sure that a sufficient number of adults are present to supervise. In the case of young children we advise no more than three children to one adult.

Giant Hogweed is an 'injurious weed' can cause harm to people and animals. Great care should be taken when working near this weed and it should not be touched at any time. Seek medical advice if skin comes into contact with the weed and irritation, rashes or blistering occurs. It is characterised by its size and may grow to between 3 and 5 metres in height. Other than in size, it bears a close resemblance to Cow Parsley and Hogweed. Giant Hogweed has a reddish purple stem and spotted leaf stalks, with fine spines that make it appear furry. The leaves may expand to 1.5 metres in width with flower heads commonly 250mm in width.

Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis) is a very rare infection carried in rats urine and can be fatal. The symptoms include high temperature, severe headaches, flu like illness or muscle pains. They will appear three to 19 days after exposure to contaminated water. It must be treated early. This can be treated by antibiotics. People with Leptospirosis should contact a health care provider.

### **Equipment**

Make a list of the necessary equipment and work out who will provide what. Poole Enviroteers can provide black sacks, hoops for these as well as gloves and litter pickers. Other items such as racks, shovels, wheelbarrows and ropes may come in useful.

### **Be Considerate**

If you are working in the country, parks, woodland or open spaces avoid disturbing animals or damaging plants. Keep gates closed and don't clean up natural 'rubbish' such as logs, stones and weeds. They may look untidy but they are home to many animals and birds. Before your clean-up get some advice from an expert, the Borough of Council may be able to help you or Poole's local branch of Wildlife Trust. Make sure that your activities don't interfere with people in the vicinity who are not involved in the litter pick. In particular, tell your volunteers not to go on to other people's property uninvited.

### **Insurance**

Groups that are working in partnership with the Borough of Poole and agreed a site for the clean up are covered by the Borough of Poole's Public Liability insurance cover, provided the event is undertaken following these guidelines.

### **Safety**

Avoiding danger is all-important for you and your participants. Again before the event, survey the area you are tackling, looking for any dangerous pieces of litter such as unidentified cans or canisters, poisons, insecticides, glass, condoms, or syringes.

Before your group begins to litter pick, make sure everyone is aware of the potentially dangerous items which they should not pick up. If these dangerous items

are spotted at any stage, before or during your litter pick, do not attempt to move them yourself. Make a note of their location and inform Environmental Services who will arrange for their safe removal. Contact - 01202 261700, alternatively if the litter pick is taking place "out of hours" (e.g. weekends) contact 0800 506050.

Take particular care of children and make sure they are well supervised at all times. No more than three children to one adult is advisable. Before your clean-up, make sure children are also aware of which items are potentially dangerous and should not be picked up. Warn them not to pick up any items that they are the least bit unsure of. If such items are found, don't let children litter pick in those areas. Don't let children attempt to pick up heavy or bulky items. Ensure they have at least one adult helper for any weightier items.

If you are working along roadsides, rivers or ponds make sure there are responsible people appointed specifically to keep an eye on safety. Do not allow children to wander freely near such areas.

### **First Aid**

It is essential that you have a comprehensive first aid kit at your event and that it is sufficient for the number of volunteers. For larger events you could invite the local branch of the Red Cross or St Johns Ambulance

### **Sensible Clothing**

Advise volunteers well in advance to dress for the occasion. They'll need warm, waterproof clothing and strong, comfortable boots or shoes. Strong hard-wearing gloves are essential and fluorescent items should be worn if working in poor light or at dusk.

### **The Result**

Keep a record of the amount of rubbish you collected. You can do it by sack, weight, or skip load. Make a note of any unusual items you find. Take before and after photographs and share these with Poole Enviroteers.

**This guidance is provided in good faith, we do not however accept responsibility for any problems or any injuries or harm as a result of anything stated herein.**

**Environmental Services  
Borough of Poole  
Newfields Business Park  
Stinsford Road  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH17 0NF  
Telephone: 01202 261700**

