



Volunteer Litter picking

Information/Safety Pack

For many people litter is the most important issue on the local environmental agenda. Volunteer litter picks are a great way to bring communities together. Young and old alike can join forces to show they care about their neighbourhood and want to keep it looking clean and tidy.

Planning your local event

Firstly decide where you would like to litter pick, your immediate local vicinity is a good start but you may want to choose a local landmark or a well-known area such as woodland or a park. Look for support from other local community groups such as environmental groups who will have a shared interest in keeping the local area looking clean and tidy. Decide upon a meeting point; choose a well-known spot that is familiar to everyone.

Health and safety

It is important that your clean up event is carried out as safely as possible. Once you have chosen the area you would like to clean up, visit the site and carry out a risk assessment, there is a risk assessment and guidance included in this pack (page 6). Check for possible risks that could cause harm to you or any volunteers taking part. Beware of dangerous items such as unidentified cans or canisters, oil drums, insecticides, hazardous substances, broken glass, syringes. Natural hazards such as areas of water, steep or slippery slopes or banks, derelict buildings, busy roads and electric fences.

Please complete and sign the risk assessment form on page 6 and return it to Mid Devon District Council prior to your event; this will ensure your group is covered by MDDC public liability insurance.

Personal protective equipment/arranging collection of litter

Mid Devon District Council will provide your group with Hi-Viz vests, litter picking sticks and sacks. These items can be picked up from the Mid Devon District Council Head Office at Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane Tiverton EX16 6PP; they can be pre ordered by telephone on 01884 255255 email customerservices@middevon.gov.uk or by visiting the offices (please note that opening hours are limited with Covid-19 precautions in place - see [website for details](#)). Please make your request for equipment at least three weeks in advance of your event to ensure the equipment is available; there are a limited number of sets and they will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

On the day

- ✓ Once you have your group assembled at the meeting point ensure everyone is familiar with the risk assessment and what to do if any of the risks should arise. It would be a good idea to give each volunteer a copy for reference during the litter pick (see guidance on page 4)
- ✓ Each volunteer will need to add their name to the register on page 10
- ✓ Agree upon a time that all volunteers will return to the meeting point
- ✓ Make sure that you have arrangements in place to contact each other in the event of an emergency or if anyone is not present at the meeting point at the agreed return time
- ✓ Ensure that each volunteer is within sight –hearing distance of one other person at all times during the litter pick
- ✓ If any children are joining in they will need to be under the supervision of an adult at all times; ensure that all supervising adults are aware of this responsibility
- ✓ Once the hard work is done and everyone has returned safely to the meeting point volunteers will need to complete the register on page 10 (please retain this register along with your signed copy of the risk assessment)
- ✓ Place the full litter picking bags at the agreed collection point
- ✓ **Please convey the thanks and appreciation to the volunteers from Mid Devon District Council for the hard work and effort they have put in to help keep the district clean and tidy**

Mid Devon District Council – Risk Assessment for Volunteer Litter Picking Groups

Introduction

This form should be completed by the lead volunteer before the start of any litter pick. Litter picks are generally very safe and it is unlikely that you will encounter any serious hazards or incidents – you will see that the points below are just common sense and are worth considering to ensure your event runs as smoothly and safely as possible.

As the organiser of the litter pick you should ensure that all volunteers know the risks and understand the control measures before clearing any litter. It is sensible to address all volunteers and introduce yourself as the lead volunteer/organiser, so they know who to go to with questions/to report an incident. You should also check that all volunteers know what equipment they must use and what area they may clean up.

Covid-19

Please ensure that social distancing guidelines are adhered to at all times during the initial gathering at your chosen meeting point and during the litter pick itself. If equipment is borrowed from Mid Devon Council it will need to be sanitised before being returned will all Hi-Viz jackets washed and placed in clean plastic bags. Gloves are not provided by Mid Devon District Council but are part of the Personal Protective Equipment that should be worn by participants. Please ensure all participants wash their hands at the beginning and at the end of the litter pick.

Risk Assessment

It is essential a risk assessment is carried out and submitted one week in advance as part of the preparation for any litter picking event carried out in conjunction with Mid Devon District Council; not only as an insurance requirement but to ensure the safety of participants.

Once completed please return the form either by email to customerservices@middevon.gov.uk or post to:-

SS&OS

Mid Devon District Council (Phone 01884 255255)

Phoenix House

Phoenix Lane

Tiverton

Devon EX15 6PP

Please submit the form prior to the Litter picking activity taking place.

Name of Organiser	Date of Litter pick	Contact telephone number	Location of litter pick	Location of bags for collection

Take a register of all the people working at the event, along with contact phone numbers in case there is an emergency. A template has been provided as part of this pack. Agree the finishing time and location. Make a note if anyone is to leave the event early so that you take this into account at the end of the event. At the end of the event check the register to ensure everyone on the event has reported in and that they are ok.

Before starting the litter pick ensure all volunteers:

- ✓ Have the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – e.g. suitable gloves, hi-visibility vest, sensible footwear, weather appropriate clothing, etc.
- ✓ Have the correct equipment – e.g. Litter pickers, plastic bags, dog waste bags, and know how to use the equipment.
- ✓ Consider all the risks and hazards in the work area, e.g. hazardous waste, broken glass, dog waste, vomit, needles, condoms and roads/cycle ways, thorny bushes, low branches, uneven ground, hidden banks, etc.
- ✓ Know the work area and how to; report incidents or hazardous or unidentified waste, where to get first aid, meet on completion, deposit bags of waste.

Risk Assessment Table

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Existing Control Measures	Comments Further Action Required	Controls in place?	
				Yes	No
Highways vehicles, bicycles, plant and machinery	Volunteers being hit by passing vehicles, bicycles, plant or machinery Motorists may be harmed avoiding volunteers if they are impeding the highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *At all times be mindful of your environment and the traffic conditions, pedestrian and vehicular, in which you are working *Work facing traffic where you can be seen at all times away from bends and steep hills *Avoid close proximity to traffic if possible *For roads up to 40mph maintain a minimum distance of 0.5m from the carriageway *No working on or near high speed roads (>40mph) unless working on a wide pavement *No Litter picking to take place on any highway. *Be alert to the potential presence of agricultural machinery *Wear high visibility clothing of the relevant standard if near the highway, footpaths or verges *Be aware of the vehicles around you *Keep a look out and only work during daytime *Children should not work by a road-side 	*Seek medical attention in the event of injury		
Needles	Volunteers coming into contact with sharps may sustain puncture wounds which could result in infection	*Leave alone and report to event organiser who will inform MDDC Customer Services of the location	*Seek medical attention where appropriate		
Broken glass, sharp/rusty edges	Volunteers coming into contact with sharps may sustain cuts which could result in infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Suitable gloves to be worn at all times *Broken glass or other sharp objects should be reported to the organiser who will inform MDDC customer services of the location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Seek medical attention where appropriate *Thoroughly wash any cuts or abrasions as soon as possible, however minor 		

Heavy/awkward to handle rubbish	Volunteers sustaining strained muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Assess the weight of any load before handling. Extreme care to be taken, use good lifting practices *If too heavy to handle e.g.: tyres, car bumpers-leave the object in place and report it to the organiser who will inform MDDC Customer Services * Do not leave sacks of litter or sweepings where they will be a danger. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Stop immediately if suffering any pain or discomfort *Seek medical attention if the ill effects persist 		
Batteries, asbestos and miscellaneous chemicals	Volunteers coming into contact with this hazard may suffer acid / chemical burns or spores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Do not approach or remove any potentially hazardous waste * Report to the organiser who will inform MDDC Customer Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Seek medical attention if exposed to pesticides, insecticides or other chemicals – record any label details 		
Ground conditions	Volunteers may suffer sprains, muscle damage or broken bones if uneven ground causes them to slip or fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Avoid dangerous areas and choose the safest possible route over difficult ground *Instruct volunteers to wear suitable footwear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Thoroughly wash any cuts or abrasions as soon as possible, however minor. *Seek medical attention for any serious cuts, bruises or strains 		
People, lone working	A lone working volunteer may come into contact with aggressive or difficult members of the public If a lone working volunteer finds themselves in difficulty they may be unable to summon assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Be aware of aggressive and difficult people * Withdraw rather than face conflict * Do not work out of sight of others in the group * Lone workers must have mobile phone *Volunteers working alone should be discouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Seek medical attention following any assault/injury *In the unlikely event a volunteer is working alone a buddy system should be used – volunteers to have a mobile phone and check in at the beginning and end of the session 		
Animals – Domestic, wild and farm	Volunteers may be bitten / scratched by domestic animals or contract a disease carried by livestock or ticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Wear appropriate clothing * Beware of loose dogs *Avoid contact with animals. Avoid contact with animal faeces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Seek medical attention as soon as possible after being bitten or scratched *Wash hands immediately after contact with faeces. Avoid touching eyes or mouth 		
	Volunteers coming into contact with rats urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Do not touch dead animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Seek medical attention where appropriate 		

Waterborne diseases	are at risk of contracting Weil's Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cover any cuts or sores with a waterproof plaster before carrying out a litter pick * Avoid getting hands wet in rivers, ponds or canals 	*Thoroughly wash any cuts or abrasions as soon as possible, however minor		
Dog faeces	Volunteers coming into contact with dog or cat faeces are at risk of contracting Toxocara canis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Do not touch dog faeces * Always wear gloves and use a shovel when removing dog faeces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Thoroughly wash your hands *Thoroughly wash any cuts or abrasions as soon as possible, however minor *Seek medical attention where appropriate 		
Cliffs and steep slopes	Volunteers may slip or fall causing sprains, muscle damage and broken bones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Instruct volunteers to stay away from these areas * Avoid picking on or close to the edge of cliffs, steep slopes, etc., and below unstable cliffs and slopes * Take weather conditions and possible weather changes into account * Seek medical treatment in the event of injury 	*Seek medical attention where appropriate		
Adverse weather e.g. Thunder storms	Volunteers may suffer from health conditions as a result of exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cease work in inappropriate conditions * Avoid working in extreme conditions. * Dress for conditions and carry additional clothing * In the event of extreme weather conditions the litter pick should be postponed or abandoned 	*Seek medical attention where appropriate		
Electric fences	Volunteers will be electrocuted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Always assume electric fences are live * Warn volunteers not to touch electric fences 	*Seek medical attention where appropriate		
Irritants, dangerous plants	Volunteers may suffer poisoning, skin irritations or allergic reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Wear the gloves provided * Beware of dangerous plants and possible adverse reactions * Wash thoroughly on completion of such operations 	*Seek medical attention for unusual or suspicious symptoms after contact		

Please enter below any risks specific to the area of the litter pick that are not listed above:

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Existing Control Measures	Comments Further Action Required	Controls in place?	
				Yes	No
Name of Organiser (PRINT) Signature		I confirm that the volunteers taking part in the litter picking event taking place at on..... Will adhere to the practices described in the above risk assessment			

On completion of the Litter Pick ensure:

- ✓ Everyone washes their hands thoroughly as soon as possible after the litter pick and before taking any food or drink

- ✓ Any wounds are redressed after cleaning and disinfecting if there has been any contact with water
- ✓ Volunteers carry out a personal inspection for cuts, grazes, etc.
- ✓ That the area covered is inspected to see if there is any hazardous material still present. If so report to the event organiser who will inform MDDC Customer Services
- ✓ All volunteers have reported back and all equipment is collected back in
- ✓ All rubbish for collection has been left in the arranged pick up site

Thank you for your efforts to help keep Mid Devon clean and tidy

Volunteer Register

Name	Contact Number (If required)	Number of Bags Collected	Equipment/High Viz Returned?	Volunteers reported back at end of event and all ok?
