

How to organise a community litter pick in Dorset

Litter is a growing problem that affects countryside and urban areas alike. In last year alone, an estimated 25 million tonnes of rubbish were dropped in Britain. This litter is more than an eyesore that spoils the environment – it's also a hazard to pets and wild animals. In 2015, 69,000 animals were killed or injured in Britain due to litter.

You can help us combat this problem by organising a community litter pick day. The following notes will give you an overview of how to get involved.

1. Plan the community litter pick

(*Dorset Council Waste Services team can help. See **Contact Details** below.)

- **Decide on where you want to carry out your litter pick**
Contact landowners to make sure you have legal access to this area. Landowners can be the town, district or county council, farmers, or local estate owners;
- **Carry out a full risk assessment of the area**
Have a look at the template produced by Dorset Council (see **Useful information** below) to plan how you can deal with a comprehensive list of hazards;
- **Make a site map**
Make a note of your route and, if possible, identify locations for first aid, toilets, public phones, useful amenities, break areas and so on;
- **Decide when you will do the pick (date and time)**
Allow ample time for preparation and promotion;
- **Decide how you will present the clean-up to your volunteers**
It can be a straightforward litter pick, or you can have some fun by setting a theme or creating a challenge for teams or individuals;
- **Rally your volunteers**
Try to get support from other groups and individuals to make this a community event. You can use a poster to reach a wide range of volunteers;
- **Prepare for the event**
You will need a range of equipment* (see **Useful information** below). Some is available from Dorset Council;
- **Brief the volunteers prior to the event**
Make sure they know where and when to meet, what clothes to wear and what equipment to bring if applicable. Contact Dorset Council for high visibility vests*;
- **Arrange for waste disposal* with Dorset Council**
Liaise directly with Dorset Council to organise waste disposal. They may be able to help with heavy objects;
- **Consider public liability insurance...**
...in case of accidental damage or injury during the event (if organised by a Parish Council or CPRE, insurance may already in place. Please check);
- **Let Dorset Council know if you want publicity for your event***
But whether you want glory or anonymity, please let us know when and where the pick is to be held, and who is involved.

2. The day of the community litter pick

- **Inform and instruct the volunteers**

Identify team leaders and make sure your volunteers know about health and safety risks, who is responsible for first aid, how to use equipment, the route, timings and so on. Provide each volunteer with their high visibility vest;

- **Be considerate**

You are urged not to disturb animals or damage plants. Don't remove 'natural' rubbish like logs, stones and weeds as these can be home to animals. Don't try to release entangled animals - call the RSPCA instead;

- **Don't interfere with people not involved in the litter pick;**

- **Avoid danger**

Make sure all volunteers, particularly children, are aware of what **not** to pick up, such as drug-related litter. Note its location and tell Dorset Council. For other precautions, please refer to the guide produced by ENCAMS (under **Useful information** below).

3. After the event

- **Report the result**

Please note the amount of rubbish collected and let us at Dorset Council know;

- **Try to recycle as much of the rubbish as possible by using the different bags provided.**

Useful information

There are many guides available on how to arrange community litter picks...

- Keep Britain Tidy have information at <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/volunteer/litter-heroes/clean-preparation-and-safety-advice>
- A risk assessment template produced by Dorset Council can be found at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/litter-picks

Contact details

General information on Dorset Council Waste Services and the help we can offer community litter picks is available at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/litter-picks

To get help within your own part of Dorset, please contact one of the following;

Area	Name	E-mail	Telephone
Weymouth & Portland	Mike Haines	mike.haines@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk	01305 225462
West Dorset	Ian Brewer	ian.brewer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk	01305 224880
Purbeck	Robin Hildreth	robin.hildreth@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk	01929 555951
North and East Dorset	Dave Nichols	david.nichols@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk	01202 971390

Please note that different arrangements apply in Bournemouth and Poole. Please contact BCP Council at <https://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/ContactUs/CustomerServices/WhoToCall.aspx>