



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

 **recycle** for West Oxfordshire

# Litter information pack



[www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk)

Litter can be anything from wrappers, cans, bottles, food, plastic bags, cigarette ends, and chewing gum to larger items such as bags of rubbish and abandoned shopping trolleys.

Fly tipping is a bigger offense where larger quantities of waste are illegally dumped. As a result this causes far more damage to the surrounding environment and is dealt with separately to litter.

West Oxfordshire District Council spends around £650,000 each year cleaning streets and paths, which includes emptying bins and picking up litter. The street cleaning team work 364 days a year, which is every day apart from Christmas. They start work at 6.30am, picking up large amounts of litter before it is even seen by the public.

Compared to other districts, West Oxfordshire has low levels of litter and our standards are much higher than the national average. Our aim is to keep it that way. But there is only so much that the District Council can do, which is why we are fortunate that so many people are also taking anti-litter action to keep their parishes and communities clean and tidy.

We are pleased to support these groups, which is why we have designed this pack which outlines practical ways the Council can provide support.

## Why we are tackling litter

- It is unsightly and reduces people's pride in and enjoyment of public areas.
- Some litter is dangerous to wildlife and can suffocate or strangle birds or mammals.
- The cost of cleaning, collecting, and removing often falls to the taxpayer.
- It can often take many years to degrade, for example:
  - Plastic bottles can last indefinitely, and plastic dropped in a field today could still be there in the next millennium.
  - Aluminium litter such as drinks cans last from 80 to 100 years, as do nappies.
  - Plastic bags given away free by supermarkets last between 10 and 20 years.
  - Cigarette butts, orange peel, banana skins and apple cores can last up to two years.

## Practical ways the Council can help

As part of our services we offer you:

- Loan of litter picking equipment (gloves, litter grabbers, bags, hi visibility tabards)
- Waste collection afterwards
- Free car litter bags
- Details of educational awareness events

More information on each of these is in this document.

## What the law says

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 gives enforcement powers to the council to deal with littering offences and states;

- Littering is an offence and litterers can be issued with a £80 fixed penalty notice.
- If not paid within 28 days they can be taken to court and fined up to £2,500.
- Schools are legally responsible for clearing the litter and refuse from their own grounds but have no responsibility for clearing the litter outside their grounds.
- If a piece of private land is littered, the owner is responsible for clearing the litter.

## Council's responsibility to litter

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to remove litter and fly tipping from public land, including, streets, roadside verges and parks.

Some areas, such as local towns, will have someone litter picking regularly, for other more remote areas we do not provide a regular service and the land is cleaned on request.

You can make a big difference just by reporting fly tipping and heavily littered areas to the council.

## Enforcement rights

West Oxfordshire District Council has the power to issue Litter Clearing Notices in areas which have been affected by litter or refuse to the detriment of the surrounding area. It is an offence not to comply with a notice issued and the Council can specify the standard in which the land needs to be cleaned and kept to.

It is an offence to, drop, and leave litter. The offence applies to all outdoor places, including private land and land covered by water. A person found guilty can be issued with a £80 fixed penalty notice. If this is not paid within 28 days, they can be fined up to £2,500 in court.

Members of the public can make a complaint to the magistrate's court against areas affected by high levels of litter. If the court agrees a complaint is reasonable, then a 'Litter Abatement Order' may be issued requiring the person complained against to clear or clean the land.

There is also the 'Litter Abatement Notice' which the council can issue specifying either, or both, of the following:

- A requirement for the litter or refuse to be cleared within a certain time.
- A prohibition on permitting the land to become defaced by litter or refuse.

Failure to comply can lead to a £2,500 fine and an additional £125 a day for each day the offence continues.

To report a litter problem visit: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/litter](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/litter) or call Street Scene on 01993 861020.

The Council's Environmental Enforcement Team investigates offences of fly tipping. Offenders responsible for these offences can be prosecuted at court for which the maximum penalty is a £50,000 fine and up to 5 years imprisonment.

Any information on the identity of fly tippers can be passed to the team on 01993 861060.

## Organising a litter pick

As well as improving your local environment, a community litter pick can be a great social activity. If you want to organise a litter pick the council will be happy to lend the equipment for up to ten people to join in. To help you get started here is some advice for arranging an event.

### Before the event:

- Choose an area to pick and get permission
- Choose a day and time
- Invite participants
- Contact the council ([www.westoxon.gov.uk/litter](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/litter) or 01993 861020) who can provide the following equipment for up to ten people:
  - Gloves
  - Litter grabbers
  - Bags
  - Hi visibility tabards
- Make arrangements with the Council to have bags taken away after the event.

- Complete a risk assessment and give copies of this once completed to all attendees beforehand along with a safety check list. A sample is shown on page 5.
- Decide how you will spread across your area eg in groups, all together
- Think about refreshments and toilet facilities
- Check you have a first aider.

We have provided a sample risk assessment for you to use as a basis for your own assessment. For more information about safety please visit [www.thebigtidyup.org](http://www.thebigtidyup.org) giving tips and advice on what precautions need to be taken as well as how to write a risk assessment. Please be careful about what you pick up and control any activities children undertake.

### **On the day:**

Before starting the litter pick:

- Go through health and safety issues
- Introduce the first aider
- Demonstrate how to use the equipment
- Decide on meeting points and timings
- Tell everyone where to put their full bags
- Check that everyone is wearing sensible footwear and appropriate clothing

### **After the event:**

Ensure all bags have been collected either by you or by the council, if pre arranged.

### **Providing car litter bags**

A Keep Britain Tidy Campaign study found that 20% of the population admitted to dropping car litter and found one of the main excuses for dropping litter was because they had no bin in their car.

Because of this, car litter bags are available from the council free of charge. You can pick up a car litter bag from the Council's Town Centre Shop in Witney or The Guildhall in Chipping Norton. Alternatively, our waste and recycling advisors will have supplies at their town centre roadshows.

### **The Wild Waste Show**

The Wild Waste show is run by the Earth Trust (formerly known as the Northmoor trust) with the support of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP).

It is a free show, run for schools and community events aimed at raising awareness of local issues caused by our 'throwaway' society. The bus is fully equipped for running interactive workshops for all primary age pupils with the aid of two experienced education officers.

The bus can be booked by using the contact form at <http://www.earthtrust.org.uk/Wildwasteshow> or by calling 01865 407 792.

The bus is sometimes booked up months in advance. If they are fully booked, the Earth trust can provide outreach visits. These involve an education officer visiting the school or eco group and providing workshops or assemblies to cover all areas of recycling and sustainability. Outreach officers can also arrange visits to landfill sites to show where waste goes. These visits are suitable for both primary and secondary aged pupils. Details of this are available at <http://www.earthtrust.org.uk/>

■ *Pictured: Waste collected after a litter pick at Madley Park, Witney.*





### Example of litter picking risk assessment form

Location Throughout the District but run by local groups.....  
 Date 18.01.2011.....  
 Undertaken by Harriet Perkins .....

<b>Description of activity:</b> Litter picking.		
<b>Names and job roles of those at risk:</b> All volunteers.		
<b>Hazards:</b>		<b>Risk rating:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Irritation caused by dust getting into eyes, nose, mouth etc.</li> <li>2. Back or neck injures from manual handling</li> <li>3. Burns etc from exposure to sun</li> <li>4. Uneven ground and items on ground leading to trips / slips</li> <li>5. Collision with traffic or pedestrians</li> <li>6. Contamination from waste eg needles, dog mess, broken glass</li> <li>7. Attack from dogs</li> <li>8. Slips caused by ice/snow</li> <li>9. Hit by falling debris when picking litter</li> </ol>		<p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p>
<b>Existing controls:</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do not collect large or heavy items or items above shoulder height.</li> <li>2. Inspect area before work to assess and remove major trip hazards.</li> <li>3. Short breaks recommended when working in cold or hot weather for extended periods.</li> <li>4. Wear sensible clothing eg sturdy boots, high vis jacket, warm clothing, gloves, hats as necessary.</li> <li>5. Try not to use hands to pick up litter; use bags or litter pickers.</li> <li>6. Be careful when picking up sharp or messy items, always use the appropriate equipment.</li> <li>7. Do not litter pick on high speed roads.</li> <li>8. Keep away from the kerb and whenever possible work facing towards the traffic.</li> <li>9. Ensure there is a designated first aider and there is a meeting point which everyone is aware of.</li> </ol>		
<b>Further risk reduction actions:</b>	Action date	Action by
	Provide a sketch of the area, any areas to avoid, a meeting point and any other necessary facilities eg toilets, refreshments, first aid.	
Communicated to those at risk		