



# CAMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

District of South Cambridgeshire

## GUIDANCE FOR VOLUNTEER LITTER PICKERS

### Introduction

Individuals and groups acting as volunteer litter pickers can be exposed to a number of easily avoidable hazards. This guidance has been produced to help volunteers identify these hazards, making their involvement safe and enjoyable, and should be followed by all volunteers. While this guidance has been written primarily for volunteers organising litter picks with the assistance of the Council, the contents are applicable to all volunteer litter pickers in Cambourne.

To contact the Council about any of the items raised in this guidance, please call 01954 714403 or email [clerk@cambourneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@cambourneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### Protective Clothing and Equipment

The following items should be used at all times by volunteers undertaking litter picks:

- **Reflective hi-visibility waistcoats** to clearly highlight volunteers to traffic and pedestrians.
- **Litter pickers** to avoid direct contact with litter and repetitive bending.
- **Gloves** to minimise contact with and noxious or dangerous materials.
- **Suitable footwear and clothing**

Reflective hi-visibility waistcoats, gloves and litter pickers can be provided by the Council, subject to budgetary provision and availability.

### Noxious and Dangerous Materials

The following materials may be encountered during litter picks and should be treated with caution:

**Broken glass** – remove using a litter picker or a brush and shovel, avoiding contact by hand, and dispose of in a sturdy container.

**Drug related litter/hypodermics** – these should not be moved under any circumstance.

Note the location and report to the District Council for specialist removal.

**Suspect materials and fly tipping** – items that are possibly dangerous such as unknown liquids in containers, building materials, asbestos, or fly tipping should not be moved by volunteers. Note the location and report to the Council for specialist removal.

If there is any doubt about an item, leave it, and let the Council know.

### General Site Safety and Inspection

Litter picking of areas beside roads should be carried out with extreme caution, due to the risk of being struck by vehicles. Litter picking should be restricted to only where the speed limit is less than 30mph and there are wide verges or pavements, suitable for pedestrians,

and should be carried out facing oncoming traffic. It is essential that volunteers are visible to road users, for that reason, hi-visibility waistcoats must be worn and litter picks should only take place in clear daylight. Volunteers should not attempt to clear litter from the carriageway.

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 spring time avoid disturbing animals and birds that may be nesting and in the summer time 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.

The level of risk will vary at each location, so prior to commencing a litter pick, it is recommended that a visual site inspection and risk assessment is carried out to establish the above risks and to identify and note other possible hazards. Volunteers have a duty towards themselves, 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.

### **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.

### **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 checked.

### **Collection and Disposal of Litter**

Volunteers are can will be supplied with bags and it is environmentally friendly to re-use these bags.

Where possible, litter collected should be disposed of by volunteers through their own weekly refuse/recycling collections. If this is not possible, then volunteers are asked to take the litter to an agreed location for collection.

Volunteers are not expected to separate recyclable items of litter, but if they are willing to do so this, it would be welcomed. The recyclable items should be added to the volunteers' blue bin (where clean and acceptable) or taken to their nearest recycling point.

Please contact the Parish Office 01954 714403 or email [clerk@cambourneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@cambourneparishcouncil.gov.uk) to arrange supply of bags.

### **Disclaimer**

Volunteers should not participate in litter picks unless they understand and accept that **participation is entirely at their own risk**, unless they confirm with the Parish Council their intention to carry out voluntary work, location of pick, adhere to the Guidelines and complete a Risk Assessment. 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.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### ***Can I borrow litter picking equipment from the Council?***

Yes. The Council has litter pickers, gloves and hi-visibility waistcoats available for residents and organisations to borrow. Please contact the Council on 01954 714403 or email [clerk@cambourneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@cambourneparishcouncil.gov.uk) if you would like to use this equipment.

#### ***Am I insured by the Council when litter picking?***

Yes. Volunteer litter pickers are working for, or on behalf of, Cambourne Parish Council, therefore you are covered by the Council's insurance. This is subject to volunteers seeking approval from Cambourne Parish Council, following this guidance and completing a risk assessment. 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 black bin for collection?***

No. It is the District Council's policy not to accept side waste next to black 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 a location for collection agreed with the Parish Council.

#### ***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 District Council's Environmental Health section, who will follow up your report, and will take enforcement action depending on the strength of the evidence available.

#### ***Can I get paid to work for the Council as a litter picker?***

No. This is purely a voluntary arrangement to enhance the service provided by the Parish Council in your area.