

Wethersfield Parish Council Litter picking risk assessment

01-Apr-25

Potential risks

There are a number of risks associated with litter picking.

Potential risks associated with litter picking

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Activity risk rating (no controls)	Control measures already in place	Risk rating with control measures
Manual handling	Volunteer/workers	High	Litter picker sticks and bag hoops provided to avoid bending and ease debris transferral Volunteers to be aware to lift and move items by using their leg muscles to bend – not their backs!	Low
Carrying bags, moving bins, moving large and heavy objects, reaching, bending and twisting	Musculoskeletal issues from over exertion		Regular breaks are recommended and can be taken at anytime Volunteers are made aware to wear suitable footwear that have good tread such as hiking boots or study trainers Volunteers are made aware not to lift or move anything above their own capability. Report any issues such as moving heavy hazardous items to us. Volunteers are aware to only collect litter that can be transferred easily into black bags	
Slips, trips and falls	Volunteer/Workers	High	Volunteers should stay within the pathway boundary and not to venture into banked up areas Volunteers are made aware to wear suitable footwear that have good tread such as hiking boots or study trainers – no open toed shoes	Low
Uneven or slippery ground surfaces, steep banks, shrubs, brambles, tree branches, debris, and dark areas	Head injuries, fractures, dislocations, sprains, cuts and bruises		Volunteers to be aware of the surface they are walking on and the current weather conditions Litter picking should only take place during daylight hours	
Adverse weather	Volunteer workers	High	Volunteers should be aware of the local weather reports and assess if it is suitable to carry out the litter picking. Volunteer to be aware of changing weather conditions during their litter pick Do not litter pick in extreme weather	Low
Heavy rain – flood, deep puddles or fast flowing water	Head injuries, fractures, dislocations, sprains, cuts and bruises, fatigue, dehydration, sun burn		Clothing worn should be appropriate to the weather conditions i.e. sun hat and sun screen during hot weather, waterproof and warm clothing in cold weather	
Ice/snow – difficult walking conditions			Regular breaks are recommended	
High winds – trees to bend/break				

Extreme heat – over exposure to UV rays

Biological hazards	Volunteer workers	High	Suitable clothing and sturdy footwear to be worn at all times Use litter pickers at all times – do not use hands Volunteers are recommended to use gloves of at least EN388 standard to ensure they are puncture and tear resistant. Any existing cuts/grazes should be covered with surgical tape or waterproof plaster before starting activity Do not touch any unidentified and potentially hazardous waste and report it. Be aware of personal hygiene and wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking, going to the toilet and handling children. Do not touch your own face prior to washing your hands	Low
Dirty water, faeces, vomit, used condoms, used syringes	Infections and diseases			
Sharp objects	Volunteer workers	High	Suitable clothing and sturdy footwear to be worn at all times Volunteers are recommended to wear gloves of at least standard EN388 and EN374 protect themselves against micro-organisms and be adequately puncture and tear resistant Use litter pickers at all times – do not use hands Do not touch any sharp objects and report it to us online.	Low
Broken glass, syringes, nails, cans sharp twigs	Cuts and abrasions			
Contaminated waste	Volunteer workers	Medium	Do not handle any can, canister, oil drum, poisons, insecticides, clinical waste, hazardous substances, dead animals, broken glass, condoms, syringes, needles or sharp objects – report it to us. Suitable clothing and sturdy footwear to be worn at all times Be aware of personal hygiene and wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking, going to the toilet and handling children. Do not touch your own face prior to washing your hands	Low
Litter contaminated by hazardous substances	Chemical burns, skin irritation, sickness, diarrhoea, infections and diseases			
Collisions	Volunteer workers	Medium	Volunteers are advised to be aware of their surroundings and be considerate of other using the route and look before making abrupt changes in direction Follow the highway code at all times	Low
Vehicles, cyclists, joggers, dogs, other pedestrians	Head injuries, fractures, dislocations, sprains, cuts and bruises		Don't work on the roadside if the speed limit is 40mph or over Don't litter pick on the highway, roundabout, central reservation or in the road	
Lone working	Volunteer workers	Low	Lone working is not recommended, minimum of 2 persons at any one time	Low

			Fully charged mobile phone to be carried at all times by volunteers
Violence/abuse	Stress		Ensure you inform someone of your whereabouts when out litter picking and an agreed timescale Litter picking should only be carried out during daylight hours Anyone under the age of 16 needs to be supervised by an appropriate adult.
Undisclosed health issues:	Volunteer workers	Low	Volunteers who are aware they have underlying health issues should ensure they protect themselves sufficiently during the activity bearing in mind the environment they will be surrounded by It would be prudent to inform a friend that will be with you of any health issues prior to starting the litter pick
Diabetes, epilepsy, hay fever and adverse reactions to stings, bites, nettles	Stress, ill health and allergies		Carry appropriate equipment and medication if required Do not approach any domestic pets unless agreed by the owner. Try not to disturb any wildlife that you may come across Be aware of your nearest defibrillator - You can see these at www.defibfinder.uk Consider taking a first aid kit
Watercourses	Volunteers and rescuers		Don't enter any rivers, ponds, lake or canals. River banks can be steep and unstable Do not enter into floodwater or pick litter from floodwater as it may be contaminated.
	Drowning, waterborne illnesses		