

**REPORT TO PELSALL & RUSHALL
LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP
12TH AUGUST 2004**

SUMMER CLEAN UP

Purpose:

To outline proposals for the Council to support Local Neighbourhood Partnerships who wish to organise a Summer Clean Up of one area of poor quality within the Neighbourhood. The Council will provide litter picks, refuse sacks and gloves and will dispose of the litter after the event. Officers will also provide some support on the day, including brief training in the use of the equipment provided and support with the provision of publicity.

Resource and Legal Considerations:

The Local Neighbourhood Partnership is advised to seek advice from the Council on issues of land ownership before committing to undertaking a Summer Clean Up of their chosen site.

The Council's assistance, as detailed in paragraph 3.3 will be funded from within existing budgets.

Citizen Impact

The clean up of local areas and involvement of residents will have a positive impact on the cleanliness of the neighbourhood.

Environment Impact

The environment will benefit from the removal of litter and other wastes, which can be unsightly and potentially dangerous. The Council will attempt to recover any recyclable material when disposing of the waste collected.

Performance Management and Risk Management Issues

The Council's Public Liability Insurance will cover the Summer Clean Up event.

Equality Implications

Summer Clean Ups are open to all sections of the community. The LNP's are encouraged to ensure under-represented groups are engaged in the activity.

Consultation

The Council is consulting with residents via LNP's to establish which areas of poorer quality are priorities to the local community.

Links to Vision 2008:

Summer Clean Ups organised by Local Neighbourhood Partnerships would contribute to the Vision of ensuring a clean and green borough, making Walsall a healthy and caring place and encouraging everyone to feel proud of Walsall.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The quality of our environment is essential to the health and well-being of our community and this is reflected in the Council's Vision. It is widely recognised that it is unlikely that long term sustainable improvements can be made to some of our poorer quality areas, unless we can change the behaviour of those littering these spaces and, ideally, unless the whole community is involved. When generations of families, groups of neighbours, friends and children all work alongside each other to improve their small environment, the sense of achievement, ownership and pride endeared can be far more effective in preventing the deterioration of the area than any formal enforcement measures could ever be. The Council recognises that it is challenging to communicate this message effectively at local level, and needs LNP's to support the Council in taking pro-active leadership to start taking pride in our streets.

2.0 The LNP's Role

2.1 Walsall Council believes that Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNP's) will play a major role in helping the people of Walsall to achieve the Council's Vision for the borough of Walsall. In recognition of the Partnerships' role within the communities they will serve, the Council is keen to encourage the Partnerships to take ownership of their neighbourhoods and be instrumental in shaping their environment and communities for the benefit of all.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that each LNP identify one area within their neighbourhood that they consider would not only benefit from a Summer Clean Up, but would have the potential to afterwards be championed by the LNP and the local community, so that the initial hard work would not go to waste. By championing an area in this way, the LNP would quickly establish itself as an effective force within the area it serves.

3.2 In order to organise an effective Summer Clean Up, it is recommended that the LNP agree to secure the support of appropriate elected Members, along with enthusiastic members of the community, including local schools.

3.3 The Council wishes to be actively involved in Summer Clean Ups, in terms of:

- Removing and disposing of the waste material collected
- Providing hand held litter pickers, so that volunteers can participate safely
- Providing gloves so that volunteers can participate safely
- The Council's Communications Unit being on hand to offer advice and guidance on publicity in advance of the event, and positive interest from the local press
- Receiving and commenting upon a completed risk assessment
- Providing two Grounds and Street Cleansing workers to give practical assistance at the event
- Providing general guidance on organising a Community Clean Up (Appendix 1)

It is recommended that if the LNP endorses a Summer Clean Up, the Council will be called upon to work in partnership with the LNP, as detailed above.

General guidance on organising a clean up.

The following guidelines to planning a successful event are largely drawn from suggestions made by ENCAMS.

1.0 Planning Ahead

- Identify your chosen site and ensure you have the permission of the landowner.
- Think of ways to make your event as much fun as possible.
- Consider having a theme or setting a challenge.
- Decide whether refreshments should be provided.
- Choose a well known spot as a rallying point for volunteers.
- Undertake a risk assessment of the clean up site and ask the Council for advice when you have completed the assessment. Check for hazards such as: broken glass, syringes, condoms, unidentified cans or canisters, oil drums, derelict buildings and busy roads. If the site carries too many risks, choose somewhere else.

2.0 The Clean Up Crew

- Approach local residents either by leafleting, calling at homes, or through residents' groups.
- Put up posters in local shops, libraries, community and leisure centres, schools and on church notice boards.
- Send out a press release to the local media calling for volunteers well in advance of the event, with details of whom to contact and how people can be involved.

3.0 Equipment and Preparation

- As well as refuse sacks, clean up equipment could include litter pickers, gloves (waterproof or heavy duty), wheelbarrows, rakes and shovels.
- Consider having a first aid kit and anti-bacterial wipes. Remember to let your volunteers know who the first aider is.
- If your chosen clean up site is likely to house hypodermic needles or other drugs related litter, make sure you have a contact number for the Council who will provide help. It is not advised that volunteers remove this kind of material.
- Seek advice from the Council in advance if the clean up site contains heavy objects, such as abandoned cars.
- Make a list of useful equipment and work out who will provide what. Some volunteers may be able to provide their own equipment.
- The Council may be able to loan certain items for one off events. For scheduled regular clean ups, the group may wish to consider purchasing its own equipment. ENCAMS refers to the Helping Hand Company (01531 635678) as being a good place to go for information.
- It might be useful to make a sketch plan of the area to be tackled. The plan could include details of where the litter collection points will be, where the first aid point will be. It may also be advisable to note the location of any nearby public amenities such as pay phones, car parks, bus stops and toilets. You might also notes places of shelter in case of rain.
- Take a camera to photograph the site before, during and after the clean up, so that there is a lasting record of what has been achieved.

4.0 Informing, Instructing and Organising

- Prepare a safety checklist to hand out to volunteers on the day, to inform them of any health and safety risks, and what precautions have been undertaken to protect against these risks.
- Inform volunteers how to use any equipment provided.
- Inform volunteers of the agreed area or route and event procedures.
- Ensure all volunteers know where and at what time to meet and what the finishing time will be.
- Advise volunteers in advance of what they should wear on the day. Strong, comfortable boots or shoes will be needed and depending on the weather, waterproof clothing might be appropriate. Gloves are essential if litter picking by hand. Fluorescent armbands or clothing should be worn if working in poor light or anywhere near traffic.
- Advise volunteers of any facilities such as toilets, refreshments, the nearest telephone and first aid arrangements.
- Arrange collection points for any items which can be recycled.

5.0 Publicity

- Contact local newspapers and perhaps radio and TV stations if you are planning a large scale event. Let them know at least one week in advance of the event. It's a good idea to contact them the day before the event to remind them.
- The date and timing of your event has to suit the volunteers, but if possible, organise your event at a convenient time for the media. Photo calls in the morning are preferable so deadlines can be met for the evening news.
- Provide the media with an interesting angle to ensure your event gets coverage. Be sure to let them know:
 - Who is taking part
 - When the event is taking place
 - Where you are cleaning up
 - Why you chose this location
 - What is interesting or unique about your event
 - How you are going to do your clean up
- Don't be disheartened if you don't get coverage. On the day breaking news about major incidents may take precedence over yours.
- The main thing is to ensure the volunteers have fun. Media coverage is a bonus.
- The Council's Communications Team can provide help in producing a news release.

6.0 Sponsorship and Funding

- You could approach local companies to see if they will help in providing equipment. Once the area has been cleaned up, maybe a local company would consider sponsoring a litter bin with their name on it for the site. You would need to liaise with the Council about this.
- Local fast food outlets, shops, pubs or restaurants could be approached to donate refreshments on the day.
- Fundraising events could be organised to help fund future clean ups. These could include:
 - Aluminium can collection
 - A car boot sale
 - An environmental fair

- An auction or jumble sale

7.0 Be Considerate

- If you are working in parks, woodland or public open spaces, avoid disturbing animals and damaging plants.
- Don't clean up natural 'rubbish' such as logs, stones and weeds that may look untidy but are home to animals or birds.
- Make sure the event doesn't interfere with people in the vicinity who are not involved. In particular, advise volunteers not to go on to other people's property.

8.0 Avoid Danger

- Make sure everyone is aware of potentially dangerous items that they should not pick up.
- Make a note of the location of any dangerous pieces of litter such as syringes, unidentified drums, cans and canisters of chemicals and ask the Council to help.
- Line pins and tapes can be used to section off any potentially dangerous areas, to warn all volunteers.
- Avoid choosing a site with natural dangers such as very slippery or steep slopes, fast flowing water or derelict buildings.
- Take particular care of children and don't attempt to do too much.
- Consider the ages of any participating children and make sure that a sufficient number of adults are present to supervise. In the case of young children, ENCAMS advises a maximum ratio of four children to one adult.
- Before the clean up, make sure children are made aware of which items might be potentially dangerous and should not be touched. Tell them to leave alone any item that they are the least bit unsure about.
- Be aware that children may not heed warnings and will require supervision.
- If you are working near roads, canals, rivers or ponds, consider designating a number of adults to specifically keep an eye on safety. Don't allow children near such areas.
- Only expect children to do a one hour stint. If only adults are involved, plan rest breaks.
- Be realistic about what you hope to achieve. Two to three hours of litter picking is usually enough unless you're extremely dedicated.