

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL**Leisure & Amenities Committee****Group Litter Picking****1. Information**

- 1.1 The West Swindon Parish Council office contacted all volunteers on 17 March 2020, reiterating the latest Government guidance around Covid-19, stating that unnecessary social contact should be avoided. Many individuals and all organised groups halted their litter picking efforts immediately.
- 1.2 Over the last couple of months, some individuals have restarted their litter picking activity, no groups have restarted their activity.
- 1.3 Litter is now becoming an increasing problem around West Swindon, particularly in open spaces and close to fast food outlets.
- 1.4 Some residents from Freshbrook have expressed an interest in getting together and doing a group litter pick.
- 1.5 As at 03 June 2020, the current Government Guidance is to maintain at least a 2 metre distance from people outside of your household, and to meet in groups of no more than 6 other people at any one time. The Guidance may be open to interpretation, however the primary message is as follows:

Stay alert

We can all help control the virus if we all stay alert. This means you must:

- stay at home as much as possible
- work from home if you can
- limit contact with other people
- keep your distance if you go out (2 metres apart where possible)
- wash your hands regularly

Do not leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms.

- 1.6 A strict interpretation of this would suggest that encouraging volunteers to resume an activity outside of their home, may not be in the spirit of the guidance. However, alongside this message, other lockdown measures are relaxing. The public is advised that providing they observe social distancing, they can meet in groups of up to 6 with people from another household, non essential retail environments will be open (15 June), and people can exercise outdoors as often as they choose.

- 1.7 A review of the available Guidance for a Covid secure environment, indicates that the Parish Council could resume outdoor volunteering. There is no specific Government Guidance that covers this type of volunteering, however the Risk Assessment for outdoor volunteering has been updated (Appendix A) and takes into account government guidance set out for sports activities, outdoor employment and the public generally.
- 1.8 Alongside, adhering to Guidance, there are practical restrictions. Current access to the Parish litter picking equipment stored at the Link Centre is limited as access is by prior arrangement, however it can be done. Arrangements are being made to transfer the litter picking equipment to the mess room to improve our access.
- 1.9 Given the complexity of managing group activity safely, the Council could consider facilitating single or single household activity only with loan of equipment to volunteers on an individual basis. This would allow more participants but would reduce risks associated with groups/gathering. The risk may be that people are not seeking to do this as a long term commitment and kit could be allocated where it is not put to the best use.
- 1.10 If Councillors wish to facilitate small group activity, the following would need to be considered and resolved
- participants would need to sign up to an updated risk assessment (see attached)
 - all participants should be encouraged to wear a face covering and use gloves
 - groups should not be in excess of six people from different household, this reduced group size would need to be adhered to for risks to be minimised
 - staff are working remotely with limited access to equipment so collection and return of equipment will be by arrangement
 - sanitation of litter picking equipment by the Parish Office in between uses will need to be considered e.g. agreed delays between loans of equipment

2. Recommendation:

- 2.1 That the Parish Council facilitates individual participation and reissues the updated risk assessment to all registered volunteers.
- 2.2. That this Committee considers the conditions and timing required in order to resume group litter picks.

Leanne Curtis
Assistant Clerk