



Aberdeenshire Litter Initiative (ALi) **-a voluntary initiative to tackle litter and littering across Aberdeenshire.**

Introduction

The **Aberdeenshire Litter Initiative** is a Community based partnership of like-minded individuals, organisations and businesses that have concern for the quality of their local environment. Promoted initially by Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum (AEF) with the support and encouragement of Keep Scotland Beautiful and Aberdeenshire Council it is hoped that the Initiative will grow and evolve by promoting care for the environment and civic pride in the communities the participants live in. Initially however, it will focus on volunteers who agree to ‘Adopt-a-Street’ (or part of it) to take positive action to help keep it litter free.

We are all fortunate to live in an area of outstanding beauty and high environmental quality where the presence of litter is even more offensive, is a danger, a health hazard and detracts both visitors and inward investment.

Aberdeenshire Council as Principal Litter Authority for the area have additional responsibilities in respect of Community Wellbeing. The Council have agreed to join and provide support from within existing budgetary provision. **ALi** fits well with the Council’s lead responsibilities in respect of promoting community partnership and with the concept of Community Wellbeing for cleaner, safer, healthier communities

On the basis of the Scottish Government encouragement to ‘Do a little change a Lot’, the initiative proposes to start in a modest way by replicating the ‘**Adopt a Street**’ concept from N. America. In this, volunteers commit to clearing an area of litter at a time and frequency that suits them.

While it is appreciated that the Council have a duty to clear litter, it is not reasonable to expect them to be in every street, every day. To do so would have substantial implications for increases in Council tax to pay for it. The volunteers are in their own local area with a greater frequency and when an area is clean, there is more of a disincentive to dropping litter. **ALi** only involves litter. The Council will still carry out routine street sweeping duties.

The action of the volunteers will be noticed by others and hopefully will encourage them to participate and hopefully to stop dropping litter. The use of Hi Viz safety vests with the **ALi** logo will also help in this regard.

AEF is aware that there are numerous organisations in the wider community and individuals that already clear areas of litter in an unsung way. **ALi** does not propose to change any aspect of their current efforts but to encourage, support and recognise them in a tangible way.

The Forum has received a number of enquiries from interested persons and groups. It is hoped that once underway, **ALi** will cause a groundswell of civic pride from like-minded people who perhaps only need a little encouragement and support, to feel empowered to act.

The Basic Approach

Volunteers will be offered a high visibility vest and a litter picker. These are not compulsory. They will also be provided with guidelines for the safe handling of litter and, in particular, what not to pick up and who to contact within Aberdeenshire Council to deal with exceptional items. **ALi** volunteers will be asked to sign a disclaimer which clarifies that they take part at their own risk. Unless a volunteer is a recorded member of the scheme, they will not be considered part of it. They do not have to commit to collecting litter at any specific interval. Nor will the scheme be in any way 'policed'. The volunteer is free to pick up the litter at a frequency and time that is convenient to them.

The Litter

Volunteers will be asked to re-use supermarket bags, or similar, to collect the litter. This is for three reasons. It does not involve additional costs to supply bags. It is environmentally friendly to re-use such bags and it ensures that the volumes of litter collected are manageable to handle.

Volunteers are **actively encouraged** to separate out recyclable items. If they are willing to do so, this would be most welcome but it is not a *requirement* of the scheme.

Volunteers will be asked to dispose of the litter through their own fortnightly refuse collections – whether this is a wheeled bin collection or, in some cases, black bags. It is fully recognised that not everyone has available space in their wheeled bin for additional waste and, as a result, Aberdeenshire Council has agreed to provide a second wheeled bin and /or recycling box to participating households if required. In the event that a second bin is not a desirable option for a household, then the volunteer would be asked to take the litter to the nearest Household Waste Recycling and Disposal Centre.

ALi is grateful to Aberdeenshire Council for providing the Litter Picking Kits (Picker and Hi Viz vest) and to the Area Committees of the Council for giving grants from their Area Top-Up budget to cover postage of kits to volunteers within their areas. This is the most environmentally sound and economic way of delivering kits to those parts of Aberdeenshire.

Interested individuals and groups seeking more information or wishing to join **ALi** should contact George Niblock on 01467 621902 or by email to ALi@niblockenvironmental.com

Visit our website at www.green-butterfly.org.uk

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