

SGOIL AN IOCHDAIR AGUS A'CHOIMHEARSNACHD

HOW TO RUN A COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP

We ran a community clean up this year in Iochdar. The best thing we did was to get help from the council. Here are the steps we took and lessons that we learned, all in one place.

PLANNING

- We decided which day to hold the clean-up about a month in advance. We picked a day in June, but May would have been better. Any day from the start of the Easter Break to the end of May is good, because the weather is slightly better and the grass is not too long.
- We picked a Sunday afternoon. Saturday afternoon would have been OK as well. A 2pm start worked well.
- We contacted Mairead MacNab about a month in advance to tell her what we were doing. (m.macnab@cne-siar.gov.uk). You could write to her c/o Waste transfer station, Market Stance, Isle of Benbecula, HS7 5LA or call 01870 603910. She sent us all the forms for getting assistance from the council.
- Mairead organised rubbish bags, safety gear and claim forms for getting money. We collected them during office hours the week before the collection. They can also organise a skip for a big clean-up e.g. of a fly-tipping site.
- We advertised for volunteers: we chose to advertise through the youth club. Other suggestions would be to: send a note round your local school; advertise in the co-op; notices in church newsletters; think about a sponsorship and put forms in the post-office
- We checked our insurance: our group has public liability insurance and the youth club had SCRO checking in place for regular adult volunteers.
- We let the police and church know, to see if any traffic calming measures could be supported.
- We decided to start at the school because this is an area important to children. This is on a side road. We decided to stay away from the main road for safety.

EQUIPMENT

- We got safety tabards, bags, gloves and helpful guidance from the council
- We made signs to slow traffic. Our signs were terrible, we would have been better asking the police or council if they had suitable signs.
- We took along a clipboard for taking notes, and a camera for photographs.
- We had a small van for all the gear, with a trailer to haul away the rubbish. The trailer could have been bigger: don't underestimate how much rubbish you will find!
- We asked volunteers to be responsible for wearing suitable clothes such as wellies and waterproof coats
- We took along bottles of water, which were very useful

ON THE DAY ORGANISATION

- Once we assembled and waited the obligatory extra five minutes we had a safety briefing, outlining the route, and reminding volunteers to be safe, and to remember road safety

- Leave dangerous rubbish such as poisons, insecticides, fragmented glass and very heavy items: make a note of their whereabouts and inform the Comhairle
- Use adults only to clear bulky items such as old cookers and refrigerators.
- The bags allow you to sort recyclables. In our area, for every four bags of rubbish, we collected one bag of recyclables. We separated these into bottles, plastic and tins as we went along.
- We agreed to stop after an hour, but this was not nearly long enough, and we were happily working away when we realised we had been busy for two hours. Two hours or so is about right.
- We stopped for a rest and had a drink of water, because we were thirsty. Then we took lots of photographs and had a nice chat about what we wanted to do for the community next, and I took notes.
- At the end of the clear-up, we collected all the rubbish into the trailer. It took three trailer loads to take all the rubbish to Market Stance. (It was a small trailer.)
- We returned unused bags and our claim form back to Mairead afterwards.

ASSISTANCE AND SPONSORSHIP BY THE COMHAIRLE

The Comhairle want to encourage voluntary organisations to assist in cleaning up in their neighbourhood. For this purpose, the Comhairle agree to:

- Make plastic sacks available free of charge
- Make skip(s) available if required
- Make a contribution per sack or per skip of litter collected (where scrap or other bulky waste is included an overall maximum amount of sponsorship may be set)