



# StayConnected



## Love Solihull - March 2023



***This month we ask readers to pledge their support for the Great British Spring Clean, reveal the winner of this year's school flowerbed design competition and discover how the Council's eco-cargo bike is lightening the load for litter picking volunteers!***

## Will you pledge to take part in the Great British Spring Clean?



This year's Great British Spring Clean runs from 17 March to 2 April and aims to bring together residents, community groups, businesses, schools and colleges to make a difference to the local environment by removing litter.

It's so easy to get involved, so why not show your love for Solihull by pledging to pick just one bag (or more!) during the campaign.

If you already have your own litter picking kit, make your pledge via the [Keep Britain Tidy](#) website, then share your involvement via Twitter and Instagram @lovesolihull #GBSpringClean

If you're keen to get involved in litter picking regularly, [register today](#) and collect a free litter picking kit from your local library. The standard kit includes everything you need to get started, including a litter picker, high-vis vest and Love Solihull branded litter bags. You can also request additional tools like gloves, a bag hoop, or a child-size litter picker, so even the smallest family members can make a big difference!

If you're not sure if litter picking is for you, but want to give it a try, why not pop along to an organised group litter pick and see for yourself. The events are organised by expert volunteers from the local community, who can lend you the kit needed to take part. It's a great way to see what litter picking is all about, and get to know any volunteers where you live!

Visit our website to find out about any local [community groups near you](#) and don't forget to follow us on social media for more updates about the campaign.

Here are a selection of organised litter picks during the 2023 GB Spring Clean were interested residents are very welcome:

### **Berskwell Community**

Saturday 18 March at 10am

Meet: The Spinney Car Park (off Spencer's Lane)

Equipment provided and the opportunity to see one of the Council's [e-cargo bikes](#) in action!

### **Hampton in Arden Parish Council & Catherine De Barnes Residents' Association**

Saturday 18 March at 10:30am

Meet: Catney Village Hall, Catherine De Barnes

Equipment provided

### **Hampton in Arden Parish Council & Hampton Wombles**

Saturday 18 March at 10:30am

Meet: George Fentham Meeting Room (off Marsh Lane, B92 0AH)

Equipment provided

### **Talking Rubbish in Solihull & Clean & Green**

Saturday 18 March at 10:30am

Meet: Lanchester Park (off Lanchester Way)

Equipment provided

### **Hockey Heath Parish Council**

Friday 24 March at 10:30am

Meet: Hockley Heath Recreation Ground

Equipment provided

### **Tidbury Green Litter Pickers**

Saturday 26 March at 8am

Meet: Tidbury Green Farm, Fulford Hall Road

Please bring your own equipment

### **Olton Literary Litter Pickers**

Saturday 1 April

Meet: Olton Library at 10:30am

Equipment provided

### **Friends of Shirley Park**

Saturday 1 April at 2pm

Meet: War Memorial, Shirley Park

Equipment provided

More events will be publicised via our social media channels, so make sure you follow us on

Twitter: [@lovesolihull](https://twitter.com/lovesolihull) and Instagram: [@lovesolihull](https://www.instagram.com/lovesolihull)

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## **Jack's bloomin' marvellous flower bed design**



During February half term, we had the pleasure of meeting Jack, a pupil from Balsall Common Primary School who has won our competition to design this year's flowerbed display for Malvern Park.

The competition was open to local schools and the theme was '[Your Future Solihull](#)', to highlight the Council's climate change campaign.

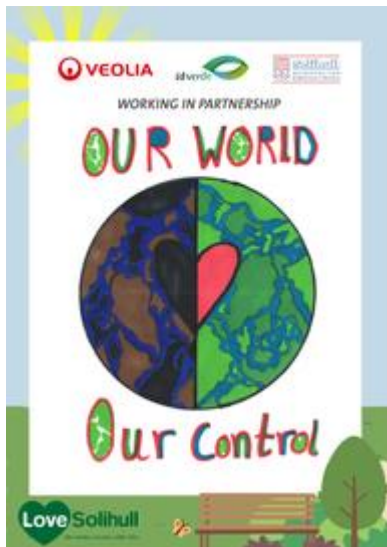
Jack interpreted the theme brilliantly by coming up with a very colourful design, featuring an electric car and a solar panelled house. We can't wait to see his design planted in the summer and share Jack's vision of an environmentally conscious Solihull.

To read the full article, click [here](#)



Photo caption: Jack and his winning design for Malvern Park's flowerbed

## Schools in Balsall Common launch litter campaign



We recently supported Balsall Common Primary School and Heart of England Secondary School to launch a community anti-litter campaign in the village of Balsall Common.

With help from the local community group, Balsall Common Litter Pickers, both schools have been out picking up litter and discussing ways to eradicate litter in the village.

Prefects and members of the school council from Heart of England delivered an engaging presentation to all Year 7 and Year 8 pupils over two days, demonstrating their fantastic public speaking skills and passion for the topic.

At Balsall Common Primary School, Jacob, a member of the school council, gave a rousing speech about the harmful effects that litter has on wildlife, which was met by thunderous applause from the whole school.

All of the pupils involved have done a fantastic job of highlighting the importance of disposing of waste responsibly. To follow up, both schools launched a bin sticker competition which tasked pupils with creating a design to raise awareness of the issue in the local community.

There were some fantastic entries from both schools, which were judged by school staff, local volunteer Rachel (Balsall Common Litter Pickers) and Kerry Taylor (Veolia's Community Outreach Officer).

The standard of artwork was really high, with designs featuring very powerful messages about responsibility and behaviour change. An overall winner was selected from each school, as well as a number of highly commended runners up. These designs will be turned into bin stickers which will be on display later this month to coincide with the Great British Spring Clean.

**Photo caption: A winning design by a pupil from Heart of England School**

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## E-cargo bike trial to support Clean & Green



Last month, we were thrilled to learn that community group Clean & Green had an opportunity to trial one of the Council's e-cargo bikes during their community litter pick.

The e-cargo bike, which holds a capacity of 900 litres (or 100kg of weight), was loaned by the Council's [Sustainable Travel](#) team, and proved to be an innovative way of transporting litter picking equipment for the group.

You can read the full article [here](#) as well as watch a [video](#) of the bike in action!

The bike will be back in action to support another community litter pick later this month in Berkswell, and we can't wait to see how it helps volunteers there to tackle litter.

A promotional poster for the Berkswell Litter Pick 2023 event. The background shows a group of volunteers in white high-visibility vests and gloves, actively picking up litter in a park setting. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top left, there is a green leaf icon. The main title 'BERKSWELL LITTER PICK 2023' is in large, bold, black letters. To the right, there is an illustration of a black e-cargo bike with a red starburst saying 'NEW!' and a green box below it that says 'SMBC's new e-cargo bike for low-carbon litter pick-up!'. Below the title, there is a red calendar icon with a clock face, and text indicating the date and time: 'Saturday, 18 March 2023 10:00-12:00hrs'. Below that, the location is given as 'Spinney Carpark, Berkswell CV7'. At the bottom left, there are logos for 'SUPPORTED BY Love Solihull' and 'SAVE THE DATE'. At the bottom right, there is an icon of a person putting a canister into a bin, and the text 'Volunteers needed Equipment supplied'.

## Tackling the issue of NOS is no laughing matter



Over the last 12 months, volunteers have reported an increase in the number of littered Nitrous Oxide (NOS) canisters in hotspot areas of the borough.

Nitrous Oxide (also known as Laughing Gas) is a colourless substance, mostly sold in pressurised metal canisters. Users open the canister, transfer the gas into a container (usually a balloon) then inhale, giving users a temporary high.

Not only is the resulting litter issue unsightly, there are serious concerns for anyone abusing the substance in the quantities being discovered by volunteers.

The Council's [Public Health](#) team has now launched a dedicated webpage in response to this emerging issue, which has more information about the substance, the associated risks, and how discarded canisters can be reported.

We would like to request all volunteers actively use this [reporting form](#) so that further data can be gathered about where these canisters are being found, including quantity and size.

For more information about NOS, please visit the [website](#).

**Photo caption: Discarded NOS canisters found littered in a park**

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## Hazel Oak seeks volunteers to support their 'growing' ambitions



[Hazel Oak](#) (Shirley) is a dedicated community school for children of all ages who have learning difficulties.

The school is hoping to expand its curriculum provision for pupils aged 14-16 by increasing community engagement and exploring vocational options.

The school would like pupils to work alongside local community groups or individuals to plan, maintain and grow produce in their school garden. Whilst the garden needs some work, it is hoped the area can be turned into a kitchen garden used to grow food for the local community and school.

The project directly supports students who may be at risk of NEET (not in employment, education or training) enabling them to develop social skills whilst having fun and meeting members of the community.

If you think you have the skills, expertise and time to offer your voluntary support, please email [office@hazel-oak.solihull.sch.uk](mailto:office@hazel-oak.solihull.sch.uk) for the attention of Mr Summerfield (Assistant Head) to express interest.

The school is also particularly keen to support any existing community projects in the area, so please contact the school if you have any suitable projects which pupils could get involved in.

**Photo caption: How the growing garden currently looks at Hazel Oak**

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## Veolia's Community Improvement Fund - deadline approaching



Just a reminder of the approaching deadline (31 March) for any community groups who wish to apply for support from Veolia's [Community Improvement Fund](#).

The scheme, administered by our environmental partners has awards of up to £1,000 available.

For more information and full eligibility, click [here](#)

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**Love Solihull actively encourages residents and businesses to make a difference to the environment and support those who co-ordinate their own projects.**

**Email alerts will be sent out throughout the year giving information on environmental projects including what is happening in your area and how you can get involved.**

**More information can be found at [www.lovesolihull.org](http://www.lovesolihull.org)**

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For more information about Council services, please see our [website](#).

