



The Big Abingdon Spring Clean by Helen Flynn, Friends of Abingdon Civic Society

AbiBinit! aims to make Abingdon a cleaner and more attractive town by helping to remove litter from its streets, green spaces, and waterways.

Volunteer litter pickers work throughout the year to help keep their patch clean. You may have seen some of us out and about. Continuing to litter pick will help to nudge people towards pro-environmental behaviours. It's the patchwork quilt of change made up of people's small behaviour changes, and groups of committed citizens doing the right thing, from which big changes are made, and from which civic pride is encouraged and increased.

Blue Planet II taught us that we cannot allow littering to continue to happen. Hedges festooned with indestructible crisp packets, gutters full of cigarette butts which will eventually find their way into the ocean, and bottles and cans lining the roadsides must become a thing of the past. No one can now claim ignorance of the adverse effects of litter on our biodiversity, or our neighbourhoods, or indeed ourselves.

Just one positive behaviour change can have such a dramatic and positive effect on the state our streets, and in turn on our town. Do we really need to wear single use plastic gloves when filling up with petrol? Could we put a spare pair in the car to use? Could takeaways be served in paper instead of polystyrene packaging? Could we each pick up a piece of litter, rather than passing by it? All of this makes Abingdon a more attractive place to live and builds a feeling of civic pride and responsibility.

Over the past year we have met with many local schools interested in arranging their own litter picks, and have also helped Cub, Brownie, and other youth groups organise litter picks. They are always amazed by the amount of litter that is out there but get a sense of pride at having cleaned up an area, often taking before and after pictures. Many of these young people are then inspired to go out litter picking with their friends and families. This is just the sort of thing we love to hear about and proves that littering picking and civic pride are catching!

Abingdon is joining in the "Great British Spring Clean" throughout March - last year our Spring Clean lasted until the end of April and there is every sign that this year's will too.

Many local groups have already reserved their litter picking equipment with the council, who will deliver and collect it. If you want to do likewise, the contact email is: waste.team@southandvale.org.uk

You can find out more about AbBinit! and future litter picks at : <https://abingdoncivicsociety.org.uk/activities/abibinit-litter-picking-initiative/>