# South Leicestershire Litter Wombles clear 109 bags of waste including trampoline and laughing gas canisters



More than 100 bags of rubbish have been cleared from Leicester’s streets in a single day by a dedicated group of volunteers known as the South Leicestershire Litter Wombles. This monumental cleanup effort highlights ongoing issues of litter and fly-tipping in the east of the city, particularly along Lunsford Road, where a disturbing array of abandoned items, including a trampoline, has become commonplace in a community that many residents describe as being under siege from litter and illegal dumping.

Scott 'Gibbo' Gibbins, an established member of the Litter Wombles since 2019, revealed the team recovered 109 bags of litter during their most recent outing. Notably, the haul included typical offenders such as alcohol bottles and plastic containers, but also some rather unusual finds, including wooden garden furniture and Nitrous Oxide cannisters, often used as "laughing gas" for recreational purposes. This misuse is particularly persistent, despite government bans aimed at curtailing the substance’s illegal use. In total, Gibbins noted that the group has cleared over 210,000 bags of litter across the region, an impressive sum that underscores the ongoing struggle against litter in urban environments.

The Litter Wombles, who have cultivated a Facebook community of more than 4,000 members, are not just focused on picking up waste; they also emphasise the need for broader community responsibility in dealing with littering. "We can’t expect the councils to cope with all that's wrong where we live," Gibbins remarked, stressing the need for a collective effort to maintain cleanliness. The group’s work is supported by local authorities, including Harborough District Council, which has provided necessary equipment and logistical support since the group’s inception.

This local initiative echoes similar efforts across the UK, reflecting a growing societal recognition of the impact littering has on the environment and community wellbeing. In 2022 alone, the Litter Wombles uncovered various bizarre items in their clean-up operations, including weapons and even a mannequin's arm—evidence of both the seriousness of littering and the diverse nature of waste generated by urban life. Their educational outreach, engaging with local schools about the environmental dangers associated with litter, aims to instil a sense of stewardship and responsibility in younger generations.

Scott Gibbins has voiced concerns about the psychological toll of witnessing such neglect in public spaces. "It's depressing when passing through these areas to see how happy some people are to live in such a mess,” he stated. This sentiment is mirrored by volunteers who frequently encounter the grim reality of litter-strewn locations, including lay-bys rife with hazardous waste materials. Such areas, described as "some of the grimmest places on earth," reveal the extreme consequences of littering and call for stricter enforcement of littering laws to protect both volunteers and the community at large.

Furthermore, the drive for community involvement goes beyond simply collecting rubbish; Litter Wombles have been instrumental in initiating participatory events that inspire residents to contribute to environmental cleanup efforts, thereby fostering a greater sense of local pride. As volunteer-led efforts grow, they serve as a beacon of hope in the fight against litter and pollution, seeking to transform the perception of public spaces into cleaner, more welcoming environments for all.

The collective legacy of the Litter Wombles serves as a reminder of the power of community action. With their unwavering commitment, volunteers demonstrate that even modest efforts can culminate in meaningful change—ensuring that Leicester can reduce the litter problem that threatens the city’s beauty and ecological balance.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/trampoline-among-litter-wombles-latest-10195485), [[4]](https://www.gbnews.com/news/leicestershire-lay-bys-litter-human-waste)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/trampoline-among-litter-wombles-latest-10195485), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-68332272), [[5]](https://purewildroots.com/litter-picking/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.harborough.gov.uk/news/article/1575/council_thanks_litter_picking_volunteers_for_work_in_the_harborough_district), [[6]](https://amberol.co.uk/community/post/2022-12-28/paying-tribute-to-litter-initiatives-in-the-community)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-68332272), [[3]](https://www.harborough.gov.uk/news/article/1575/council_thanks_litter_picking_volunteers_for_work_in_the_harborough_district), [[6]](https://amberol.co.uk/community/post/2022-12-28/paying-tribute-to-litter-initiatives-in-the-community)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.gbnews.com/news/leicestershire-lay-bys-litter-human-waste), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-68332272)
* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://www.harborough.gov.uk/news/article/1575/council_thanks_litter_picking_volunteers_for_work_in_the_harborough_district), [[5]](https://purewildroots.com/litter-picking/), [[6]](https://amberol.co.uk/community/post/2022-12-28/paying-tribute-to-litter-initiatives-in-the-community)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/trampoline-among-litter-wombles-latest-10195485> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-68332272> - In 2022, the South Leicestershire Litter Wombles, a volunteer group dedicated to keeping their area clean, discovered unusual items during their litter picks, including three guns, a bayonet, a mannequin's arm, and a ceramic toilet. In December 2022, they celebrated collecting their 100,000th bag of rubbish. The group, named after the popular children's characters known for collecting and recycling rubbish, also found a bread bag priced in shillings, dating it back to at least the early 1970s. Other notable finds included a sword, a brass musical instrument, and over 40 gas canisters. The group maintains a Facebook page with more than 4,000 members, where they regularly post about their activities and the amount of rubbish they've removed from streets and countryside. They also run an education group that talks to students about the environmental harm of littering.
3. <https://www.harborough.gov.uk/news/article/1575/council_thanks_litter_picking_volunteers_for_work_in_the_harborough_district> - In December 2022, Harborough District Council thanked the South Leicestershire Litter Wombles for their efforts in combating litter in the district. The group, established in 2019, marked the collection of nearly 160,000 bags of rubbish since 2020. Comprising around 500 active volunteers, they conduct litter picking sessions across South Leicestershire and Leicester. The council supplies the litter bags and equipment, while FCC Environment removes the full bags for disposal or recycling. The group's founder, Bob Lee, expressed pride in their achievements and emphasized the importance of community involvement in maintaining a clean environment.
4. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/leicestershire-lay-bys-litter-human-waste> - Volunteers from the Leicestershire Litter Wombles have been clearing lay-bys filled with human waste, syringes, and needles. Scott Gibbins, a member of the group, described lay-bys as 'some of the grimmest places on earth' and recounted a group clean-up where they filled 300 bin bags in 2.5 hours, finding hundreds of bottles of urine and bags of human waste. He emphasized the importance of volunteers in maintaining these areas and called for stricter enforcement of littering rules by councils. The group has also reported around 1,000 incidents of fly-tipping.
5. <https://purewildroots.com/litter-picking/> - The Leicestershire Litter Wombles, a group of litter-picking volunteers, began in 2019 with the mission to clean up the local environment. Since then, they have grown to over 5,000 members. As of 2024, they have collected over 178,000 bags of litter, significantly reducing pollution in parks, streets, and natural habitats. Their efforts have led to cleaner spaces, healthier wildlife, and restored ecosystems. The group also engages in fundraising, with member Sam Laywood raising £2,185 for the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust through a sponsored litter-picking marathon.
6. <https://amberol.co.uk/community/post/2022-12-28/paying-tribute-to-litter-initiatives-in-the-community> - The Leicestershire Litter Wombles, a group of litter-picking volunteers, have collected over 100,000 bags of litter since January 2020. They aim to make the county cleaner and more pleasant to live in. The group also focuses on educating the next generation and the community about the importance of responsible litter disposal. Bob Lee, the group's leader, expressed pride in their achievements and emphasized the collective effort involved in maintaining a clean environment. The group encourages community involvement and highlights the positive changes they are making.
7. <https://the-journal.org.uk/my-introduction-to-the-world-of-litter-picking/> - The Enderby Litter Wombles, a local litter-picking group, have been active since September 2019. From September 2019 to the end of 2019, they filled 75 bags of litter. In 2020, they collected a total of 686 bags. The number of local litter pickers joining the group has gradually increased, and in 2021, they collected 1,601 bags of litter. Up to April 2023, they have filled 606 bags, making a grand total of 2,968 bags of litter picked in and around Enderby since September 2019. The group also collects empty drinks cans towards the Helipads for Hospitals appeal.