

Civic Pride article for October 10 Abingdon Herald

Helen Flynn – Friends of Abingdon

Earlier this year I decided to start a new litter initiative in Abingdon. AbiBinit! is attached to The Friends of Abingdon Civic Society and has its webpage in the Civic and Community section of their website.

Whilst out litter picking I am often stopped by people who say that they are also tired of litter and want to try and do something about it. There are many theories about littering and what we can do to try and stop it happening. Clearly education is the key and this should start in infancy. Another factor which influences littering is how clean a neighbourhood is to start with: litter breeds litter and if there is little or none around it suggests that dropping it is not normal behaviour in that area and people are less likely to think it is OK to do so.

When it comes to our surroundings there seems to have been a loss of civic pride. Most of us have never experienced life without litter on our streets which is very sad. We should be proud of the areas we live in and want them to be the best they can be.

There was a time when cleaning the surrounding areas of our property was a regular ritual. Just think of the difference it would make if all of us tidied the immediate areas surrounding our homes on a regular basis?

Abingdon is blessed with some beautiful areas of countryside, the river, the lakes, parks, and walks. It is heartbreaking to see hedgerows stuffed with litter, birds nests alongside crisp packets, and waterways with tin cans floating alongside swans. Is this really the sort of world we want for ourselves and our future generations?

At the end of the day there is no better ‘nudge’ than for people to see others litter picking or just going about their daily lives picking up litter if they see it. To quote the author Bill Bryson, “I hope we can move towards a cleaner, greener Britain; one that is not just beautiful from the ankles up.”

AbiBinit! arranges regular litter picks throughout the year. We are working with retailers and businesses to try and help Abingdon become a litter free town. We are also very interested in getting more young people involved in litter picking, including schools, youth groups, and sports clubs. Starting from this month there will be a quarterly newsletter which will be available to see on the Abibinit! webpage and can be emailed on request.

No one can do everything but everyone can do something.

You can find out more about AbiBinit! at <https://friendsofabingdon.org.uk/civic-community/abibinit-litter-picking/>