

My Beach, Your Beach



An intervention to improve bathing water quality
Phase One Report: Summer 2018

Foreword

In summer 2018, Keep Scotland Beautiful piloted **My Beach, Your Beach**, a new **behaviour change** and **awareness raising** campaign addressing dog fouling, litter and gull feeding behaviours at three Scottish beaches at risk of poor bathing water classifications. Over the summer season, a range of community, business focussed and material interventions were trialled at **Portobello, Fisherrow Sands and Ayr South Beach**. This report outlines the project's findings, and our recommendations going forward.

My Beach, Your Beach Big Success



Awareness raising

82%

beach users noticed the campaign.



Behaviour change

12-15%

litter reduction observed at all sites.



Community ownership

98%

would like to see ongoing work.



Our #MyBeachYourBeach dog ambassador competition to tackle dog fouling was **Keep Scotland Beautiful's most successful social media campaign to date**, with **10,200** post engagements.

“The campaign made locals believe that something positive was being done to deal with problems they have been complaining about for a long time. This campaign was informative, but more importantly fun and engaging. It has given people a real sense of pride and worth in their area. I think people definitely feel more engaged as there has been a real presence.”

Gaynor Allen, Fisherrow Waterfront Group

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Introduction



Water quality at Scottish bathing water sites is monitored by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and awarded annual classifications in accordance with European and national regulations. Scotland aims for all designated bathing water sites to meet a 'sufficient' classification or above by 2020¹. In the 2017/18 bathing season, 75 of Scotland's 86 bathing water sites met this standard, with 11 sites classified as 'poor'². Sites falling below 'sufficient' for five successive seasons (effective from 2016) are at risk of losing bathing water status and must display permanent advice against bathing.

Ayr South Beach, Portobello (Central and West) and Fisherrow Sands (Musselburgh), were selected for this pilot project. They have been identified as some of the bathing water sites at risk and with the potential for significant reputational damage³ should permanent advice against bathing be issued.

Bathing water quality is affected by a number of factors to varying extents, including; human sources (arising from combined sewer overflows, private septic tanks or misconnections); ruminant sources from agriculture; diffuse urban pollution; and dog and gull excrement.

To tackle dog and gull sources of bathing water pollution, My Beach, Your Beach trialed a series of community, business and material interventions addressing gull feeding and dog fouling behaviours at beaches. This project sits alongside a range of work being carried out by SEPA, Scottish Water and other agencies to tackle other known sources of bathing water pollution at Ayr South Beach, Portobello (Central and West) and Fisherrow Sands (Musselburgh).



Bathing water information signage at Portobello West. Electronic bathing water forecast signage is present at 29 bathing water sites, in addition to information provided online (apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters).



¹ SEPA (2016) Scottish bathing waters: https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/219168/1282_sepa_bathing_waters_2016_web.pdf

² SEPA (2018) Scotland's bathing waters continue to meet strict environmental standards ahead of new season <http://media.sepa.org.uk/media-releases/2018/scotlands-bathing-waters-continue-to-meet-strict-environmental-standards-ahead-of-new-season/>

³ Scottish Government (2018) The value of bathing waters and the influence of bathing water quality: Final Research Report. Available: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/value-bathing-waters-influence-bathing-water-quality-final-research-report/pages/5/>

Aims

- Encourage behaviour change in relation to littering to remove this source of food for gulls.
- Encourage residents and visitors to bag and bin dog waste.
- Create more community ownership of the quality of local bathing waters.
- Create a campaign that can be replicated in other bathing water locations.

A collaborative effort

This work was funded by the Scottish Government, carried out in partnership with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and with backing from local authorities: South Ayrshire Council, The City of Edinburgh Council and East Lothian Council.



How are bathing waters monitored?

Bathing waters are monitored by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and classified annually in accordance to the Revised Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC), designed to improve the quality of the environment and protect human health. According to the directive, a bathing water is "any element of surface water where the competent authority expects a large number of people to bathe and has not issued permanent advice against bathing." Bathing water classifications are based on the faecal indicator organism count in collected samples. Presence of *Escherichia coli* (E.coli) and *Intestinal enterococci* (IE) are both measured. Microbial source testing (MST) is carried out on selected samples to identify contributing sources of bathing water contaminants. Known sources include human, ruminant, dog, gull and other.



Site profiles



Portobello

Portobello, fondly known as 'Porty', is just a stonethrow from Edinburgh City centre. Popular with locals and visitors alike, this sandy stretch has spectacular views of the Firth of Forth and a host of amenities including restaurants, bars and cafes along the promenade. The beach is split into two bathing waters – Portobello (Central) and Portobello (West).

Local ownership

Baseline research showed that overall, there was a good sense of community ownership with several active groups locally and 7 in 10 respondents feeling involved in the cleanliness of Portobello beach.

Cleansing regime

The City of Edinburgh Council carries out regular mechanical cleaning (with tractor). There are 22 council maintained combined waste bins along the promenade.



Fisherrow Sands

Fisherrow Sands, in Musselburgh, East Lothian, is a much cherished beach among locals. The beach offers stunning views across the Firth of Forth and is a popular spot for families, dog walkers and harbour users.

Local involvement

During primary research, it was found that most of those using the beach were local to the area (85%). There was a good level of community ownership, with 7 in 10 respondents saying they felt involved with beach's cleanliness. There are a number of active community groups operating at Fisherrow Sands.

Cleansing regime

There is no mechanical cleaning of the beach but community led clean ups are regular. East Lothian Council maintains eight combined waste bins along the promenade area.



Ayr

South Beach, in Ayr, is one of the most popular visitor beaches in Scotland. Stretching over 3.5km South from the River Ayr, the beach is known to attract thousands of visitors on a sunny day. Of those audited through face-to-face questionnaires, 85% were visitors to the area.

Local ownership

At the beginning of the My Beach, Your Beach project, there was a lower sense of community ownership than at the other sites, with 4 in 10 beach users feeling no involvement with the beach's cleanliness.

Cleansing regime

South Ayrshire Council regularly mechanically cleans the amenity stretch of this beach. A series of new, gull proof bins were installed July 2018. Out with the amenity area there are some infrequent clean ups led by other groups.

Our approach

The My Beach, Your Beach project trialled a series of community, business and material interventions during summer 2018 to meet the project aims:

- Encourage behaviour change in relation to littering to remove this source of food for gulls.
- Encourage residents and visitors to bag and bin dog waste.
- Create more community ownership of the quality of local bathing waters.

The project was split into three key periods: planning and baseline research, followed by a period of intervention and closed with follow up research and monitoring.



Planning and baseline research:

June – July 2018

- Initial stakeholder input to campaign plan, development of monitoring methodology.
- Baseline monitoring and research carried out.



Intervention period

July – September 2018

- Interventions delivered across three sites including: community engagement, business engagement and material interventions.



Follow up

September – October 2018

- Feedback gathered from the public on effectiveness of interventions.
- Ongoing quantitative monitoring.

My Beach, Your Beach emphasised our shared responsibility to take action to improve local bathing water quality. Campaign messaging consisted of three simple 'calls to action' to beach users, qualified by a linked explanation:



Messaging was adapted to each bathing water site with the supporting local authority logo and increased local relevance e.g. Dog poo pollutes the water **at Portobello**.



Monitoring strands

Monitoring throughout the My Beach, Your Beach project was undertaken as follows:

Measure and method	Baseline (5 weeks) 24/06/2018 - 29/07/2018	Intervention period (7 weeks) 29/07/2018 – 16/09/2018	Follow up (4 weeks) 16/09/2018 – 16/10/2018
Measure	Method		
Litter and dog fouling counts	Two full litter audits were carried out weekly at each site. Clean Europe Network (CEN) methodology ⁴ was adjusted to incorporate LEAMS (Local Environmental Audit and Management System) categories for assigning litter type. Transect size: 50m long, 2m wide (100m ²).		N/A
Gull count	Two spot counts of the number of gulls visible in defined area carried out weekly at each site.		N/A
Engagement	N/A	Uptake / engagement data recorded e.g. number of businesses supporting campaign, number of attendees at event.	Press and social media impact measured – reach, impressions, shares, likes, mentions.
Perceptions and attitudes	Initial questionnaire carried out across sites (in person) to inform baseline research (172 respondents).	Intervention perception questionnaire carried out in each site in person and online (208 respondents).	
Other observations	Weather and other variables potential influencing factors observed to be recorded at each site weekly at time of visit: peak times, bin status, events etc.		N/A

Table shows parameters measured across the duration of the campaign - from baseline monitoring to the completion of a follow up period.



⁴ European Litter Prevention Association (2014) A Common European Litter Measurement & Monitoring Methodology Pilot Handbook

Interventions

We trialled a range of different intervention approaches across the sites, incorporating elements of community and business engagement, as well as installing visible material interventions. Our interventions were designed to both **raise awareness** of the issues of dog fouling, gull fouling and littering behaviours and **enable and support increased community ownership** of the bathing water site.



Stakeholder input

We held initial stakeholder meetings with representatives from regional bathing water partnership groups, local authorities and other interest groups, to gather ideas and local feedback.



Project launch day

My Beach, Your Beach was launched on Ayr Beach on the busy Glasgow Fair Monday, joined by partners South Ayrshire Council and local elected representatives.



Forming connections

We opened communication with existing groups in each area, to grow our campaign and impact. This included Friends of Porty Prom, Porty Podcast, Fisherrow Waterfront Group, Eskmuthie Rowing Club, Environmental Volunteers Ayrshire and others.



Community groups supported to grow their reach and impact

We provided My Beach, Your Beach materials (posters, flag banners, stickers, high vis vests) and assisted with capacity building/planning meetings for local clean up events.

Community and business engagement

On the ground community building was a key element of this project and ranged from one-to-one conversations with those who used the beach most, to engaging with local businesses and providing ad hoc support to community groups.



A focus on business

Leaflets, A2 posters and 'Proudly supporting #MyBeachYourBeach' window stickers were hand delivered to 15 businesses/amenity facilities across three sites.



Getting the message out

Outreach events included a presence at Musselburgh Festival's Fisherrow Waterfront Day, The Big Beach Busk Portobello and Edinburgh Cat and Dog Home Open Day.



Beach clean events

Working with community groups at each location, we supported the delivery of three beach cleans to tie in with Marine Conservation Society's Great British Beach Clean. More than 250 people gathered across the three sites, removing over 60 bags of litter in total and contributing to citizen science.

Beach users targeted in bid to boost water quality

BY JANE CASSIDY

ENVIRONMENTAL charity Keep Scotland Beautiful marked Glasgow Fair Monday with the launch of a new trial campaign that aims to improve water quality at three of Scotland's best-known beaches. The My Beach, Your Beach initiative will focus on changing the behaviour of users on these fronts. It



Press and media

The campaign gathered nine press articles with a reach of 54,000+ including The National, Edinburgh Evening News and The Ayrshire Post. We also recorded features for television (That's TV Scotland), radio (Radio Forth) and podcast (The Porty Podcast).

Campaign presence

A range of material interventions were installed across three sites, dependent on local feasibility. These are listed in the table below. In a follow up survey of 208 individuals across three sites, 82% noticed at least one intervention.



My Beach, Your Beach bin wraps at Portobello.

Intervention	Portobello	Fisherrow Sands	Ayr	Public awareness
Bin wraps	✓	✓	✓	77%
Bathing water quality signage (SEPA managed)	✓	✓	✓	54%
Lamppost signs	✗	✓	✗	36%
Social media	✓	✓	✓	22%
Events e.g. beach clean, info stall	✓	✓	✓	22%
Notice board signage	✓	✓	✓	19%
Railing banners	✓	✗	✓	14%
Newspaper	✓	✓	✓	14%
Window stickers on businesses	✓	✓	✓	10%
Leaflets	✓	✓	✓	7%

Tick signifies that intervention was operated at the site, a cross signifies that the intervention was not viable at the site.

The campaign had the most visible presence at Portobello, with 88% respondents noticing at least one intervention. In Ayr, 83% noticed the campaign and 78% in Fisherrow Sands.



Material interventions included lamppost signs shared with South Ayrshire Council's Safer Shores campaign.



Bin vinyl sticker pictured on Fisherrow Sands bin.

Going social: #MyBeachYourBeach social media presence

There is a growing appetite for bathing water quality information to be disseminated online, particularly through social media^{5,6}. We used Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn as platforms for our campaign messages. This included our 'doggy portrait competition' to raise awareness of dog fouling at the beach.

We combined in-person interaction (meeting dog owners on the beach) with online voting to create an interactive posts allowing the public to vote for their favourite dog to become the local '#MyBeachYourBeach Ambassador'. The competition was repeated for each site, generating an online engagement of 10,200 (votes and clicks) and combined reach of 82,000 – Keep Scotland Beautiful's most successful Facebook campaign to date. As a result of social media activity, one in five survey respondents reported having seen the campaign online.



Facebook post.



⁵ Scottish Government (2018) The value of bathing waters and the influence of bathing water quality: Final Research Report. Available: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/value-bathing-waters-influence-bathing-water-quality-final-research-report/pages/5/>

⁶ Shepherd, J. (2014). Bathing water quality: public perception and awareness, The Plymouth Student Scientist (2), 38–58.

What people thought

"I bumped into No. 5 at the weekend, the campaign generated a lot of interest – would be really nice if you could put photos of all the dogs on the local bins!"

Email from participant

"Using local dogs and a great competition made people take notice. Everyone loved it."

Fisherrow Waterfront Group

"A project based on Ayrshire beaches but very relevant to our local beaches too."

Shared by Beach Cleans Inverclyde group – Facebook

"It is fantastic that Indie came out top in the competition. We are really excited that she will be the face of the campaign. It is great to see such efforts being made to protect and improve this great outdoor space."

Claire Russell, Indie's owner (winner for Fisherrow Sands)



The winning dog ambassadors featured in local signage. Top left clockwise: Ayr playpark railings, Fisherrow Sands lampposts, Portobello (West) access rails.

Doggy portrait engagement



Reach

82,000

Clicks

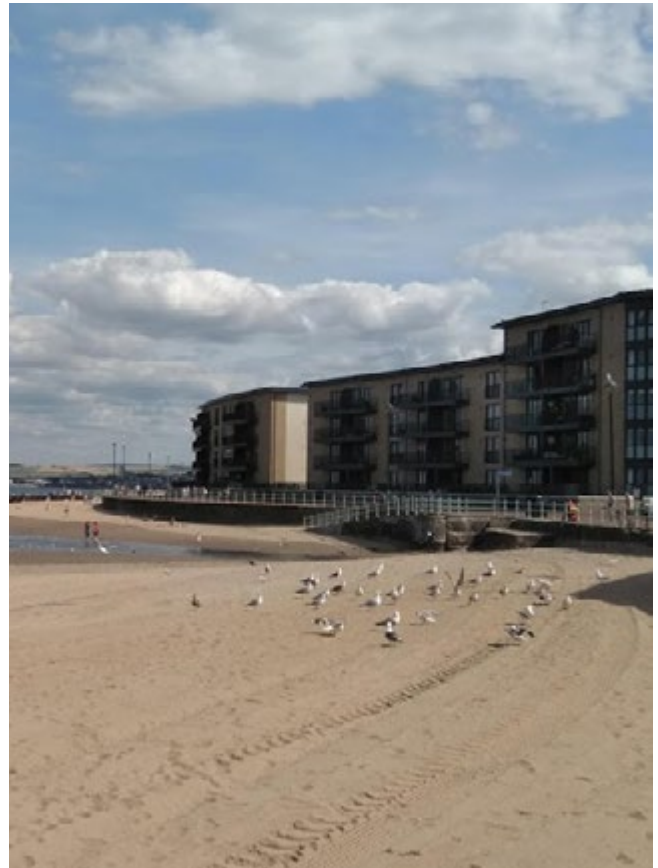
10,200

Comments

1,600

Findings

Objective 1: Reduce litter as a source of food for gulls.



Significant gull population present at all sites, gull hotspots include near food outlets and bins. Top left clockwise: Ayr, Portobello (West), Low Green (adjacent to Ayr beach), Fisherrow Sands promenade.

Context

The distribution of gull populations is affected by a number of variables, including the availability of food source⁷. Food sources include natural or anthropogenic. At urban beach sites, anthropogenic food sources can arise directly e.g feeding gulls or indirectly e.g deposited litter or overflowing bins.

Data collected during the project period found that when more food related litter was present at the sites, more gulls were observed at the site⁸, suggesting that human behaviours (feeding or littering) are affecting the number of gulls gathering at the bathing water site. More gulls present means that more gull excrement is concentrated in the bathing water area, increasing the likelihood of a negative effect on bathing water quality.

⁷ Belant, J. L. (1997). Gulls in urban environments: landscape-level management to reduce conflict. *Landscape and urban planning*, 38(3-4), 245-258.

⁸ This relationship was most prominent at Portobello (West), though a trend was present across all sites. Regression analysis on our monitoring data showed that 46% of the variation in gull numbers could be explained by the count of food related litter at Portobello (West).



Input

Food source:

- Human behaviour sources (indirect feeding e.g. food-related litter), direct feeding.
- Natural sources.

Other factors

- Availability of suitable nesting /shelter.

Outcome

- Gulls attracted to site.
- More gull faeces deposited at site.

Impact

- Increased faecal indicator organism levels in bathing water samples.



Relationship between gulls and gull sources in bathing water pollution.

We found that there was a good general awareness of the problems associated with feeding gulls.

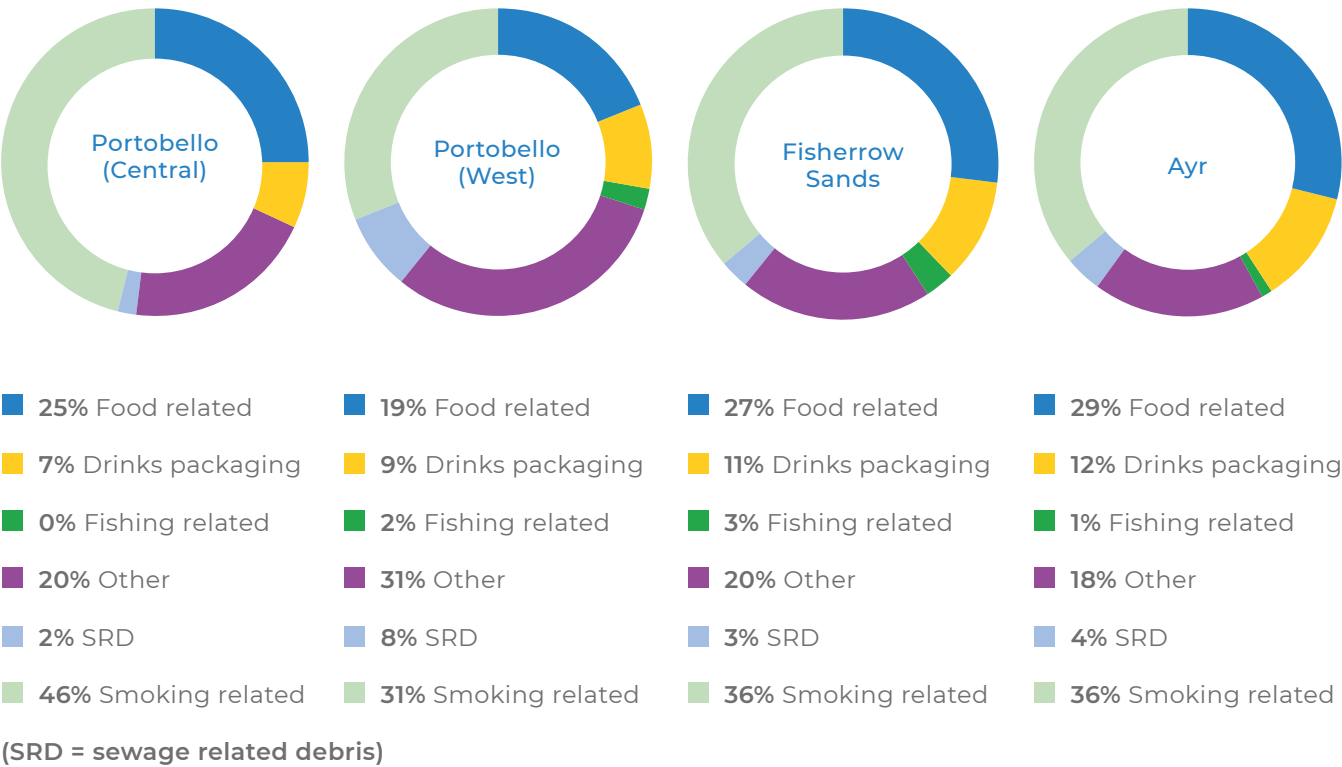
Across all of our project sites, only 3% of survey respondents admitted to feeding gulls, suggesting that direct feeding was not a significant behavioural issue at the My Beach, Your Beach project sites. The top reasons people gave for not feeding gulls were:

1. Feeding encourages or attracts them.
2. Aggressive behaviour.
3. Worried about dirt/diseases associated.
4. Some respondents answered 'not natural/ not good for them'.

However, food-related litter made up 19-29% of litter on beaches and amenity areas.

Baseline litter audits showed that 19-29% beach and amenity area litter was 'food-related' e.g. packaging, takeaway containers, cutlery, ice-cream containers and napkins. Litter levels varied between the sites. The highest counts observed (pieces per 100m² transect) were in Ayr (111), followed by Portobello Central (83), West (81) and Fisherrow Sands (47) as recorded during baseline monitoring.

Composition of litter on beaches and amenity areas



The most common food-related litter items found were:

	Portobello Central	Portobello West	Fisherrow Sands	Ayr
1	Confectionery packaging (plastic)	Confectionery packaging (plastic)	Confectionery packaging (plastic)	Confectionery packaging (plastic)
2	Confectionery packaging (foil/foil hybrid)	Napkins	Wooden lolly sticks	Takeaway packaging (polystyrene)
3	Cutlery	Food waste	Napkins	Cutlery



At all sites, people thought that litter was an issue

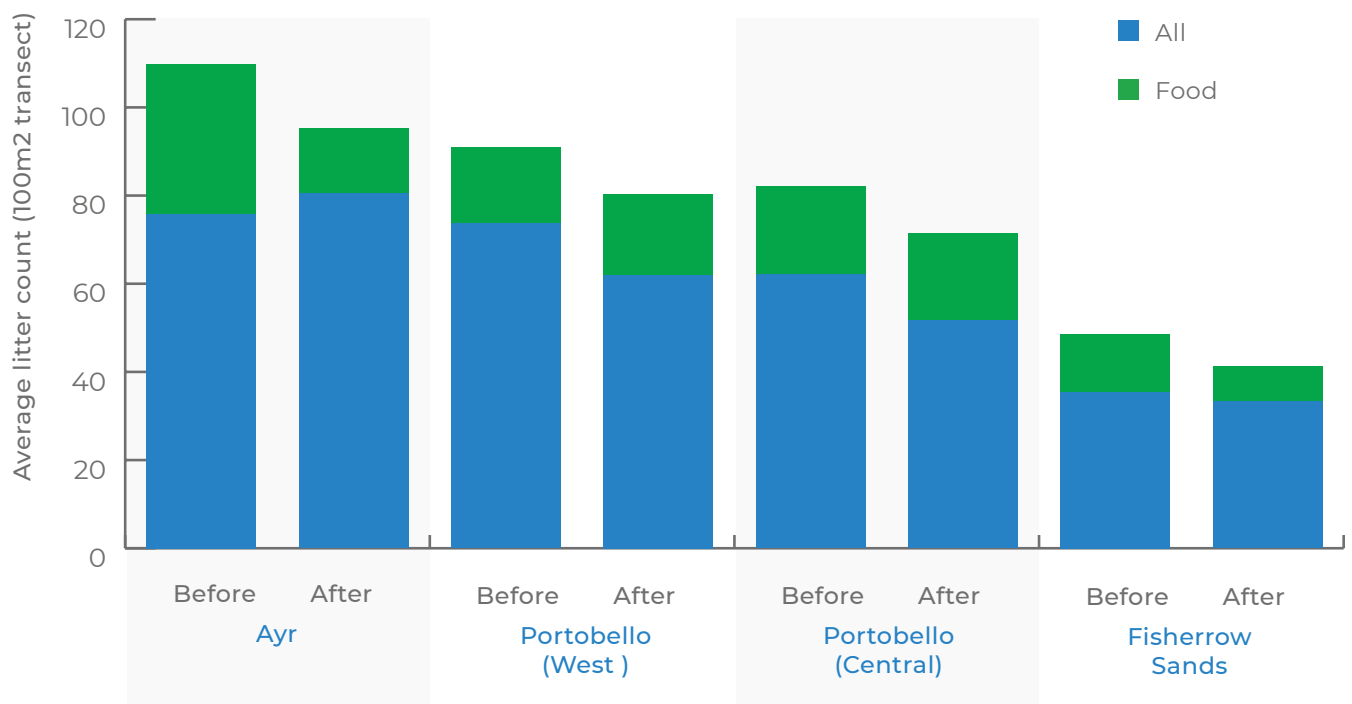
Public perceptions on the severity of beach litter varied between the sites. At Portobello, 7 in 10 thought that litter was an issue and at Fisherrow Sands, litter was an issue to 8 in 10 respondents surveyed. Despite having the highest litter count per transect, a lower proportion of respondents perceived litter to be an issue in Ayr, with only half stating that litter was an issue at the beach.



Changing behaviours

- During the intervention period, **litter reduced across all sites, by 12-15%**. The average litter count during the intervention period was 12-15% lower than the average litter count before any interventions had been put in place⁹.
- Trends in food-related litter varied. During the intervention period, the count of food-related litter items decreased by 56% in Ayr and 39% in Fisherrow Sands. However, levels remained constant at Portobello (<1% change) throughout the intervention period, despite there being an overall reduction in litter.

Litter counts before and after interventions



⁹ Sampled across eleven weeks on days of similar weather (2 transects per site, per week).

Objective 2: Encourage residents and visitors to bag and bin dog waste

As well as the potential health impacts of dog faeces, attitudinal surveys show that 69% of people rate dog faeces as the item on beaches that bothers them most¹⁰.

Dog fouling was most chronic at Portobello West, though present at all sites. Dog fouling was perceived by the public to be more of a problem at Portobello than at any other site, and also had a higher proportion of beach users being dog walkers than the other sites. Conversely, in Ayr, where the lowest count of dog poo was observed, public concern was also lowest for the issue, and there was a smaller proportion of dog walkers.

Location	Observation (Average count per 100m ² transect)	Public perception	Dogs walked in area
Portobello	1.35 Portobello (West) 0.46 Portobello (Central)	6 in 10 thought dog fouling was an issue	33% beach users
Fisherrow Sands	0.26	4 in 10 thought dog fouling was an issue	21% beach users
Ayr	0.13	3 in 10 thought dog fouling was an issue	15% beach users



Portobello West is a popular location for dog walkers. Of the three locations, Portobello had the highest proportion of respondents who came to the beach to walk their dog. **One in three beach users** in Portobello used the beach for dog walking, compared to 21% at Fisherrow and 15% in Ayr.

Since count data was low at most sites (less than one poo per transect), it was not possible to record significant trends in dog poo during the time frame of the project. Beach users across all sites welcomed messaging around dog fouling at the beach, and an increased awareness of bathing water implications was delivered, with 82% public noticing at least one intervention.

¹⁰ Keep Scotland Beautiful (2007) Public attitudes to litter and littering in Scotland.

Portobello West and dog fouling

Portobello (West) had more than double the dog fouling observed at any other site. A recurrent issue observed was bagged dog poo left beside one bin in particular, identified through this project as a hot spot. This location was selected for dog specific messaging, but infrastructural changes may also be required:

■ Bin placement

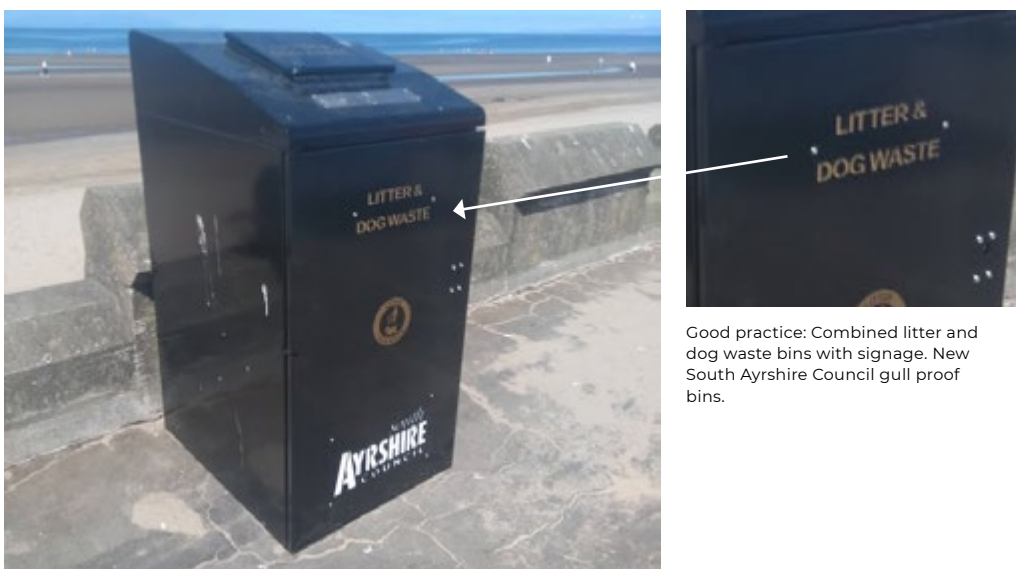
The current location is adjacent to the access ramp onto the beach, meaning that bin access from the beach impeded by the railings between the beach and bin. Easier access would reduce barriers to correct disposal.

■ Combined litter and dog waste bins

Some face-to-face respondents highlighted confusion around the lack of 'red dog poo bins' which have previously been in effect in some local authorities. To tackle this, a number of local authorities including South Ayrshire have incorporated signage to their bins which says 'litter and dog waste'.



Dog specific messaging installed at dog fouling hotspots at Portobello (West).



Good practice: Combined litter and dog waste bins with signage. New South Ayrshire Council gull proof bins.

Objective 3: Promote local ownership of bathing water

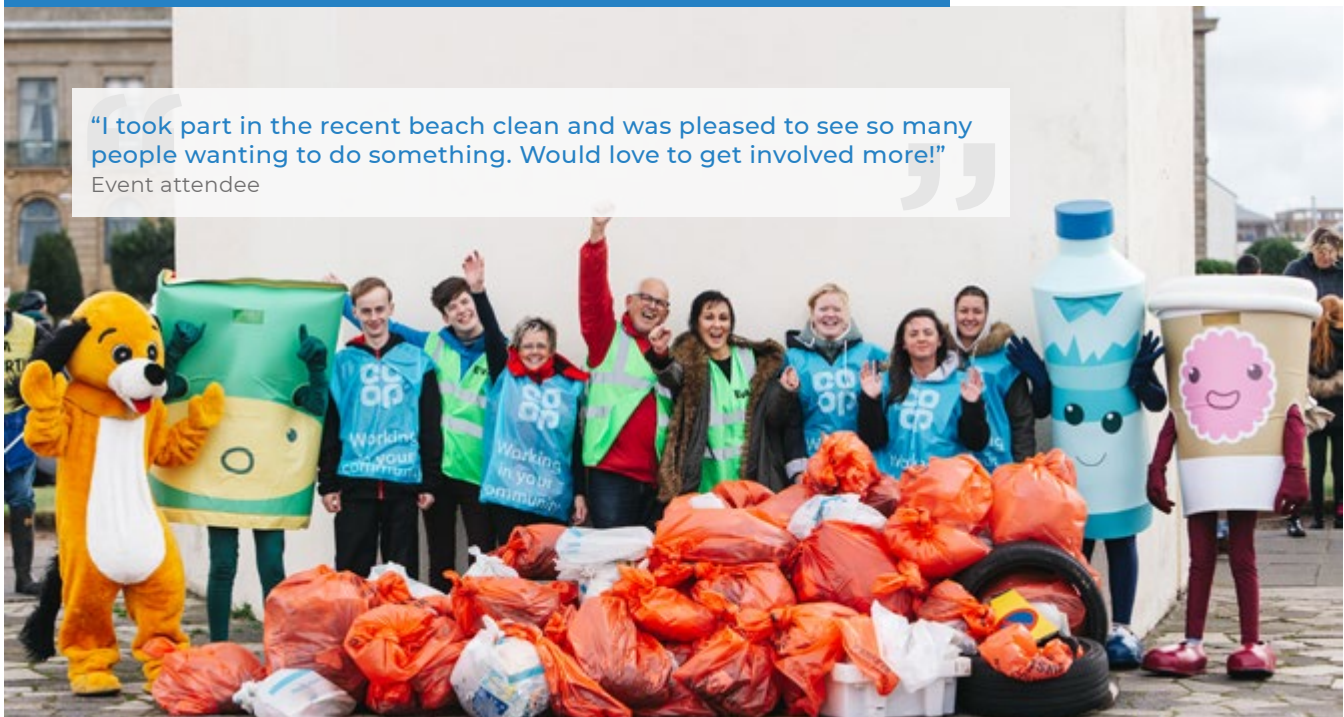
Both Fisherrow Sands and Portobello had good levels of community involvement prior to the campaign, with less than 3 in 10 stating they felt no involvement/influence over the cleanliness of the area.

In Ayr, overall less people felt ownership compared to the other locations. This could be due to most summer beach users being visitors, meaning that a lower proportion of those using the beach felt personal involvement with its cleanliness. At the time the My Beach, Your Beach project was launching, a new community-led litter clean up group – Environmental Volunteers Ayrshire (EVA) – had just begun to establish. Through My Beach, Your Beach, we worked closely with this group to boost community ownership of the beach and surrounding areas.

Case study: Boosting community ownership in Ayrshire

“I took part in the recent beach clean and was pleased to see so many people wanting to do something. Would love to get involved more!”

Event attendee



Environmental Volunteers Ayrshire after a successful beach clean with over 150 attendees, removing 40 bags of litter from Ayr beach.

In Ayr, beach cleanliness was ‘important’ or ‘very important’ to all respondents. However, nearly 40% respondents did not feel at all involved in helping to keep the beach clean. As part of the My Beach, Your Beach campaign, we supported a newly formed group – Environmental Volunteers Ayrshire (EVA) – to establish themselves within the community. This culminated in The Big Beach Clean Ayr, at the end of the summer, co-organised between EVA and Keep Scotland Beautiful, with equipment provided by South Ayrshire Council. The group has been a huge success, garnering support from local influencers, Ayrshire Daily News and Stephen Brown McCoo, as well as political support across the board. The event saw over 150 attendees, many having never been involved prior, attending to help clean Ayr Beach. In addition to this, the event attracted plenty more support, with a legacy of over 700 newly interested Ayr residents. This group could be a valuable player in long term solutions to resourcing issues on busy summer days.



Thematic analysis of public questionnaires

98% of the public said they would like to see ongoing campaign work to help improve bathing water quality. Over the course of the campaign, 380 people were surveyed (171 online, 209 face-to-face) to assess perceptions of problems, effectiveness of interventions as well as gather general feedback.

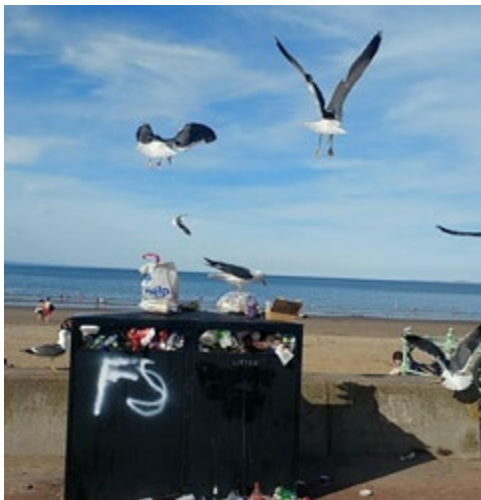
Beach cleanliness motivated people for different reasons: family, safety and nature were all factors.



Although 25% respondents said did not consider 'bathing water quality' when visiting the beach, the concept of 'beach cleanliness' was important to all respondents, for many different reasons:

- "Children, safety, environment all important. Wouldn't come back if beach wasn't clean." Face to face respondent, Ayr.
- "Having lived in the area 30 years I have seen positive changes to the beach and its environs but I have never ever seen so many people using the beach as they do now. Many, many dogs walkers – some with multiple dogs, walker, runners, rowers, swimmers, sailors, kayakers, tourists, families, young, old.... it is imperative that the beach is improved and maintained to ensure all these people are able to continue their health, active, outdoor activities safely and continue to bring life and revenue to the local community." Online respondent, Portobello.

Pressure on bin capacity on busy days, particularly at Portobello



Throughout the project period, concerns were consistently highlighted by Portobello respondents about the capacity of promenade bins, with many calling for more regular emptying:

- “Main concern is during summer months, waste facilities are insufficient and collections are not frequent enough, with rubbish piled against the buckets and attracting seagulls.” Online respondent (Portobello).
- “The public are doing their bit, but the bin on Porty Prom at Morton St is never emptied. Dog poo mountain.” Twitter comment (Portobello local).
- “There was also a desire for more linked up work with the council so the bins were emptied well, as it was felt full bins undermined the message of the campaign.” Friends of Porty Prom.

Concern about summer litter influx in Ayr



Ayr respondents were concerned about the influx of litter as a result of increased footfall:

- “After a warm day in summer, groups partying and leaving litter on beach. Not enough resources.” Online respondent, Ayr.
- “During the summer, especially during the summer holidays, Ayr beach is mobbed with tourists and the community is very conscious of the amount of litter left behind by our visitors.” Environmental Volunteers Ayrshire.

Across all sites, there was some public concern about other bathing water pollutants, particularly sewage



A variety of comments from the public highlighted concern that there are other contributing sources to poor bathing water quality:

- “From what I’ve read about this since moving to the area, the Fisherrow bathing water quality suffers due to contamination from the river Esk after heavy rainfall. Something needs to be done to divert the contaminants before they flood out into what used to be a lovely bathing spot.” Online respondent.
- “I would be interested to know the relative impacts of litter, dog fouling, Seafield, water drainage, silt etc on water quality. I think all are important to tackle for a variety of reasons but suspect some have more impact than others on water quality.” Online respondent.
- “It seems a bit unfair to target individuals on water quality when the big factor is contaminated water coming in from sewage works and flooding in through the river after rain. I appreciate that individual responsibility is important too, but the relative impact seems important to acknowledge.” Online respondent.

Feedback from our local partners



Fisherrow Sands: Fisherrow Waterfront Group and Eskmuthe Rowing Club.
Comments from Gaynor Allen and Pauline Crerar

Q. What have you liked about the My Beach, Your Beach campaign? Has it benefitted your area?

A. I thought the KSB campaign was really great. The campaign made locals believe that something positive was being done to deal with problems they have been complaining about for a long time – particularly dog poo. It doesn't really matter if the problem isn't huge. It is knowing that an organisation such as KSB was interested in their area and helping to raise awareness. This campaign was informative, but more importantly fun and engaging. Using local dogs and a great competition made people take notice. Everyone loved it. It has given people a real sense of pride and worth in their area. I think people definitely feel more engaged as there has been a real presence – with leaflets, bin stickers and in person, and it made people think about the issues of litter, dog and gull poo. I think this has been an immensely successful campaign and helped the people of Fisherrow realise it is all of our responsibility to care for our beaches and seas.

Q. What would you like to see going forward?

A. For next year, we could look more at the impact of dog and seagull poo (and litter) on the water quality. I think this is difficult to get people to realise that a bit of poo on a big sea makes a difference. Also to help people to take more responsibility for the water quality. We really appreciated the extra dimension to the fight against pollution in our local area this year that you brought. I really hope it continues.

Q. Have you felt adequately engaged in the project's planning and delivery?

A. We felt very engaged in the process, which was brilliant from our perspective. I think the project team really engaged with the community and made people feel a sense of pride in where they live and what we have. We have beautiful beaches in East Lothian and our beach rarely gets attention, despite having an awful lot going for it. The campaign was a step in the right direction of making people see we have a great facility that we should make more of. Well done and thank you KSB for an excellent campaign. Thanks once again for your help.



Friends of Portobello Prom

Comments gathered by Cllr Mary Campbell

Q. What have you liked about the My Beach, Your Beach campaign? Has it benefitted your area?

A. The bin stickers were appreciated, as they made the bins more visible to prom visitors. People thought the design was good and they liked the variety in design.

Q. What would you like to see going forward?

A. It was expressed that an even greater variety of bin vinyls would be more engaging. They also felt it would have been good to link the message more to the quality of water. A few people expressed a desire for a litter focus, and for an autumn/winter campaign. There was also a desire for more linked up work with the council so the bins were emptied well, as it was felt full bins undermined the message of the campaign.

Q. Have you felt adequately engaged in the project's planning and delivery?

A. People appreciated the short turn around this year, but in future would like to be more involved in the planning stages.



Environmental Volunteers Ayrshire

Comments from Cllr Siobhian Brown

Q. What have you liked about the My Beach, Your Beach campaign? Has it benefitted your area?

A. I think the My Beach, Your Beach campaign has been a success this year in Ayr. I think the local community are very aware of environmental issues hence a huge big turn out on the day of The Big Beach Clean. Keep Scotland Beautiful has been very supportive to EVA and helping them start up – providing costumes and tabards.

Q. What would you like to see going forward?

A. I think having the annual beach clean in the summer would have more of an impact as September it is very quiet. During the summer, especially during the summer holidays, Ayr beach is mobbed with tourists and the community is very conscious of the amount of litter left behind by our visitors so having this event earlier would encourage more people out to help and probably have more impact.

I still feel Ayr Beach's water quality is mainly poor due to sewerage outlets and also agricultural run off more than seagull and dog poo. I would like to see continued support and campaigning from Keep Scotland Beautiful with South Ayrshire Council to the Scottish Government to address the sewerage problem as a long term solution to solve our water quality problem.

Q. Have you felt adequately engaged in the project's planning and delivery?

A. Absolutely. The team has been very helpful in all aspect of their campaign and have done a wonderful job.

Conclusions

The pilot of the My Beach, Your Beach project aimed to address issues associated with dog fouling, litter and gull feeding at three Scottish beaches that were at risk of being allocated poor bathing water classification.

Keep Scotland Beautiful worked together with national and local government, public agencies, businesses, community groups and individuals to deliver behaviour change interventions and raise awareness of issues affecting bathing water quality.

Through delivery of community, business focused and material interventions, we saw reduced littering and increased awareness levels amongst the public of the environmental impact that dog fouling, litter and gull feeding was having on beaches. These are very positive outcomes.





The main conclusions that we would like to highlight are as follows:

1. Given the relatively short time period that the trial was operational, My Beach, Your Beach has been regarded by partners as a successful project particularly in terms of community engagement, raising awareness and changing behaviours. This provides an excellent platform to build on this work and grow the project's impact.
2. Feedback from our partners confirmed that providing adequate support resource was central to the project's success. Our on-the-ground presence together with our approach to volunteer engagement, campaign management, social media and litter prevention ensured that the public remained motivated and engaged throughout the trial period.
3. The profile of My Beach, Your Beach led to heightened interest from the local community to find out more about beach cleans, bathing water quality, litter prevention and community engagement initiatives. This suggests that where the public have access to the right kind of support, advice and information, they are more likely to take positive action.
4. We found that on-the-go food packaging was a major source of beach litter. Polystyrene take away boxes, plastic cutlery, paper, plastic bottles and ice-cream pots made up a significant portion of beach litter. Food-related litter is a significant and contributing factor to the gull population at beaches.
5. Campaign materials in the form of bin wraps and signage were central to improving awareness of the issues and helped raised campaign visibility in general terms. Partners commented positively on the range and impact that the campaign materials had. This suggests that they are a vital component when engaging with the public.
6. Social media was a valuable tool in reaching the public and central to public engagement. The campaign reached over 82,000 with the anti-dog fouling message in posts gathering over 10,000 engagements. Platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, were all used to good effect which helped us reach a mixture of demographics.
7. The support and assistance of local authorities was also an important aspect of the campaign and it is unlikely that the same outcomes would have been achieved without their assistance.
8. Behaviours such as leaving dog poo on beaches and littering (attracting gulls) are affecting Scotland's bathing water quality at certain beaches, but this is not the only factor. Bathing water contaminants associated with sewage and Scotland's agricultural industry also play their part. There is much work still to be done by Scottish Government, SEPA, Scottish Water, the agricultural community and others to avert this.

Recommendations

Following the findings of the My Beach, Your Beach project, Keep Scotland Beautiful invites stakeholders to consider the following recommendations:

For national government, its agencies and local government:

1. In order to measure the impact of the campaign effectively we would recommend that a second pilot is undertaken in the summer of 2019, at the same locations, so that benchmark data can be compared.
2. More work needs to be done to address all sources of bathing water pollution.
3. Recognise the contribution that empowered and supported local communities and volunteers can play in taking ownership of shared spaces, therefore assisting the efforts of the public sector.
4. We recommend that local authorities review the provision of existing bin infrastructure and waste management facilities at bathing water sites during peak visitor times and adjust services accordingly.
5. Consideration should be given to commissioning comprehensive Litter Prevention Action Plans (LPAP) specific to bathing water sites as part of bathing water improvement plans for all bathing water sites in Scotland classified as 'poor'.
6. SEPA and other appropriate agencies should continue to ensure open and transparent communication with the public at bathing water sites, for example through engagement with bathing water partnership groups.

For businesses:

1. Engage with your customer base to encourage responsible disposal of on-the-go food packaging.
2. Carry the campaign messages in store in places where it is easily seen.
3. Support local community groups and initiatives taking action on litter. This could include, where appropriate, donating some of the 5p charged by retailers for single use carrier bags to support community action on litter.
4. Move away from bulky, non-recyclable packaging (e.g. polystyrene) which fill up bins quickly. Gulls find these 'clam shell' boxes extremely easy to open.

For the voluntary groups and organisations:

1. Get involved and support local action in your area to tackle beach litter and promote responsible dog ownership.
2. Form a clean up group if one does not already exist.
3. Support the My Beach, Your Beach campaign messages and promote the campaign principles through networks and social media. The key messages to promote are:
 - Don't feed the gulls.
 - Bag and bin dog poo.
 - Put your litter in the bin.
4. Find out more about issues affecting your beach and coast, from marine plastic to coastal erosion. Beaches are a valuable outdoor space for health, recreation and learning. Check what resources and activities are available in your local authority.

Our partners

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We would like to thank the following groups their willingness to get involved with this new campaign – as supporters, as shapers and as key players in helping to spread the message locally:

Eskmuthe Rowing Club, Fisherrow Waterfront Group, Fisherrow Harbour and Seafront Association, Fisherrow Yacht Club, Friends of Porty Prom, Portobello Community Council, The Porty Podcast, Environmental Volunteers Ayrshire, Alloway Rotary, Ayrshire Daily News and many others. Thank you.

We would also like to acknowledge Scottish Water, Marine Conservation Society and RSPB for their contributions to this project.





We support the Sustainable Development Goals.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is the charity that campaigns, acts and educates on a range of local, national and global environmental issues to change behaviour and improve the quality of people's lives and the places they care for. We are committed to making Scotland clean, green and sustainable



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