

# My Beach, Your Beach



A campaign to improve bathing water quality  
2021

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# My Beach, Your Beach



## Introduction

My Beach Your Beach is our campaign to support bathing water quality improvements at a selection of Scottish beaches. It does this by raising awareness and encouraging behaviour change among locals and beach users, around key habits that can impact on bathing water quality. This includes:

### On the beach

- Encouraging dog owners to clean up after their dogs.
- Discouraging beach users from attracting gulls by feeding them.
- Reminding beach users to take litter away and put it in the bin, to avoid attracting gulls and polluting the beach with litter.

### Indoors

- Encouraging people to flush only the 3Ps (pee, poo and paper) down the toilet.
- Encouraging people to avoid pouring 'fats, oils and greases' down the drain.

Although there are many factors that can impact on bathing water quality, these small habits can make things worse. Gull and dog poo have been found to contribute to bathing water contamination, affecting marginal bathing water classifications; indoor habits can block pipes, causing sewage overflows that can end up in the sea.

## Campaign beaches

Since 2018 My Beach Your Beach has building on success year to year to expand to a growing number of bathing waters. The latest site to join the campaign this summer was Saltcoats/Ardrossan, making for a total of seven campaign beaches.

These are all bathing waters that have a high footfall and that face challenges with bathing water quality, that the campaign is deployed to help address.



Ayr



Troon



Irvine



Saltcoats / Ardrossan



Kinghorn



Portobello



Fisherrow Sands

# Campaign context and approach

In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic set a new and unique context for the My Beach Your Beach campaign. Lockdown and travel restrictions led us to target primarily local beach users, through online channels, and with a focus on celebrating different aspects of the local beach in order to keep the campaign uplifting and relevant in the given climate.

This approach was successful in generating significant engagement and so this summer we built on what we learnt, whilst also bringing attention to additional factors, including:

## Visitors vs locals

With restrictions easing further, visitor numbers were anticipated to be much higher this summer, with people opting for day trips and staycations within Scotland. As such, My Beach Your Beach sought ways of targeting visitors specifically, including by installing campaign collateral in car parks and a partnership with Scotrail, as well as tagging in with the national #RespectProtectEnjoy campaign.

At the same time, this summer's campaign also aimed to expand local reach further, by engaging more local target audiences such as businesses and schools.

## Beach stewardship vs bathing water quality

Throughout the campaign to date there have been recurring challenges with effectively conveying the link between bathing water quality and habits on the beach. As such, this year's campaign moved to frame these in the context of beach stewardship, encouraging beach users to play their part and 'help protect the sand and sea', pursuing the same behaviour change objectives, but in a more effective way.

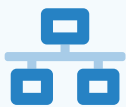
At the same time, with only 30% of people saying they check bathing water quality when visiting the beach last year, it was clear that there was scope for education around this issue specifically. A parallel strand of communications was therefore created to raise awareness around bathing water quality, thus setting the scene for further communications around the habits that impact on it.

## Data and evidence

The longer bathing season this year allowed for the litter and attitudinal surveys used to evaluate the campaign to be conducted both at the start and the end of the summer. In addition, this was supported by local community groups, who were engaged to carry out litter surveys on their respective beaches using our citizen science template, helping to gather valuable data whilst also getting involved in a key aspect of the campaign.

Overall, this year's campaign was both broader in scope and more nuanced in its approach, seeking to better address the different aspects of bathing water challenges in order to achieve its core behaviour change objectives.

# My Beach, Your Beach 2021 overview



## Reach

**920,000**

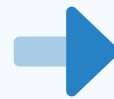
total reach achieved



## Campaigning

**71%**

beach locals noticed  
the campaign



## Looking ahead

**76%**

would like to see  
ongoing work

## Behaviour change



## Water quality

**46%**

beach users check  
bathing water quality



## Indoor habits

**43%**

would change  
habits that block pipes,  
resulting in  
sewage-related debris



## Beach litter

**82%**

would pick up litter  
when visiting the beach



# Campaign delivery

Building from the approach outlined in the previous section, the key objectives of the campaign this year can be summarised as follows:

- Encourage beach stewardship
- Educate around bathing water quality
- Reach new audiences -both locals and visitors
- Gather more data and evidence

Delivery against these objectives comprised a combination of communications strands supported by number of targeted interventions. An overview of this year's campaign activity can be seen below:

Intervention roll-out				
May	June	July	August	September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pre-campaign litter surveys</li> <li>■ Launch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bathing water quality</li> <li>■ Scotrail partnership launch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Glasgow Fair - Daytrippers</li> <li>■ Doggy Ambassador competition</li> <li>■ Business engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Schools engagement</li> <li>■ Business engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Community celebration</li> <li>■ Post-campaign surveys</li> </ul>
<h2>Ongoing communications</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Beach stewardship / #LuckyToLiveHere</li> <li>■ Calls to action (litter, dog poo, gulls)</li> <li>■ Bathing water quality awareness / pipes and drains messaging</li> </ul>				

A further breakdown of key campaign elements will be presented in the following sections, including stakeholder engagement, communications, collateral, key interventions and data gathering.

## Stakeholder engagement

Local partners and supporters, including beach managers, the local authority and community groups at each site, are crucial to the delivery of My Beach Your Beach. This year saw our ongoing relationships with key groups and contacts strengthened, as well as new relationships built with the council and local groups at the new site, Saltcoats/Ardrossan.

We would like to acknowledge support from the following groups at each site:

Beach	Community group	Local authority
Ayr	Don't Trash Ayr	South Ayrshire Council
Troon	Friends of Troon Beaches	
Irvine	Irvine Clean Up Crew Coastwatch	North Ayrshire Council
Saltcoats/ Ardrossan	Three Towns Clean Up Crew Ardrossan Community Development Trust	
Kinghorn	Kinghorn Harbour Residents Group Kinghorn Community Council	Fife Countryside & Community Trust
Portobello Beach	Keep Porty Tidy	Edinburgh Council
Fisherrow Sands	Fisherrow Harbour Seafront Association Fisherrow Waterfront Group (part of FHSA as of this summer)	East Lothian Council

In the lead-up to this summer's campaign, a stakeholder session was held on 31 March 2021 in order to capture community feedback and input to inform the development of this summer's campaign. These groups supported campaign delivery throughout the summer, through litter surveys, communications and various interventions on a case by case basis - in addition to their own independent work to care for their local places and communities. Some further examples of community action at each site are outlined in the intervention section.





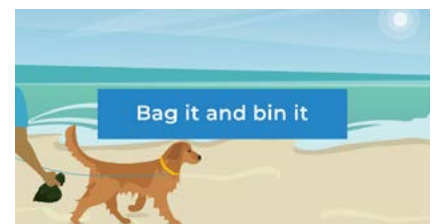
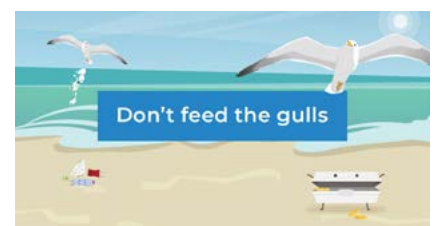
## Communications

### Campaign messaging

Throughout the bathing season, a suite of campaign messaging was rolled out across KSB and partner social media and other channels. This included updated versions of existing campaign assets, as well as a variety of new messaging assets reflecting this year's communications strands:

### Beach stewardship

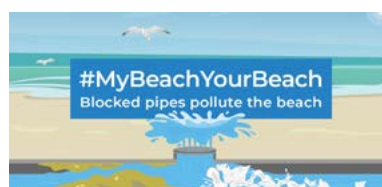
The key calls to action around behaviours on the beach -littering, gull-feeding and bagging and binning dog poo- were framed in the context of beach stewardship, with a call to 'Help protect the sand and sea'. Additional messages around 'take your litter away' and 'leave the beach cleaner than you found it' were also included this year, to emphasise ownership and responsibility.



### Bathing water quality

Bespoke social media cards were created featuring the bathing water signage for each beach and deployed with communications outlining key facts about bathing water quality, why it's important, and how to check it.

These were complemented with communications explaining the link between habits indoors, blocked pipes and bathing water contamination, making use of updated collateral and messaging that was improved for clarity.



## Collateral

The campaign presence was refreshed at all sites as needed, replacing damaged collateral, installing additional collateral e.g. in car parks, public toilets or along the beach and using the new messaging outlined above. In addition, campaign collateral was rolled out to the new site, Saltcoats/Ardrossan.



*Stewardship banners at Kinghorn and Fisherrow Sands as well as a new campaign presence at Saltcoats/Ardrossan beach.*



*3 Ps messaging installed in all public toilets near all campaign beaches.*



*Additional campaign messaging installed at car parks and train stations, in order to target visitors to the beach.*



## Interventions

### Launch: setting the scene

My Beach Your Beach launched on 17 May 2021, in advance of the SEPA pre-season water quality surveys. Launch announcements were linked to the results of pre-campaign litter surveys, carried out by local community groups at each site, in order to highlight local litter issues and galvanise action. This was followed-up by communications encouraging locals to get involved in the Summer Clean campaign, followed by engagement around #LuckyToLiveHere and celebrating the beach. Finally at the start of the bathing season in June, the campaign started raising awareness around bathing water quality.

### Scotrail partnership



At the end of June 2021, My Beach Your Beach launched a partnership with Scotrail, which supported the campaign by delivering key messages to target daytripper audiences, particularly along the Ayrshire coast.

This included the installation of campaign collateral at the Ayr-bound platforms 11-15 at Glasgow Central station, as well as destination stations Saltcoats, Ardrossan, Irvine, Troon and Ayr.

In addition, Scotrail posted regularly on their Twitter feed, which has a reach of nearly 250,000 followers. This included a bespoke communications feature in July, during the Glasgow Fair, which played on the history of the Ayrshire coast as a daytripper destination. Historical images were used for a different engagement angle with campaign content and a special quiz around historical facts about each beach directed participants to the campaign web pages. A total of 101 people engaged with the quiz.



Enjoying the #GlasgowFair? With staycations set to be the holiday of #Summer2021 we've teamed up with @ScotRail to bring you a special edition of our #MyBeachYourBeach quiz. Check it out 🗑️ [surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CGRYQQ](https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CGRYQQ)



This weekend marks the #GlasgowFair that for years has seen Glaswegians flock #DoonTheWatter for some sand & sea. With staycations set to be the holiday of choice this summer. When visiting the beach, bring a litter bag & leave no trace. #MyBeachYourBeach @KSBScotland



## #DoggyAmbassador competition

The popular Doggy Ambassador competition was run online again this year. A total of 26 Ambassador submissions were received from across the seven beaches, with a total of 84 votes cast to select a Doggy Ambassador for the west and east coasts. The winners got their portraits taken by a professional photographer and were featured in local press, as well as featuring on social media to help encourage dog owners to bag it and bin it.



55,242 overall reach



84 votes



1,892 engagements



4 local press articles

## Business engagement

Local businesses including food & drink outlets and supermarkets have previously been identified as important stakeholders for this campaign, that can help to engage both customers and staff with key messages. Last summer's circumstances did not lend themselves to business engagement and this year we were keen to create opportunities to revisit this.

The business pledge and [web page](#) were updated with a renewed call for businesses local to campaign beaches to take part. This was also supported by a number of council channels (e.g. Business Gateway) and local community groups, some of which put up posters in local businesses.

50 Business posters distributed



50 posters distributed







### Schools engagement

Engaging local school children with My Beach, Your Beach was another target outcome for this year's campaign, as a key way of fostering local ownership of the beach, bathing water and campaign outcomes.

A classroom resource was created for S1-S6 pupils, bespoke to each of the seven campaign beaches. It provides an introduction to bathing waters generally and at each beach, explaining the different factors that can impact on bathing water quality and inviting pupils to reflect on what makes their beach worth protecting. This was made available on a new [Education and Learning](#) section of the web page, along with other resources for schools.

At the start of the 2021/22 school semester in August, a campaign pack was sent to 41 schools local to the campaign beaches, including posters, bathroom stickers (3Ps) and a covering letter encouraging teachers to make use of the classroom resource. This will continue to be promoted through the school year through our Eco-schools channels in order to ensure maximum uptake.



41 packs sent to schools



200 posters distributed



500 stickers distributed

## Community features

Over the course of the summer, local community groups supported the campaign alongside a raft of their own activities. As part of the drive to encourage beach stewardship, a number of local initiatives were highlighted, including:

## Community support

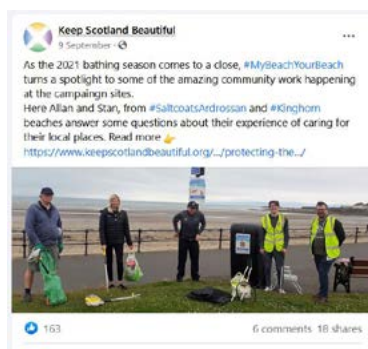
### Irvine



#### Cup and cigarette campaign

Following on from the results of the pre-campaign survey, Irvine Clean Up Crew ran their own campaign to target cigarettes and coffee cups on the beach.

### Kinghorn and Saltcoats / Ardrossan



#### Community blogs

The community groups at these two sites contributed a blog each, following a Q&A format designed to highlight the great work that they do for their communities.

Reach: 5,155+

### Troon



#### Clean Up Hero of the Month

A member of the local community at Troon was nominated and awarded our monthly Clean Up Hero of the month award in September, helping to highlight the amazing work that local volunteers do to keep their places looking beautiful.

Reach: 5,902+

### Fisherrow Sands



#### Litter picking station

Following discussions with the local community and council over the summer, we co-designed a locking litter picking station, which was installed on the beach.

Reach: 2,598+

### Portobello



#### Silent Disco Litter Pick

In September, My Beach Your Beach teamed up with our Treasure Your River campaign to launch Source to Sea week with a silent disco litter pick on Portobello beach, in collaboration with Keep Porty Tidy and with the help of 18 volunteers.

Reach: 13,481+





## Data & evidence

This summer we aimed to capture more data and evidence around the campaign and its impact. This included:

**Community litter surveys** – Using our citizen science model, local groups recorded litter counts and types along a set transect of the beach and prom at each site, capturing an indicative snapshot at the start and end of the bathing season.

**Attitudinal surveying** – Our online attitudinal surveys, bespoke to each beach, were run at the start and end of the bathing season at each site, delivered through a combination of geographically targeted social media on KSB channels and supported in certain cases by local community and council channels too.



# Results: Impact and learning

## Campaign reach

My Beach Your Beach 2021 achieved an increase in reach from last year's campaign, likely due to a number of factors, including:

- Improved social media activity, both targeted and otherwise, including at the new site (Saltcoats/Ardrossan).
- Reaching new audiences in Glasgow and beyond, through our partnership with Scotrail.
- Increased campaign activity on the ground, which generated more opportunities for publicity.



Social

**469,700**

social media reach



Web

**8,499**

website views

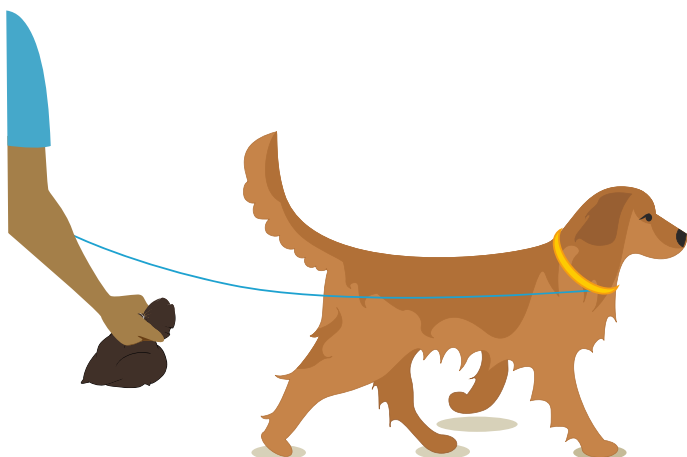


Press

**439,906**

press reach

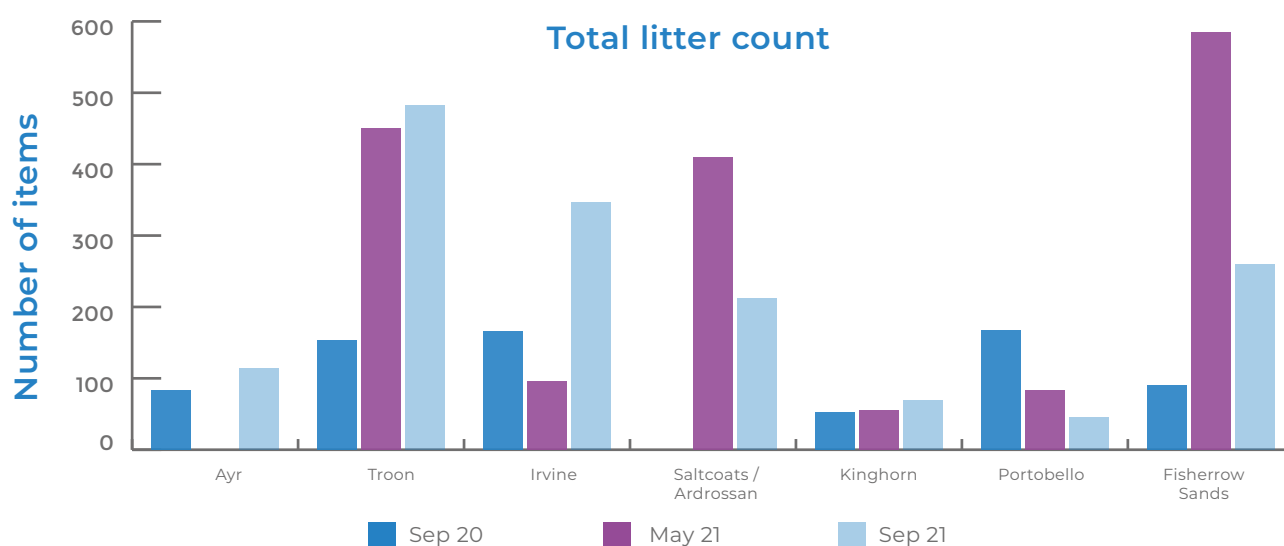
**Total reach: 918,105**





## Litter surveys

Litter survey results were mixed this year, nevertheless indicating some interesting insights and trends. The graph below shows an overview of total litter counts at the start and end of the season.



Comparison of total litter counts at the start and end of this summer, and with the data collected at the end of summer 2020.

Litter survey data is always difficult to interpret because it is subject to a variety of factors. In addition, it is worth noting that surveying by the community at each site meant there was more opportunity for surveyor bias this year, as different people notice and count litter differently. With this in mind, a brief analysis of results at each site is provided below.

**Ayr** – Pre-survey data for this site was collected but has not been provided. Comparison of the post-survey data between this year and 2020 indicates an increase, which can possibly be attributed to increased visitor numbers to the area.

**Troon** – Litter counts were significantly higher this year as compared to 2020 and also higher at the end of the campaign than the start. This site faced challenges with increased visitor impacts this summer, which could account for this trend overall -although marine litter was a significant proportion of the litter counted, in addition to the food and drink litter generally attributable to beach users (Table 1). In addition, when comparing to last year's data, the main areas of increase are small litter items, specifically cigarettes and plastic pieces, which are commonly subject to surveyor bias.

**Irvine** – Litter counts at the start of the campaign were similar to those recorded at the end of last summer, however the 'post-campaign' count was much higher. Like with the other Ayrshire sites, this could be a reflection of high visitor impacts. The biggest increase was in food & drink litter (see Table 1).

**Saltcoats/Ardrossan** – The amount of litter recorded at the end of the bathing season dropped by 26% as compared to the start of the campaign. This is within the range expected at new campaign sites, confirming trends observed previously both in My Beach Your Beach and in other similar Keep Scotland Beautiful campaigns.

**Kinghorn** – Litter data this year is consistent with previous trends, showing significantly lower litter levels here as compared to other sites. Local feedback has indicated that the closing down of the beach front café in recent years has resulted in minimal food and drink litter at this site, which is evident in the data. The majority of litter here (48%) is brought in by the sea (Table 1).

**Portobello** – Litter data at this site has shown a steady decline from last year and over the summer. This is likely linked to the diligent efforts of the local Keep Porty Tidy group, who have taken up regular litter picks along the beach and prom, supported by other interventions, including campaign activity. It is encouraging to see the positive impact of these efforts captured in the data.

**Fisherrow Sands** – Litter data this summer was significantly higher than that recorded last year. This includes an increase from 45 cigarettes counted last year to an average of 657 counted this year, which, similarly to Troon, may be a reflection of surveyor bias. A slight decrease over the summer could be attributed to an above-average pre-season count of 191 pieces of sea defence debris that were washing up on the beach at the time. When this is taken into account, it would appear that litter levels at this site remained roughly the same over the course of the summer.

	Ayr		Troon		Irvine		Saltcoats/ Ardrossan		Kinghorn		Portobello		Fisherrow Sands	
	May	Sep	May	Sep	May	Sep	May	Sep	May	Sep	May	Sep	May	Sep
Smoking	0	48	66	129	127	73	111	182	19	14	31	19	629	684
Food and drink	0	18	178	125	52	205	163	92	1	1	42	11	173	112
Dog poo	0	0	4	2	1	3	10	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
SRD *	0	0	52	18	9	26	36	9	2	0	16	9	18	2
Marine	0	38	277	11	16	34	113	38	27	49	4	14	286	70
Other	0	58	62	47	18	69	88	66	24	20	21	10	105	76

Table 1 – breakdown of litter types counted at the start and end of summer 2021 at each site.

\*SRD =sewage related debris; includes wet wipes, however, these can often originate on the beach too.

In summary, there was an overall increase of litter at the Ayrshire sites, potentially reflecting visitor impacts this summer. Litter decreased at the new site, Saltcoats/Ardrossan as well as Portobello potentially reflecting campaign and community efforts. Kinghorn was once again impacted mainly by marine litter and litter levels at Fisherrow Sands were high, though largely stable over the summer and comprising high proportions of smoking litter.

## Perceptions and attitudes

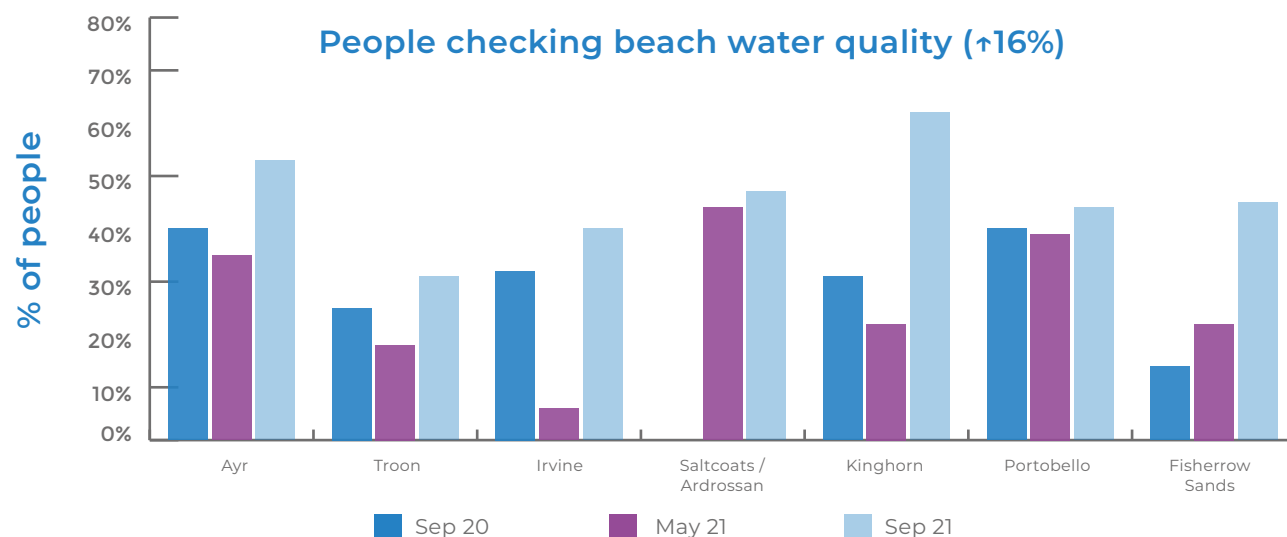
Attitudinal surveys were carried out in advance of the campaign launch in May and then again at the end of the bathing season in September. Respondent numbers were inconsistent both within and between sites, however, the data still yielded a number of consistent trends.

Number of survey respondents	Ayr	Troon	Irvine	Saltcoats/ Ardrossan	Kinghorn	Portobello	Fisherrow Sands
Pre-campaign	23	11	17	27	116	130	36
Post -campaign	20	35	95	103	34	17	20

### Bathing water quality awareness

There was an overall 16% increase in the number of people who 'check bathing water quality when visiting the beach' at the end of the campaign this summer as compared to the same time last year (excluding Saltcoats/Ardrossan).

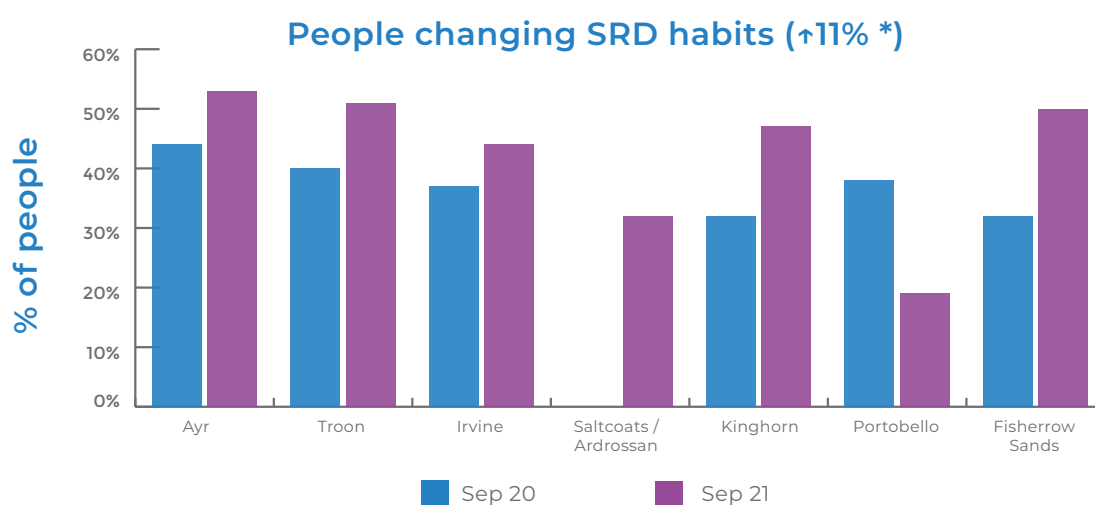
This is a positive result, given that education around bathing water quality was a key objective of this summer's campaign. Additional factors are likely to have contributed to these results too, with bathing waters in the spotlight through a number of high publicity events. Either way, this is a positive step towards changing behaviour and achieving campaign objectives.



Positive trends were also recorded with respect to key habits affecting bathing water quality, as shown below.

### SRD habits

At the end of this summer's campaign, a higher percentage of respondents (43% on average) reported that they'd be willing to change their habits in relation to what they flush down the toilet and pour down the drain, in order to support bathing water quality improvements, as compared to last year. This increase was recorded at all sites with the exception of Portobello, where this decreased by 20%. Excluding this outlier to the trend, the overall average increase across the remaining sites was 11%\*.



The most dramatic increase was at Fisherrow Sands (18%) which is not surprising, given recent issues with the site's bathing water designation (NB - at this site, the survey question was hypothetical, acknowledging that bathing water quality is not currently displayed here).

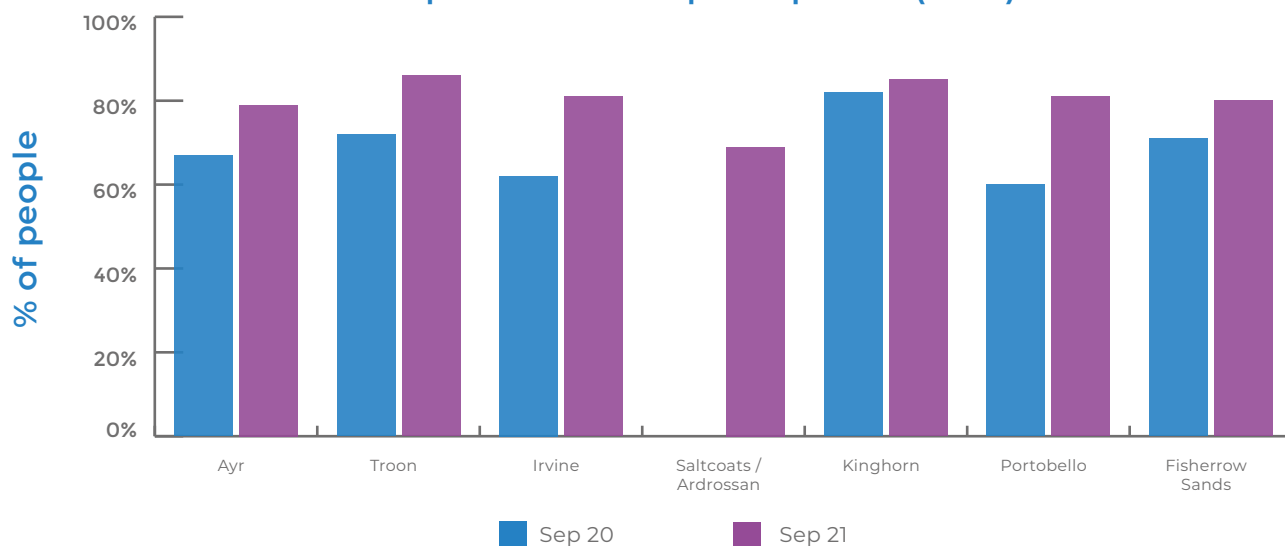
The overall positive result across all sites aligns with the increased awareness of bathing water quality described above and suggests that increased engagement around these issues over this summer's campaign had a positive impact on people's perceptions and behavioural intentions..



### Beach stewardship

Last summer's campaign had found that an encouraging 69% of people would be willing to pick up litter when visiting the beach, in order to leave it cleaner than they found it. At the end of this summer's campaign this percentage rose 13% to an average 82%. Increases were recorded at all sites, the most dramatic being at Portobello (22%), where the activity and profile of local community litter picking was significantly higher this year. Similar trends and likely causalities were recorded at Irvine and Troon as well.

People who would pick up litter (↑13%)



### Campaign recall

An average of 74% of respondents at all sites noticed the campaign this year and 76% said they'd like to see more campaign activity going forward.

These percentages are high, but slightly lower than last summer, following a similar trend from the year before. Although the trend is not strong, it is worth noting that the downward trajectory could be a reflection of campaign impact over time, which is not surprising given that it's in its fourth year.

# Conclusions



My Beach Your Beach 2021 was a multi-faceted campaign, that featured:

- A focus on beach stewardship, as well as bathing water quality.
- Targeting of both local audiences and visitors to the beach.
- More activity on the ground, in addition to online activity.

Campaign messaging was refined to become more relevant to target audiences and delivery was aided by a number of helpful partnerships including with local groups and councils, as well as Scotrail and other campaigns (e.g. Treasure Your River, Irvine Cigarette and Cup campaign, #RespectProtectEnjoy).

As a result, the campaign was successful at awareness-raising and engagement, as demonstrated both by increased levels of reach and by improvements in key behavioural indicators, including the number of people checking bathing water quality, and those willing to change their habits indoors and at the beach in order to help protect the sand and sea.

Results in terms of litter impacts were mixed, with overall increases at the sites on the Ayrshire coasts, potentially reflecting record visitor numbers, but significant decreases recorded at the new site, Saltcoats/Ardrossan, and Portobello.

These results mark another successful year for My Beach Your Beach, however, declining campaign recall rates and other feedback indicate that, after four years, the current form of the campaign may be reaching the end of its lifespan with a refreshed look, feel and overall approach needed in the longer term and going forward.

The campaign has now had the opportunity to explore and develop a range of different approaches and targeting around different aspects of bathing water challenges. In its final year, we propose to bring focus back to basics, focusing on the campaign legacy and working closely with partners to maximise behaviour change and impact at each site.





We support the ambitions of the United Nations  
Sustainable Development Goals.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is your charity  
for Scotland's environment. We work with  
you to help combat climate change,  
reduce litter and waste, and protect and  
enhance the places we care for.



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