

Marine and coastal litter

Over the past 20 years Keep Scotland Beautiful has played an active role in raising awareness of marine and coastal litter with individuals, communities, with local authorities, with the Scottish Government and with businesses.

It is commonly documented that 80% of marine and coastal litter comes from land. This is why we have worked to raise awareness of litter and littering behaviour and the impact on the environment for more than 50 years.

Litter from land can enter the marine environment from human activity on the seas and oceans, but also from our activities on land. Litter can blow from cities, towns and villages into waterways where it in turn travels to the marine environment.

We believe that it is crucial to link up land-based litter prevention campaigns and marine and coastal litter reduction programmes if we are to reduce plastic pollution in the sea and oceans.

This is why we have worked with partner organisations across Europe, as members of the Clean Europe Network, to develop monitoring and evaluation tools to measure litter on land in a consistent way.

Clean Europe Network

Derek Robertson, CEO of Keep Scotland Beautiful is currently President of the [Clean Europe Network](#), a pan-European platform where organisations active in the field of litter prevention share experience, expertise, best practice and research with a view to improving litter prevention across the EU.

Members of the Clean Europe Network are working together to develop a common approach to measuring litter, which could in due course be used all across Europe including in countries where litter measurement has not been carried out before. A common way of measuring litter would allow everyone to have a better understanding of the scale of the problem across Europe and would make it easier to come up with solutions that can be replicated from place to place.

The second main project of the Clean Europe Network is to find out how items of litter end up in our rivers and canals, lakes and streams, often travelling to the sea. Many studies have already looked at marine litter resulting from coastline littering, but much less is known about how rubbish gets into the fresh water environment. The project aims to shed greater light on this problem and help inform better policy and prevention measures on land which will also help keep our seas clean.

Good data on the source of litter, its main pathways to the sea and the effects of litter reduction programmes are crucial to solving the problem of marine litter.

Scottish Marine Litter Strategy

We played an integral part in developing the first [Marine Litter Strategy for Scotland](#), led by the Scottish Government, with steering group members including SEPA, SNH, Scottish Water, Marine Conservation Society, and KIMO International.

We are supporting the delivery of this strategy in Scotland through much of our work on education, community clean-up activities, and via our work with industry and businesses.

Here are some examples:

Clean Up Scotland

Annually we support an average of approximately 7,000 volunteers to carry out clean ups of beaches and coastal locations around Scotland as part of the [Clean Up Scotland](#) campaign.

We recognised a number of coastal heroes in 2016: Glaitness Primary from Orkney for their pick up 3 pieces campaign, Pete Miners of Coast of Moray Beach Cleaners (Aberdeenshire) and Iain and Julia House, MCS beach adopters.

We also feed back into the Ocean Conservancy data (norma cc'ed in) and of course I organised and ran a beach Clean as part of the R&A biodiversity challenge and did the MCS survey.

Support work of regional coastal partnerships, particularly on marine and coastal litter

We have supported the writing of the Clyde Marine Litter Plan, the Forth Estuary Coastal Litter Project and presented at a number of symposiums and community and local authority events on the issues and what actions can be taken.

We have close links with many coastal groups through activities such as [It's Your Neighbourhood](#), [Beautiful Scotland](#) and our [Beach Award](#) programme.

Beach Award programme

We recognise 60 beaches around the coast of Scotland with our [Beach Award](#) for excellent land based and facility management. A number of criteria are linked to [cleanliness standards](#) and we provide training and best practice guides for local authority and community beach managers to ensure that litter from beaches does not negatively impact the coastal environment at these award beaches.

Wrigley Litter Less project

Over the past four years we have engaged - 92 schools, 2,180 educators and 32,672 children/young people in the [Wrigley Litter Less Campaign](#) in Scotland.

In 2015/2016, our Wrigley Litter Less Campaign looked at the problem of marine litter in local waterways. We worked with 22 schools and organised a two-month long exhibition on the problem and solutions, led by the young people, at national visitor attraction The Tall Ship in Glasgow. This was visited by 67,000 people reaching new and unengaged audiences with the messages!

Partnership working

Marine Conservation Society

We have worked with the Scottish team [Marine Conservation Society](#) team for the past decade to actively promote clean up activity and surveying of marine and coastal litter across Scotland. Carrying out joint events, encouraging volunteers to get involved in campaigns that each charity promotes, and making our partners aware of opportunities to take action.

We are a member of the [Marine Litter Action Network](#), administered by the Marine Conservation Society in the UK, and have jointly delivered a pilot '[unflushables](#)' project, to raise awareness of sewage related debris on beaches, in three Fife secondary schools.

FIDRA

We were one of the first national environmental charities to support the work of the environmental charity [Fidra](#); in particular its flagship campaigns the Great Nurdle Hunt and the Cotton Bud Project.

Think Before You Flush / Bag it and Bin it

We have actively promoted the messages of Scottish Water for the past 20 years to raise awareness of the impacts of flushing sanitary and bathroom items down the toilet, and the resultant impact on the waste water infrastructure and our coastline.