



Upstream[®]

Battle

On the Clyde

Phase 2 - maintaining momentum

Project summary

Over last three years [Upstream Battle®](#), our award-winning campaign to tackle marine litter from source to sea, has been raising awareness, gathering evidence and inspiring action in Glasgow and the Clyde Valley.

At the conclusion of Phase 1 of the campaign in June 2020 we published our first [citizen science data report](#). The report, which used data collected by individuals and groups from along the Clyde and its tributaries, provided a snapshot of littering issues and behaviours that need to be tackled. In October 2020, thanks to funding from Crown Estate Scotland the campaign was able to continue across the Clyde Valley for another year.

Building on the success of Phase 1, the funding committed by Crown Estate Scotland allowed the campaign to continue to tackle marine litter at a community level and set litter firmly in the context of the climate emergency in the year leading up to COP26 – the biggest international climate talks - which came to Glasgow in November 2021. The campaign helped to highlight how our unsustainable consumption of single-use items, for example plastic packaging and wet wipes, is driving up carbon emissions, wasting scarce resources and often polluting our land, streams, rivers and seas as litter.

Crown Estate Scotland funding provided support for training, online events and communications to the 16 existing community [Anchor Groups](#) and allowed four new groups to be recruited to the network from across the River Clyde and its 38 tributaries ([see table on page 3](#)).



Scottish Resources
AWARDS
WINNER



Supporting Anchor Groups across the Clyde Valley

Anchor Groups have led the way on Upstream Battle, removing litter and gathering evidence on the levels and types of litter on stretches of the River Clyde and its tributaries.

In 2021 we were able to extend our Anchor Group network and recruit four new groups in Glasgow, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, and South Lanarkshire. The location of Anchor Groups are shown on the map.

Training and developing Anchor Groups

At the start of their journey, Anchor Groups received support to adopt a site along the Clyde, or one of its tributaries, and were asked to monitor litter levels at this site to gather data. They were also given training on marine litter, citizen science and behaviour change theory, to help develop campaigns which focused on local litter issues.

We have supported groups to use this training to trial localised campaigns to tackle specific behaviour and issues identified by their survey data. In Ferguslie Park, Renfrewshire, a new Anchor Group, the Darkwood Crew, identified flytipping as an issue and tackled it in three different ways. Find out more in our [case study](#).

Ahead of COP26, Anchor Groups were also provided a taster session of our [Climate Emergency Training](#). This provided groups with knowledge about how their work on litter and waste also supports our fight to tackle the climate emergency.



Groups	Local authority
1. Belville Community Garden Trust and Greenock Cut Ranger volunteers	Inverclyde
2. Clean Sweep Branch of Milngavie in Bloom	East Dunbartonshire
3. Erskine Community Garden	Renfrewshire
4. Friends of Cairnhill Woods	East Dunbartonshire
5. Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore	West Dunbartonshire
6. Friends of River Kelvin	Glasgow
7. Friends of Stonehouse Park	South Lanarkshire
8. Friends of the Calder	South Lanarkshire
9. Glasgow Coastal Rowing Club	Glasgow
10. Luggiewatch	North Lanarkshire
11. Neilston Development Trust	East Renfrewshire
12. RIG Arts	Inverclyde
13. West College Scotland	Renfrewshire
14. Queen's Cross Housing Association	Glasgow
15. 86th Glasgow Boy's Brigade	East Renfrewshire
16. Brighter Bothwell	South Lanarkshire
17. Darkwood Crew	Renfrewshire



Wider engagement across Glasgow and the Clyde Valley

The last 18 months have been challenging for our Anchor Groups as they have faced challenges in coordinating and undertaking group activities as a result of Covid-19 and varying restriction levels.

In June 2020 we commissioned a national poll that indicted a “lockdown effect” on the perception of litter and people’s response to that: 29% of the public¹ believed that the amount of litter had got worse over the lockdown period; galvanizing action with online litter picking groups starting up to coordinate action.

One of our Anchor Groups, Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore, were able to make the most out of lockdown, and have seen an increase in the numbers of volunteers engaged locally. [Read our case study](#) to find out how they’ve gone from strength to strength, allowing them to adopt new sites and target a broader area locally.

Summer Clean – Source 2 Sea week of action

As restrictions began to ease after Easter in 2021, we were able to encourage and inspire more activity from our supporters. In May and June we hosted a Summer Clean as part of the UK-wide [Great British Spring Clean](#). As part of the Summer Clean we asked volunteers to pledge the amount of time they’d spend litter picking and converted that to miles as part of the Million Mile Mission.

After a successful [Source 2 Sea week of action in 2019](#) we decided to highlight the source to sea journey and encourage people to tackle litter inland and prevent it heading downstream and potentially ending up on our beaches. The 2021 [Source 2 Sea week of action](#) took place 13-19 September. As part of this we encouraged people cross the Clyde, Tay and Forth to survey and litter pick. As part of Talk Like a Pirate Day we organised a plastic fishing punt trip along the Forth and Clyde Canal in Kirkintilloch. We had volunteers in the punt picking up litter from the canal and along the towpaths doing a survey and litter pick. Cans, bottles and sweet wrappers were very common showing the paths were well used by people eating and drinking on the go.

Working with Scottish Water we have also delivered two community workshops developed as part of Phase 1 of Upstream Battle, one online and one in person, to individuals, groups, schools and businesses to talk about the marine litter problem and discuss ways we can work together to change behaviours. At these events we delivered training on the scale of the litter issue and how groups can use behaviour change models to target local interventions. We also provided examples to inspire them to design and roll-out their own campaigns.

1. Polling undertaken by Mark Diffley Consultancy and Research using the Scotpulse online panel, on behalf of Keep Scotland Beautiful

Summer Clean 2021



Over **75,000** miles pledged.
That's more than **twice**
around the world.



1,500,000 minutes pledged.
In that time, Scotland could
play **16,666** football matches.



195 tonnes of rubbish
collected in total across
Scotland, including every
local authority area.

Report findings

The following is using the data collected from [surveys](#) completed across the Clyde Valley throughout 2021 by Anchor Groups and members of the public.



The top five in: 1. The Clyde in Greenock

1. Metal
2. Plastic pieces
3. Drinks cans
4. Glass fragments
5. Snack packets

The top five in: 3. White Cart

1. Wet wipes
2. PPE
3. Snack packets
4. Drinks cans
5. Paper

The top five in: 2. The Clyde in Govan

1. Glass fragments
2. Cigarettes
3. Drinks cans
4. Snack packets
5. Plastic pieces

The top five in: 4. Near the Kelvin in Hillhead

1. Cigarettes
2. Glass fragments
3. Newspaper and magazines
4. Snack packets
5. Plastic pieces

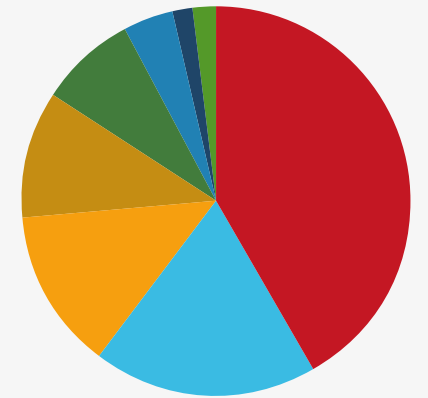
The top five in: 5. Clyde Canal in Kirkintilloch

1. Snack packets
2. Plastic bottles
3. Drinks cans
4. Paper
5. Foil wrappers

What was involved?

- 6** rivers and tributaries
- 7** local authorities
- 49** Upstream Battle surveys
- 7,000** Items counted in total

Material types found













- 41.7% Plastic** (46.9%)
- 18.6% Cigarettes** (7.9%)
- 13.2% Metal** (8%)
- 10.7% Glass** (7.1%)
- 7.9% Paper** (3.4%)
- 4.2% Sanitary** (16.4%)
- 1.5% Dog poo** (3.8%)
- 1.8% Other** (6.5%)

Number in brackets shows previous report figures

Key findings

- Items associated with eating and drinking on the go continue to feature heavily in the top 10, just as they did in our last [citizen science report](#). Some items, like drinks cans, plastic bottles and glass bottles, may eventually decrease with the introduction of the [Deposit Return Scheme](#).
- In our last report cotton buds and wet wipes featured in the top 10. Whilst this time they haven't been, it doesn't mean they aren't still a huge issue, The difference could simply be site selection in areas further from a sewage outflow.
- We are still seeing variation in littered items and behaviours across survey sites, for example some had eating and drinking on the go as a problem, others had commercial or household waste. This demonstrates the need for localised support and campaigns to change behaviours to improve communities for good.
- The pandemic has also introduced new forms of littering, with discarded PPE now a common sight along waterways and beaches across Scotland. We have worked with Zero Waste Scotland and the Marine Conservation Society to design and roll-out a campaign encouraging people to choose a reusable face mask over single-use, and dispose of it correctly.
- In 2022 we will continue to work with local community groups to monitor litter issues and also design and install targeted campaigns. We will also expand our educational programmes to support learning and teaching across the Clyde Valley.

Top 10 littered items

1		Cigarettes	2		Snack packets
3		Plastic pieces	4		Glass fragments
5		Drinks cans	6		Plastic bottles
7		Newspapers & magazines	8		Plastic caps
9		Metal	10		Glass bottles and containers

Upstream Battle®

Building Momentum across Scotland

Upstream Battle continues to be a success across the Clyde Valley, and because of this, we have secured further funding to continue our work with communities and reintroduce work with schools in 2022. Without support from Crown Estate Scotland, we couldn't have maintained the momentum, and supported community groups through a year with varying levels of lockdown and uncertainty.

“Being an anchor group for Upstream Battle has enabled us to tackle the litter issue in a far more coherent way. We have the people power to do it and together we can educate others and get others involved, if only at the very least to stop disposing of litter in such a detrimental way.”

Anchor Group, Friends of Cairnhill Woods.

Alongside the success along the Clyde and its tributaries, we are also delighted to have launched [Upstream Battle on the River Tay](#) in August 2021, again with support from Crown Estate Scotland. Like this year's work on the Clyde this will focus on community engagement and gathering data to gain a better understanding of litter levels and behaviours across the area.

Get in touch

W: www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/upstreambattle

E: upstreambattle@keepsotlandbeautiful.org





We support the 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.



Keep Scotland Beautiful

T: 01786 471333 E: info@keepscotlandbeautiful.org

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