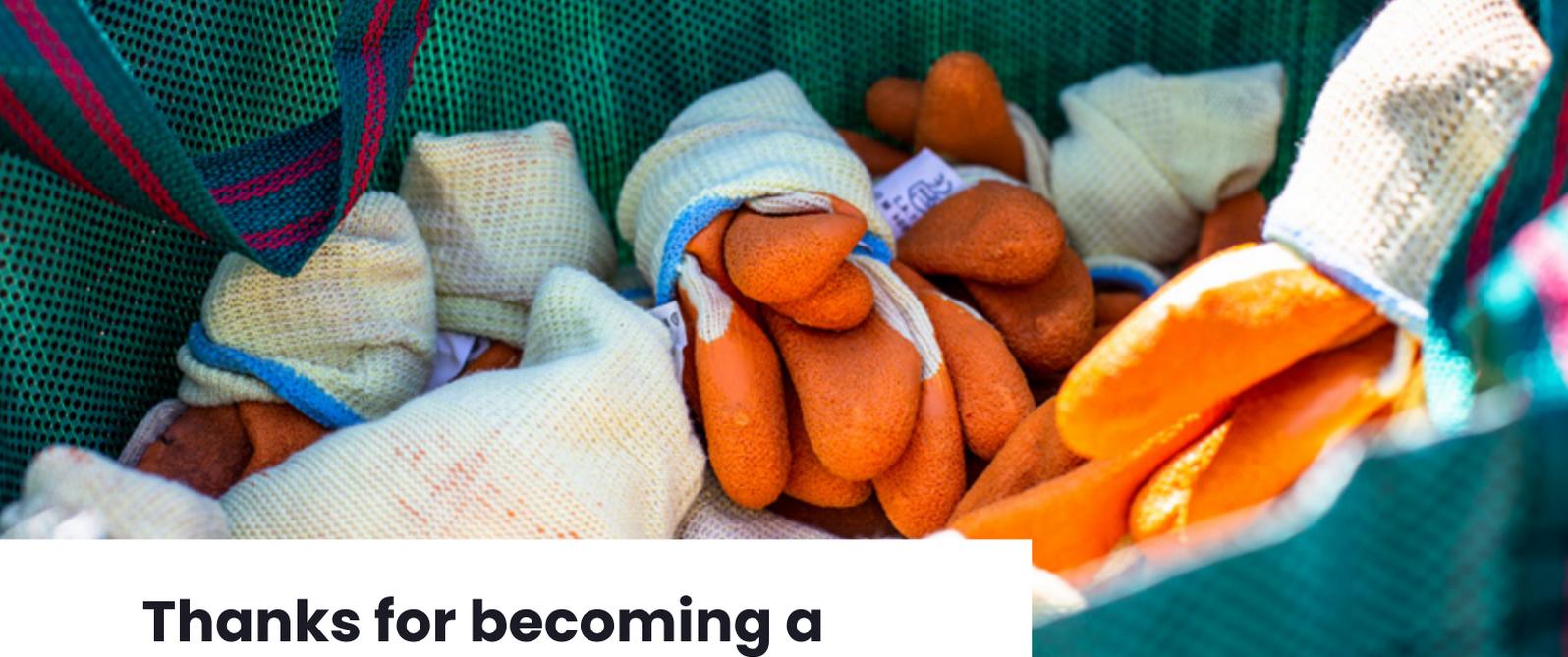


Beach Clean Organiser Guide





Thanks for becoming a beach clean organiser!

Some beach clean basics

Please follow our [Coronavirus beach clean safety guidance](#) – link to [COVID-19 H&S guidance](#)

Carrying out a Marine Conservation Society beach clean is simple – you and your volunteers clean up litter and record on survey forms what you find along a 100m stretch of your chosen beach from the strandline (the line the tide last reached) to the back part of the beach.

We only ask you to survey 100m because 90% of all litter types will almost certainly be found over that length and regular surveys over time in a set area will clearly indicate litter trends. You can of course carry on cleaning as much of the beach as you like in the time you have on the day.

The Marine Conservation Society runs a year-round, 100m survey initiative. You can clean up as often as you like – but ideally we need a set of results at least once a season.

Here's when you should do them:



Winter

mid-December to mid-January



Summer

mid-June to mid-July



Spring

April



Autumn

(the really important one)
Around the third weekend in September

What's what?

Beachwatch

our ongoing programme of beach clean events including...

The Great British Beach Clean

the Marine Conservation Society flagship Beachwatch event takes place for a week around the third weekend of September. The data we collect feeds into the International Coastal Cleanup.

Remember!

Every year, we hold the Great British Beach Clean in September for a week of events!

Data collected during the Great British Beach Clean, Great Northern Ireland Beach Clean and Great Channel Islands Beach Clean is part of the global annual International Coastal Clean-up. Hundreds of thousands of people clean beaches all over the world at the same time to give a global beach litter snapshot. For our part we publish our UK findings in a report at the end of the year which always receives huge media coverage.



Simple steps to a stress-free event

Getting started - [register as a Marine Conservation Society volunteer](#)

Once you are set up and logged in, you will see your volunteer dashboard where you can manage all your activity with us.

Click on the 'Organise a beach clean' card and this will take you through 3 simple steps to get your event organised from selecting your location, date and times, details of the event and notifying the landowner plus H&S bits.

Step:

1

Select your location, date and time – Here you'll pick a location for your beach clean by either selecting one that's already there or adding a new one. You'll also choose a date around the tides.

2

Set up your beach clean event page – This is the event page your volunteers will see and find out all of the useful information about your clean and sign up. Events can be private if you'd prefer, which means they won't show on the website but our team will still be able to see they're happening.

3

Summary and logistics – Now your event is set up, there are just a few things left to do – notify the landowner to get permission and so they can collect the rubbish, fill in the risk assessment and double check you have everything you need for the big day.

How to ensure you are covered by our insurance

Organisers must make time for appropriate planning, risk assessment and minimisation prior to their event. Organisers that have completed a risk assessment for their events, provide health and safety briefings before the cleans and get consent from parents/guardians for under 16s to take part in the clean are covered by our insurance.

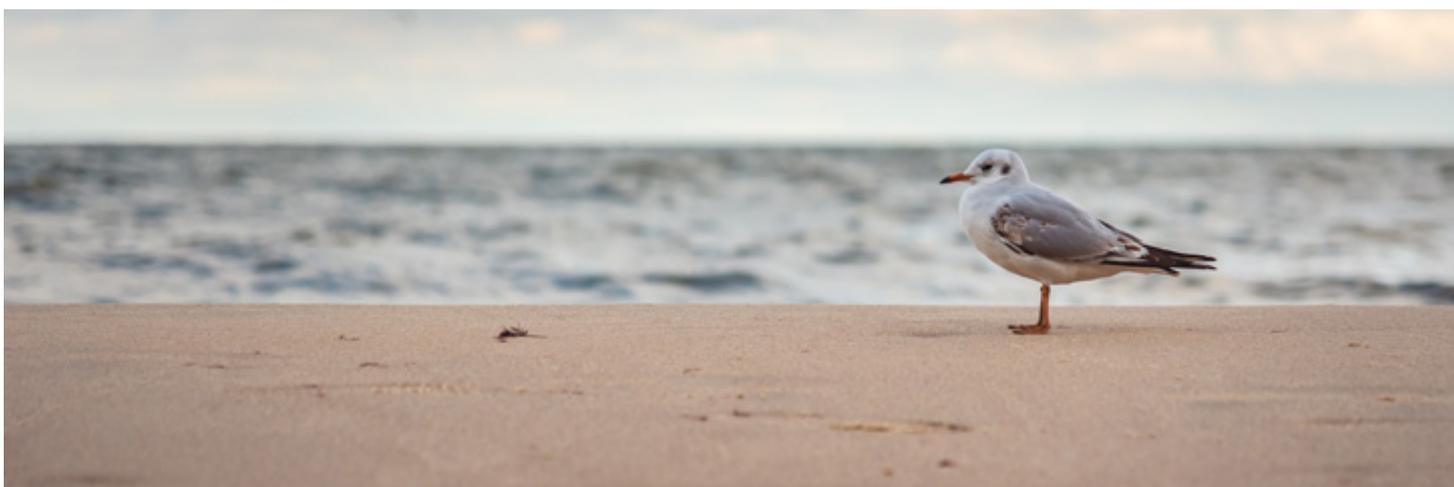
Step 1:

Select your location, date and time

Find 100m to clean and survey by searching around a location or postcode. You will see a map with the 100 metres of beaches from the search so that you can choose the right one.

If you can't find the 100m stretch you were looking for, then there is an option to submit a new one. This will be reviewed by the team and approved if there are no concerns (usually within 24hrs).

Set a date to fit with the tides. Ideally you want to be starting your beach clean about 2 hours after high tide. You can find tide times here tidetimes.co.uk



Step 2:

Set up your beach clean event page

This is where you can provide all the information about your event and either make it open to volunteers or private. Just fill everything in, including selecting a picture – as this brings the event to life on the website.



Making your event a winner

Our 'Promoting your beach clean' guide can be found online in your volunteer dashboard.

Go to the beach clean resources section under **'guides and resources'**

It's packed with hints and tips for getting your beach clean event noticed locally including template press releases to send to your local paper and radio station and suggested Facebook posts and tweets. There are also posters that you can put up locally.

You can find out how many volunteers have registered including groups by clicking on your event on your volunteer dashboard – it will also let you know how many spaces are left.

Step 3:

Summary and logistics

You are nearly set. All that's left to do is complete a risk assessment – there are templates you can download for this. And make sure you get permission from whoever owns the beach. Go to the beach clean resources section under **'guides and resources'** on your volunteer dashboard to find a template to use. When getting permission, ask what the owner would like you to do if you find needles and syringes.

You can save your event as a draft until these last bits are done and then come back (by finding the draft on your volunteer dashboard) to submit the event once permission has been granted.

Some owners need a copy of our insurance to give permission.



Not sure who the owner is? Ring the local council – it's almost certainly them but if it's privately owned they'll know who by and pass their details to you. You can also ask at the local beach shop or café – they will know who the owner is.

Cancelling your event

You can cancel your event at any time by clicking on the 'cancel' link at the bottom on the page from step 1 of the organise a beach clean process. An automatic email will be sent to your volunteers to let them know the event has been cancelled.

Organising your beach clean

Forms you'll need to take on the day...

...can all be found in your volunteer dashboard on our website.

Go to the beach clean resources section under 'guides and resources'

Print off enough **volunteer survey forms** – if there's 20 volunteers registered print off 10 with a few to spare – not everyone needs a form.

Use the survey **summary form** to collate all the data together and submit to the website.

Sources form shows you where we source each litter item to and it can also help with categorising of what you find

The risk assessment template can be found when going through the 3 step process, but it's also located in the beach clean resources section for ease

Photo consent form if you want to take photos that you can share

Parental consent forms for parent or guardian to sign for anyone under 16. This is to comply with our insurance of young volunteers.

Stuff we recommend you take with you if you don't have a Marine Conservation Society equipment pack

First Aid Kit – similar to the one you may have in the back of your car. Let people know you have one – but they can administer themselves as you don't need to be a trained first-aider.

Bucket – to collect sharp objects that will likely cut through a bin liner like glass and metal.

A big roll of bin liners – the heavy duty ones from a DIY store are ideal. If you are recycling rigid plastics, one colour for recycling and one for everything else works well.

Gloves – (if volunteers aren't using a litter picker) Ideally ask if volunteers can bring their own or the beach owner may have some for loan.

Litter pickers – The beach owner – especially if it's a council – may have equipment you can borrow. Alternatively, visit The Helping Hand Company, where you will receive a 10% discount on your order using the code MCSGROUP and they will also make a donation to MCS for each item sold. www.hhenvironmental.co.uk/shop

Clipboards and pens – again the beach owner may have some you can borrow but they're pretty cheap to buy if you want to start your own stash.

Weighing scales – you can pick up a small set of scales (the ones with a hook make it easy to hang the rubbish bags from) quite cheaply online. Search for a spring hanging balance (sometimes called a newton meter) or a luggage / travel scale.

Wear....

.....appropriate clothing. Sturdy footwear is a must and outer clothing to suit the British weather. Pack sunscreen if the weather looks like being good and a reusable water bottle!

On the day

Arrive in plenty of time and mark out the area use a tape measure if you have one but pacing it is fine



TIP – in your garden or along your street measure out 100 meters then how many of your steps it takes to cover the distance.

Put gloves and litter pickers in a place where people can pick up as they arrive. Hand out clipboards and pens when people are in their teams.



Briefing your volunteer group

Give the volunteers a briefing to include an intro to Beachwatch, that it's all about collecting data as well as cleaning, different litter types, where it comes and how MCS use the data to raise awareness, influence policy makers and run campaigns to stop litter getting there in the first place.

Here's a few pointers to include in your 'welcome' chat (for a more detailed briefing that you can download and take with you, go to your volunteer dashboard.

Marine litter is unsightly – bad for tourism and dangerous for marine creatures which can eat it or become entangled in it.

Plastics are a particular problem – consistently make up over 60% of what's found on beaches.

Plastic never disappears, it just gets smaller and smaller – and easier for marine creatures to eat which means it can move through the food chain potentially ending up on our dinner plates.

The toilets are over there – and you can get a brew at xxxx. (find out before your event)

The tides today are [list high tides - which you will have from your event planning].

Timings for the event – when we're going to start and finish.

Please don't touch anything that looks like it might be dangerous or full of something nasty (containers, drums, unexploded shells or syringes). If you're unsure, ask me.

Be careful about lifting heavy or semi-buried objects that could cause a strain injury – if in doubt don't lift!

Syringes and needles must be left where they are and the beach owner will be alerted to remove them afterwards.

We've done a risk assessment at the beach and here are a few of the hazards we identified – list.

After the litter pick – bags can be weighed (if you have a set of scales), forms tallied up and handed in. Take a group photo to share (if you have consent)

Doing the survey

The 100m is marked out – we do 100m because 90% of all litter types will almost certainly be found over that length and regular surveys over time in a set area will clearly indicated litter trends. The survey is from the strandline (the line the tide last reached) to the back part of the beach.

When you've done your 100m – you can carry on cleaning but not recording. We ONLY need data from the 100m submitted.

Your survey form is split into the different materials, and the categories are listed alphabetically.

Ideally, work in groups of between three and five. Put your team name at the top of the sheet. Suggest one person to write, one to hold the bag and the others to collect the litter. Make sure you've got a form, a pen and a bag and everyone must have a pair of gloves – don't pick up anything without them!

Pick up every piece of litter you find over the 100m stretch.

Record every bit on your survey form using the tally system (IIII).

Record it based on what the item is mostly made of – if you don't know what it is or can't find it on the form, ask me or record under 'Other' – with amount – on back of the survey form.

Note foreign / unusual items and take photos if possible on your mobile phone.

Nurdles – You may spot these (Picture of Nurdles) They're nurdles – the building blocks of pretty much anything plastic. Tell your volunteers to record under small plastic pieces and make sure you add them as being 'present' when submitting the results later.

Don't pick up any natural stuff – wood is fine to leave if not covered in resins or paints.

Some commonly mistaken items are cotton buds and lolly sticks: cotton bud sticks are thinner with notches at the ends! String or fishing net? Net is generally green!

Add it all up at the end and fill in the 'total' column.



Other data

Whilst doing the survey – make a note of the other pieces of information that you will need when submitting your data. Like **how many volunteers you have**, the **wind direction** and **sea state**.

After the beach clean

Count the bags of rubbish and if you have a pair of scales – weigh all the bags and record the weight as you will need this when submitting the results.

Take a pic of your volunteers altogether – ideally with the bags they've collected. Everyone must sign the model release form which is downloadable from the volunteer dashboard on the website. Go to the beach clean resources section under '**guides and resources**'

This gives MCS permission to use the image for digital and printed publications until an individual withdraws consent.

You can post the pic on your own social media networks as a thank you and also send to us at beachwatch@mcsuk.org or use #beachclean on twitter [@mcsuk](https://twitter.com/mcsuk) or on Instagram [@mcs_uk](https://www.instagram.com/mcs_uk)

Collect the volunteer survey sheets so you can input the results at home.

Stack the bags with the rest of the rubbish at the appointed collection point.

Thank everyone on behalf of MCS for their participation and if you have a date for your next clean – let everyone know!

Submitting your results

Add up the total numbers for each litter item from all the Volunteer Survey Sheets and add to the database as one survey summary, together with the other data you collected on the day.

Go to your volunteer dashboard when logged in. You will see your event – click on this where it says 'awaiting survey'. You will be taken to the details of the event and on the right hand side there will be an option to 'add survey data'. Click on this and you will see the date, start time and duration of your event are already added. (but you can amend if you need to)

Once you have filled in everything, click on 'submit' at the bottom (you can cancel your survey too if you need to) and you will be taken to a thank you page with an option to view your submission with a summary of your results, percentage of materials found and where they came from.

If you spot any errors, you can click on the 'edit this survey' button and save any changes. Under this, you will see an option to print or save as a pdf which you can then share with your volunteers!

If you didn't have an event set up, then that's not a problem – you can still add your data. Go to your volunteer dashboard to the 'your surveys' section. Here, you can click on 'add a survey' and you're taken to find the 100m stretch you would like to add data for using the 'find a location' search. Choose the correct stretch (or request to add a new one) and you will be taken to the next step where you submit your data. Fill everything in and when you are happy, click 'submit' at the bottom.

Our data is used for our campaign work and informs our governments on the issue of litter and what we need to do to stop it getting into our environment.

Scan or take a photo of your parental and photo consent forms, and email them to beachwatch@mcsuk.org and we will store them securely. You can then shred your paper copies.



Important contact information

We hope nothing out of the ordinary happens but here's some useful contacts just in case

Coastguard: 112

Emergency Services: 999

Hospital: [Click here to search](#)

Defibrillator: [Click here to search](#)

Lost: <https://what3words.com/>

Beachwatch enquiries: [01989 567807](tel:01989567807)

beachwatch@mcsuk.org

Hazardous & Suspicious Items

Never approach suspicious looking containers or items. Leave them untouched and contact:

Environment Agency Pollution Hotline [0800 7312453](tel:08007312453)

Scottish Environment Protection Agency [0800 80 70 60](tel:0800807060)

Natural Resources Wales [0300 065 3000](tel:03000653000)

Northern Ireland Environment Agency [0845 302 0008](tel:08453020008)

Injured/stranded marine mammals:

BDMLR (England, Scotland & Wales) immediately on [01825 765546](tel:01825765546) (24hr)

DAERA (Northern Island) [028 70823600](tel:02870823600) (24hr)

If you find any other live but injured animal call:

RSPCA hotline (England & Wales): [0300 1234 999](tel:03001234999)

SSPCA hotline (Scotland): [03000 999 999](tel:03000999999)

You will receive further advice over the phone.

Dead cetaceans:

CSIP stranded whale or dolphin hotline [0800 652 0333](tel:08006520333) (England & Wales),

Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme [07979 245893](tel:07979245893)

Northern Ireland DAERA [028 7082360](tel:0287082360)

In the meantime, you can – Keep people away, and follow this advice whilst you wait for help.

Cetaceans (dolphins, whales and porpoises)

- Avoid physical contact for their stress levels and your health.
- Keep it cool and wet with seawater – avoid getting water down the blowhole.
- Draping in a damp blanket is good as long as it doesn't cover the blowhole.

Seals

- Seals regularly come out of the sea to rest mothers can leave pups on the beach whilst they hunt offshore.
- Seals bite so keep your distance.
- Only get help if you think the seal is injured, sick or has been abandoned.

Turtles

- Get assistance immediately as every second counts with turtles.

Jellyfish

- Strand quite regularly and can do in large numbers – don't touch as they may sting and [report here](#)



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