Great British Beach Clean

2017 Report

Includes the Great Channel Islands and Great Northern Irish Beach Clean

So what can you do about it?
Thank you for making the Great British Beach Clean 2017 the best yet!

This September thousands of people headed to UK beaches to pick up litter and record their finds.

Just short of 7,000 volunteer beach cleaners picked up 255,209 individual pieces of litter from 339 beaches. That’s a staggering 718 bits of rubbish for every 100 metres cleaned!

It’s a huge number and sadly a 10% rise in the amount of litter we picked up the previous year.

Massive thanks to everyone who took part! Whether you’ve organised an event or just turned up on the day and got to grips with gloves and litter pickers for the first time - your support is absolutely incredible!

As with previous years, tiny bits of plastic were the most commonly found items, in even greater numbers than in 2016.

The problem of plastic in our oceans is on the mainstream agenda – Sky Ocean Rescue, and BBC1’s Blue Planet II have brought the issue into our living rooms. High street bars have stopped handing out plastic straws and microbeads in scrubs and gels are being banned.

That’s all fantastic! But it’s just the start - there’s so much more to do.

We’re on it, though, and we’ve more campaigns planned for the rest of the year and through into 2018 - and you can help.

Follow us on Twitter (@mcsuk) or like our Facebook page and support our appeal to stop the plastic tide.

See you in September 2018!

Lizzie Prior
Beach and River Clean Project Officer
So what can you do about it?

You can
- Find a bin
- Take it home
- Use reusable cups and bottles
- Refuse straws

Businesses and local authorities can
- Provide free drinking water
- Not give out straws
- Provide a discount for reusable cups
- Reduce plastic packaging
- Use easily recyclable packaging

It was a lot more fun than I thought it was going to be and it was heart-warming to see so many people wanting to get involved and sort it out. But you know I also found it mildly depressing. It isn’t until you actually look down to the beach that you realise quite how much rubbish there is. When I’m on a beach I’m usually looking across it and on the face of it you can actually think – oh this is quite clean... but once you start paying attention it’s a very different story.”

Deborah Meaden
MCS Ocean Ambassador, entrepreneur and ‘Dragon’s Den’ investor attended the Great British Beach Clean at Sand Bay, Somerset

Wet wipe update

Data from the 2017 Great British Beach Clean revealed a startling 94% rise in the number of wet wipes found on UK beaches – yuk!

Thanks to your hard survey work – we’re all over this one.

MCS collected over 10,000 signatures on our petition to the wet wipe industry body EDANA asking them to ensure members removed plastic from their flushable products and that flushable wipes complied with UK Water Industry standards.

Keep an eye across our social media feeds to see what happens next and don’t forget it’s just the 3Ps that go down the pan – pee, poo and paper.

Beach litter to bottles – turning litter into ‘stuff’

During this years, Great British Beach Clean, we’ve been working collecting rigid marine plastics and cigarette stubs ready for them to be recycled into new products!

The cigarette stubs, continually in the top of 10 of most found items, will go to make outside hoarding boards.

We also asked our volunteers to separate out some kinds of rigid plastic for collection by TerraCycle. They remove obvious contamination, the plastic then goes through sorting, washing, drying, and grinding steps before being made into pellets which are used by packaging companies.

Look out for washing-up liquid bottles on sale in the UK next summer – made from the litter you collected!
In 2018 we’ll be celebrating a quarter of a century of Great British Beach Cleans. We’ll be in touch about how you can get involved and help us to make our 25th year really special!

14th – 17th September 2018

Make sure you save the dates!
There are three things you can do:

1. **Sign our petition to the Governments**
   of the UK, Scotland and Wales calling for a levy on single-use throwaway items. The power to change the habits of our throwaway society is in their hands.

2. **Sign our petition to the big fast food chains**
   demanding they replace the millions of plastic cups, stirrers, straws and cutlery they give out with reusable or biodegradable alternatives.

3. **Donate to the MCS Stop the Plastic Tide Appeal**
   Make a one off donation or sign up to give monthly


   Take action at >> [www.mcsuk.org/stop-the-plastic-tide](http://www.mcsuk.org/stop-the-plastic-tide)