

Beachwatch

Suffolk Results 2017



KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2017

35

litter surveys were carried out on 24 beaches covering over 7.5km of the Suffolk coast and estuaries.



KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2017

806

volunteers took part in Beachwatch surveys in Suffolk.



KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2017

788

plastic caps and lids were collected from Suffolk beaches and foreshores.

KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2017

14,110

items of litter were recorded and removed from Suffolk beaches and foreshores.



KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2017

75%

of litter collected in Suffolk Great British Beach Cleans, was made of plastic or polystyrene.

Beach surveys

The AONB is proud to present the results of the litter surveys carried out by volunteers in Suffolk as part of the Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch schemes in 2017.

The results help to illustrate the extent of the problem of rubbish on our beaches and estuaries, and also the fantastic efforts made by Suffolk volunteers to help tackle the problem. Beachwatch is a national scheme organised by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) and coordinated in Suffolk by the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Whilst Beachwatch surveys take place at quarterly intervals, the Great British Beach Clean (GBBC) is the annual event taking place on the third weekend of September and is the UK contribution to the International Coastal Clean-Up.

Top 10 Litter Items				
Rank	Litter item (Categories are taken from the MCS Beachwatch Volunteer Survey Sheet)	Total items found	Items / km	% of total litter
1	Plastic / polystyrene pieces (small)	2236	64	16.3
2	Plastic / polystyrene pieces (large)	1742	50	12.7
3	Packets: crisp, sweet, lolly, sandwich	1656	47	12.1
4	Plastic caps / lids	788	23	5.7
5	Nylon string / cord / rope: thickness 0 – 1 cm	707	20	5.1
6	Cigarette stubs	433	12	3.2
7	Plastic cutlery / trays / straws	426	12	3.1
8	Cotton bud sticks	411	12	3.0
9	Glass pieces	302	9	2.2
10	Plastic cups	275	8	2.0
Grand Total		8976	257	65.4

NB. 9 of the Top 10 Litter Items in Suffolk in 2017 were all of plastic composition.

Please see the Marine Conservation Society website, www.mcsuk.org for the Great British Beach Clean 2017 Final Report.

Public 42%

Items like plastic bags, drinks bottles, food containers, drinks cans, dog poo bags, glass bottles, cigarette stubs and balloons have all had a helping human hand on their journey to the beach.

Medical 0%

Luckily we don't find much medical stuff, but it does turn up – pill packets, plasters, syringes and needles.

Fly-Tipped 1%

Illegally disposed of items, usually big items like white goods, TVs, car parts and paint tins.

Shipping 3%

Lots of litter gets dropped, lost or thrown overboard from small craft to massive cargo ships – this is shipping litter and can include pallets, oil drums and bits of rope.



Non-sourced 39%

We call it non-sourced because it's hard to work out where most of the litter we find comes from. It includes tiny little plastic and polystyrene pieces, bits of rubber, cloth, pieces of metal, wood, paper etc.

Fishing 10%

If it helps you catch fish, we've found it – line, net, crab pots and tops, fish boxes, weights, lures and hooks.

Sewage Related Debris 5%

Stuff people flush down the loo when it should go in the bin like condoms, cotton bud sticks, wet wipes, toilet fresheners etc.

Definitions taken from MCS Great British Beach Clean 2017 Report.

Cover image: Adnams Plc. at The Denes, Southwold, organised by Benedict Orchard, Environmental Sustainability Manager, Adnams Plc. Photo courtesy of Benedict Orchard.

Plastic...not so fantastic

By Emma Cunningham, Senior Pollutions Campaign Officer, Marine Conservation Society

Since the airing of Blue Planet II and other collaborations such as the Sky Ocean Rescue campaign, marine litter has shot up the public and government agendas. In the last 6 months we have seen: a microbead ban brought into force in the UK – probably the best ban worldwide so far in terms of the range of products included and its definition of plastic; the announcement of a 25-year environment plan for the UK; a consultation on using the tax system or charges to reduce single-use plastic; and the EU has introduced a new plastic strategy.

Scotland has committed to bringing in a Deposit Refund Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers and is in the process of looking at the best possible system for Scotland. MCS were a founding member of the 'Have You Got The Bottle' campaign which was instrumental in pushing for this in Scotland and we have been campaigning hard with our partners the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), Greenpeace, Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) and Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) for schemes to be implemented in England and Wales. England has recently committed to looking at a DRS and Wales is making some positive noises in this direction. Hopefully this will mean that an integrated system between the three nations can be implemented.

As well as showing support for DRS, several major supermarkets have also made further commitments such as reducing or eliminating plastics from their own brand products and no longer using black plastics. Several venues and festivals have also taken steps to reduce single plastic usage at their sites through such measures as deposit systems for drinks containers and banning bottled water.

In addition to this, 42 major international companies – responsible

for more than 80% of the plastic packaging in UK supermarkets – together with Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and the Ellen McArthur Foundation, have formed the 'Plastic Pact' with voluntary commitments to make unnecessary single-use plastic packaging “a thing of the past”. It's great to see companies wanting to be part of the solution but it remains to be seen whether a voluntary approach with no binding targets, is the right one.

All in all, it's been a busy and positive year and we need to work and build on this momentum and interest to ensure that the impacts of marine litter continue to be addressed and solutions developed.

As an individual member of the public, how can you get involved right now? We want to reduce single-use plastic. One challenge is to 'refuse the straw' and help to persuade

businesses to stop handing out plastic straws freely.

Take action>> Check out the 'Last Straw' challenge at www.mcsuk.org/clean-seas/straws. For an item we only use for a few minutes – that's even less time than a single-use carrier bag or a plastic take-away cup is used – plastic straws really do suck.

Take action>> You can also get involved with the MCS plastic challenge to #goplasticfree. Our book, 'How to Live Plastic Free' will help.



www.mcsuk.org/shop/index.php?route=product/category&path=71.



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Summary of results 2017

Beach No.	Beach Name	Organiser & Organisation	Number of surveys	Total volunteers	Length surveyed (m)	Total bags collected	Total weight (kg)	Total litter items	Average Items / 100m
1	Southwold: Lighthouse	Alice Eastaugh, St. Felix School, Southwold	1	18	100	6	6	229	229.0
2	Southwold: The Denes	Benedict Orchard, Adnams Plc.	3	169	300	95	150	827	275.7
3	Walberswick	Daniel Wareing, Suffolk Coastal Norse	1	1	100	0.25	0.32	78	78.0
4	Minsmere Haven	Richard Gilbert, National Trust Dunwich Heath	1	12	100	2	4	240	240.0
5	Minsmere Cliffs	Sonya Exton, Earl Soham Primary School	2	41	200	6	1.6	235	117.5
6	Minsmere Beach	Matt Parrott, RSPB	1	25	200	9	?	99	49.5
7	Sizewell	Beverley Rogers, SWT	1	17	100	3	16.2	293	293.0
8	Aldeburgh: Moot Hall to Lifeboat Station	Beverley Rogers, SWT	1	36	100	5	3.5	586	586.0
9	Aldeburgh: South Lookout Tower to North Lookout Tower	Beverley Rogers, SWT	1	2	100	2	1.2	234	234.0
10	Aldeburgh: Fort Green Car Park 1	Alona Ochert, Deben District Scouts	2	68	200	9	9.4	575	287.5
11	Aldeburgh: Fort Green Car Park 2	Alona Ochert, Deben District Scouts	2	49	200	7	4.6	467	233.5
12	Bawdsey: East Lane South	Lynn Allen, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB	3	56	300	7.75	42.15	2900	966.7
13	Bawdsey Quay	Barbara Zion, local group	1	15	100	3.25	12	724	724.0
14	Felixstowe: 13th hole to The Dip	Tim Pearse, The Rotary Club of Felixstowe, Landguard	1	2	200	0.25	0.5	102	51.0
15	Felixstowe: Cobbolds Point to Spa Pavilion	Keith Horn, The Felixstowe Society	4	35	400	5	6	768	192.0
15	Felixstowe: Cobbolds Point to Spa Pavilion	Sue Lewis, The Felixstowe Society	1	25	200	1.75	9	189	94.5
16	Felixstowe Pier, North	Paul Bailey, 1st Felixstowe Sea Scouts	1	20	100	2	7.4	521	521.0
17	Felixstowe: Port to Landguard Fort, aka John Bradfield Viewing Area	Rageenee Hope, Hutchison Ports UK	1	33	100	7	70	516	516.0
18	Trimley Marshes, River Orwell	Andrew Excell, SWT	1	105	100	4	14	3008	3008.0
19	Levington foreshore, River Orwell	Ian Angus, Levington Parish Council	1	11	100	1	?	105	105.0
20	Nacton foreshore, River Orwell	Debby Hatcher, 8th Felixstowe Scouts	1	15	120	4	7	311	259.2
21	South of Orwell Bridge, River Orwell	Charles Croydon, Transition Ipswich	1	12	100	16	28.5	514	514.0
22	Pipers Vale, River Orwell	George Seinet, local group	1	16	100	20	250	360	360.0
23	Shotley: West from Sailing Club Pier	Jo Collins, British Marine Divers Marine Life Rescue (BMDMLR)	1	8	200	2	6.93	197	98.5
24	Stutton Ness, River Stour	Chris Leach, Stutton Parish Council	1	15	3700	7	130	32	0.9
Grand Total			35	806	7520	225.25	780.3	14110	392.4

Additional Commitment In addition to the four seasonal Beachwatch surveys, many of our teams carry out beach cleaning more frequently, collecting beach litter on a monthly, weekly or even daily basis. Many local communities and individuals undertake independent beach cleans and we are very grateful to everyone for their valuable contribution in helping to look after the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and wider marine environment.

Missing Data Beachwatch events were also undertaken in 2017 by Saxmundham Free School. For various reasons, such as not submitting data to MCS or missing the deadline, the results from these events were unable to be included in the analysis of the Suffolk Results, but we would like to thank all of those involved for their efforts.

NB. In order for a beach clean to become an official Beachwatch survey, the event must be registered with MCS, the litter collected from a 100m section must be recorded and that data must be submitted to MCS within a specified timeframe.

5 Minsmere Cliffs



Organised by Sonya Exton, Earl Soham Community Primary School. Photo courtesy of Earl Soham Community Primary School.

13 Bawdsey Quay



Organised by Barbara Zion. Photo courtesy of Barbara Zion.

15 Felixstowe: Cobbolds Point to Spa Pavilion



Organised by Keith Horn, The Felixstowe Society. Photo courtesy of The Felixstowe Society.

12 Bawdsey: East Lane South



Organised by Lynn Allen, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB.

14 Felixstowe: 13th hole to The Dip



Organised by Tim Pearse, Rotary Club of Felixstowe, Landguard. Photo courtesy of Rotary Club of Felixstowe, Landguard.

Kessingland

Wrentham

Southwold

River Blyth

Walberswick

Blythburgh

Dunwich

Leiston

Snape

Aldeburgh

River Alde

Rendlesham

Orford

River Ore

Woodbridge

Rendlesham Forest

Hollesley

Bawdsey

River Deben

Felixstowe

Waldringfield

Ipswich

River Orwell

Holbrook

Alton Water

River Stour

Harwich

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17 Felixstowe: John Bradfield Viewing Area



Organised by Rags Hope, Hutchison Ports UK. Photo courtesy of Hutchison Ports UK.

18 Trimley Marshes, River Orwell



Organised by Andrew Excell, SWT, Martin Agar, Suffolk Scouts and Steve Mitchell, BT.

21 South of Orwell Bridge, River Orwell



Organised by Charles Croydon, Transition Ipswich. Photo courtesy of Transition Ipswich.

20 Nacton foreshore, River Orwell



Organised by Debby Hatcher, 8th Felixstowe Scouts.

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Earl Soham Primary School W

Question: How do you get children to clean up?

Answer: Take them to the beach!

That's exactly what Earl Soham Primary School did in the 2017 Summer Term!

The school topic for the term was 'At the Seaside' and all classes had been busy learning about the marine environment, both beneath the waves and along the coast. The subject extended to the eco assemblies, where the pupils learnt about the impact of litter and pollution in our oceans and it was suggested that something should be done to help.

Having read an article in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB newspaper about Beachwatch, we contacted Countryside Projects Officer, Lynn Allen, who helped us to organise where, when and how to go about organising a Beachwatch event for our school. We discovered that Beachwatch is a national scheme that has been organised by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) for almost 25 years, and the AONB promote and co-ordinate it in Suffolk on their behalf. The aim is simple – identify a 100m section of coast (or estuary foreshore) and collect and record all of the rubbish that you find there between high and low water. This data is submitted to MCS and is used as evidence to fuel their anti-litter campaigns, such as banning balloon releases and to lobby government to change legislation, such as stopping manufacturers from making cotton wool bud sticks from plastic.



Living in Suffolk, there is no shortage of coastline to choose from and it was decided that Dunwich Heath – with all it had to offer – would be a good option. A previous visit and chat with the National Trust Wardens revealed plenty of activities that the children could do whilst the classes took it in turns to clean their section of beach. Walks were planned, along with a visit to the Education Barn to learn more about the diversity of Dunwich Heath

and also a chance for some den building. With the help of MCS and Lynn, organisation was easy and straightforward. The only thing that couldn't be planned was the weather and for that the teachers resorted to crossed fingers...!

When the day arrived, the pupils – suitably adorned in the correct clothing for British summer weather, t-shirts and rain coats all eventualities covered! – ascended the coach steps full of excitement and anticipation as to what they might find on the beach! They headed to Dunwich to meet Neil Lister and Alona Ochert from the AONB to talk about the seriousness and impacts of plastic pollution, what to look for and how to log it on our survey sheets.

The first group to go were Red Class. In pairs, they were given a litter stick, bin bag, and gloves, and were directed to the first 100m of beach to scour for litter. Within moments, something had been found but it wasn't rubbish, more like treasure in fact, certainly for the child who spotted it! A Neolithic arrowhead! It just goes to show that you never know what you might find on the beach! The teachers recorded all litter items on the Survey Sheet and needless to say, it proved to be a full and busy hour with plastic items being the most frequently found – the worst offender being bits of plastic disposable cups.

I thought the beach had a lot of litter. I didn't like how some people treat the environment so when you go to the beach make sure you take your rubbish away. Beth A

At first doing a beach clean seemed boring but when you start cleaning it makes you think. Our planet is so beautiful and we are ruining it, so ever since I have been much more eco-friendly. Jodie

Say Goodbye to Rubbish!

The second 100m stretch of beach was surveyed and cleared by the children of Yellow Class. They had the unpleasant experience of discovering bagged dog poo – unfortunately a common hazard on the beach and wider countryside – which was cleared by one of the adults, as well as a broken umbrella and a length of rope along with the usual plastic suspects.

Finally the older children of Earl Soham Primary, Blue Class, got to do their bit for the environment and armed with bags, litter pickers, clipboards, survey forms and pencils, they picked their way up and down their 100m of beach. By the afternoon, the wind had picked up and it was proving to be no easy feat controlling the bags as they took on a mind of their own. It soon became apparent just how handy the handi-hoops are at keeping the bags open!

By the end of a highly active day the children had collected and collated a few kg of litter, as well as gaining a deeper understanding of the need to be more responsible for our plastic production and use and the impact of litter on the marine environment and wildlife. We continued the project back in school with a display about marine litter and follow up assemblies.

By Sonya Exton, Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA)

I was very surprised at how much litter was on the beach, there was lorry loads of litter and it has inspired me to be more eco-friendly. I even found dog poo, horrible. It was in a bag, smelly and still warm!!!!

Molly F

It inspired me to help and save the environment.
Bella

I felt really pleased with myself that I was helping the environment but really unhappy with the amount of litter and the destruction it causes to the environment. The beach is an amazing place, I don't want it to get turned into a litter dump.

Molly D

I loved the day out because it was a brilliant opportunity to help the wildlife and I even found a broken umbrella in the mess. Will

Keen Kids Clean Coast

Children from Earl Soham Community Primary School spent a day picking up litter from the beach at Dunwich Heath, Suffolk, to help tackle plastic pollution.

Since the beginning of the Summer Term, the children have been focussing on their topic 'Beside the Seaside'.

In Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), the children in Blue Class watched videos by Sky Ocean Rescue and Greenpeace, which informed them about the issue of plastic in our oceans and how it affects our sea life.

Blue Class HLTA, Mrs Exton, organised the litter pick to help the children find out more about how bad plastic pollution is.

As part of the experience, the children were asked to think about how much plastic they use in their lunchboxes and try to reduce it.

Over the course of the day, the children all took part in the pick. They were helped by Alona and Neil (from Suffolk Coast & Heaths) who supplied them with grabbers and bin-bags to collect the rubbish with.

The school were split into their three class groups and during the pick one of the groups collected around 2kg of litter, which consisted of: fishing line, plastic bottles and wrapping, clothing, newspaper, tissues and lots of other very small pieces of plastic, which a hungry fish could easily swallow.

Overall, the children said it was a very good day and that they enjoyed trying to help save our sea life and doing their bit to save our oceans.

By Martha Peterkin, Year 5

I thoroughly enjoyed the beach clean up day even though the weather changed and it became quite cold. We had fun making stone towers and spent time clearing an area of the beach of litter. I was surprised at the amount of litter that was found and the types. It made me feel quite emotional and I endeavour to make an effort to use less waste within family life.

Karen Pipet,
Teaching Assistant

I felt happy because I was doing something for the world but also disappointed there was so much rubbish on the beach.

Flora

Action on Plastic Waste

By Deborah Wargate, Environmental Sustainability Officer,
Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils

Urgent action is needed to address our use of and dependence on plastic at a global, national and local level. We can all be part of the local action in three simple ways:

1. Take action in our own lives to cut plastic waste and ensure we recycle correctly.
2. Pick litter up when we see it and dispose of it responsibly.
3. Become a Plastic Action Champion.

Plastic has its uses. It has made life easier, safer and more productive in many ways. However, plastic has detrimental environmental impacts that need to be reduced to an acceptable level as soon as possible. We want to address litter issues, from the very visible entanglement of wildlife in fishing gear to the hidden problems of micro-plastics that come from a wide variety of sources including synthetic clothes.

Everyone has a part to play in this. As consumers, we have purchasing power: we can avoid single-use plastics wherever possible or opt for re-useable plastic if not. The plastics industry can design and initiate research into preventing escape of and minimising plastic release into the natural environment. They are developing alternatives such as biodegradable plastic, which will simply break down in carbon and water.

In 2015, the UK was the 15th biggest consumer of plastics in the world, directly employing 170,000 people in over 6,200 companies (www.bpf.co.uk/plastics-strategy/sources.aspx). Research is being carried out by Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Volunteer Officer, Will Eden (Spring/Summer 2018), to investigate the local situation and inform future local action.

So what can we do as individuals?

Taking action to cut plastic waste in our own lives at home and at work, does make a difference, especially when there are many of us doing it. For tips and hints on how to live a low-plastic-waste-life, join the Greenprint Forum and receive a monthly e-newsletter:

greenissues@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Pick up litter. Beachwatch is vitally important and we can all participate. It is also important to pick litter off our streets, ditches and hedgerows. There is no reason to drop litter in the first place. Littering in all its forms is unacceptable and unsociable. It has the potential to enter our surface water drains and be washed straight out into our streams and rivers.

You can carry out a litter pick yourself – just ensure you don't hurt yourself doing it (avoid busy roads and do not collect sharp objects). There is lots of useful information available at



www.keepbritaintidy.org, search for **#litterheroes**. You can do it as part of a group and borrow equipment and if there is a large amount of litter, request a waste pick-up, www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/waste/litter/.

Sign up to find out more about becoming a Plastic Action Champion – a project funded by the East Suffolk Partnership and the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Sustainable Development Fund. We are looking to recruit at least 50 enthusiastic and engaging volunteers who want to help their organisation, school or community take positive plastic action. There will be training, visits and kits to help you spread the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' messages. We will offer talks about plastic to groups of 20+ people, as we test and develop the tools to help our Champions. This is part of the Plastic Action Project, and forms part of the Greenprint Forum's 2018 year of **#PlasticAction**. Please contact greenissues@eastsuffolk.gov.uk for more information and to express your interest.

Thanks to the enthusiasm, commitment and determination of everyone involved, Beachwatch continues to gain momentum in Suffolk. With over 76km of coast and 187km of estuary foreshore, there is plenty of opportunity for people to participate.

For more information about becoming involved in Beachwatch in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, please contact Lynn Allen, Countryside Projects Officer, **01394 445223**, lynn.allen@suffolk.gov.uk or go to www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

For more information about the work of the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) contact **01989 566017** or go to www.mcsuk.org

