

Mull Adopt-a-Beach Bulletin

It is a year since the Mull Otter Group started the Mull Adopt-a-Beach scheme, which is intended to coordinate the effort to clear marine litter from our shore-line, and encourage more people to get involved.

A truckload of plastic enters the oceans every minute. Some of it washes up on Mull. Together we can do our bit to combat the problem.



Last Year in Numbers

5 Mull Otter Group beach cleans took place with **112** bags of rubbish collected and **4** miles of beach cleaned. We are aiming for bigger and better this year!

40 locations on Mull and Iona were registered with us as being regularly cleaned by individuals, groups, or schools. There is so much of the 300 miles of coastline that is not cleaned though, so we need more beach adopters. Why not ask a friend to get involved?

3 Beachwatch Surveys. The Marine Conservation Society need volunteers to survey what marine litter is found on UK beaches. The data collected through their Beachwatch scheme, (the UK's biggest survey of this kind) is important to change the hearts and minds of politicians and industry so that litter can be reduced. Until 2016, nowhere on Mull had been surveyed for a while, so 3 surveys is a great start. You only need to record what you pick up for a 100m stretch and it is quite easy to do. Please consider doing it, but if you would like someone to join you and do the data recording let us know – we can probably help.



Rubbish Collected at Lochbuie

News

Balloon Ban Argyll and Bute Council have recently voted to ban releases of balloons and sky lanterns from council owned property.

Re-use the Bottles! There is a growing pressure to introduce a deposit return system (DRS) for plastic bottles. Even the Daily Mail has a 'Banish the Bottle' campaign. Such a system is shown to work in other countries like Sweden, Denmark and Germany. Unfortunately, the government at Westminster do not seem keen at the moment. After seemingly plotting against a DRS, Coca-Cola have changed their minds and are now showing support for it, which is encouraging. MSPs in Scotland also seem more amenable to the idea, but to encourage them please sign the petition (see below).

Progress on Cotton Buds Johnson and Johnson have decided to ditch plastic cotton buds, a major contributor to marine litter, and instead they will be made of cardboard.

Nurdle Menace In a recent survey, plastic nurdles, which are small pellets used to make new plastic products, have been found on 73% of UK beaches. They are so small even the most assiduous beach cleaner could not hope to collect them all. Hopefully the survey will put pressure on the government and the plastics industry to ensure best practice, and to reduce the risks of spillage.

Microbead Ban Not Good Enough The UK government proposed to ban plastic microbeads from cosmetics by the end of 2017. But environmental campaigners warn the ban does not go far enough, and should be extended to include items such as make-up, sunscreen and cleaning products. Please sign the petition below to get a complete ban.

Coming Up



The Great British Spring Clean

To tie in with the Great British Spring Clean some Mull Otter Group folk will be gathering plastic rubbish at Carsaig, along the path towards Lochbuie. Come and join us! Due to the walk back, the idea is just to fill a bag or two at most. Meeting time is 4th March at 1pm, at Carsaig pier. The terrain is boggy in places and rocky underfoot, so come prepared with sturdy footwear and weather proof clothes. As parking is limited, do let us know if you are coming, so that we can organise parking.

The Great British Beach Clean is from 15th to 18th September. We will again be participating in this so watch out for news.

More Beach Cleans! Watch out for news on our Facebook page of further beach cleaning events. We like to advertise all beach cleaning, and get a sense of what areas are cleaned, so if anyone organises a beach clean let us know and we will pass the news around.

Thank You

Many thanks to all the people who participated in beach cleans last year. Sometimes the work against the onslaught of plastic litter seems futile, but by doing your bit, talking about it, leading by example, surely humanity's bad habits will gradually change. Here's hoping.

Thank you to all of the landowners who have assisted us on our beach cleans.

And thank you to the council rubbish collectors who have kindly picked up the results of beach cleaning from the side of the road.



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Action

What can you do to combat the plastic menace?

- Keep up the beach cleaning and encourage others. We need more adopters of beaches to get more dots on the map.



Adopted Beaches as at Feb 2017

- Consider doing a Beachwatch survey. Visit <http://www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/>
- Take a bag with you on your walks and carry a few pieces of litter home. Every little helps.
- Let us know if a beach near you is in need of cleaning. It helps us plan where to do beach cleans.
- Sign the petition to encourage the Scottish government to introduce a deposit return system for plastic bottles:

<https://secure.greenpeace.org.uk/page/s/scotland-plastics-petition>

There is also a petition for this aimed at the UK government:

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/bring-back-bottle-deposits-to-stop-plastic-pollution-in-our-oceans-1>

- Sign the petition to get a complete ban on microbeads.

<https://secure.greenpeace.org.uk/page/s/microbeads-signup>