

# WHAT YOU CAN DO – RIGHT NOW!

## Single-use plastics consultation underway - take part

Currently there's a UK Government consultation taking place to gather people's views on proposals to ban the distribution and/or sale of plastic straws, plastic-stemmed cotton buds (7<sup>th</sup> in the Top 10 list of beach litter finds this year) and plastic drink stirrers in England. We think this is a no-brainer, and about time it happened. MCS will be responding to the consultation, but it's open to all, so please take part here:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/plastic-straws-stirrers-and-buds/>

But hurry – you have until December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018

## Deposit Return System - keep your eyes peeled

A Deposit Return System (DRS) is under development in Scotland and has been promised for England. MCS says the Government now has a golden opportunity to bring in the best system possible - one that will include all bottles and cans and all sizes. A consultation on a DRS in England is expected to be launched any day now. Keep your eye on our website and social feeds to see how you can help make our governments see DRS sense.

Keep up with our campaign on [facebook](#), [twitter](#) and [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)

## Sign up to the Beachwatch programme

You don't have to wait until September! Beachwatch is our national beach cleaning and litter surveying programme and you can get involved all year round.

[www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch](http://www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch)

## Join MCS as a member today!

Join thousands of others who all want the same as you – clean, healthy, vibrant seas.  
Together – we can do this.

[www.mcsuk.org/join](http://www.mcsuk.org/join)

☎ 01989 566 017 **W** [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org) **f** [facebook.com/mcsuk](https://facebook.com/mcsuk) **t** [twitter.com/mcsuk](https://twitter.com/mcsuk)

📍 Marine Conservation Society, Overross House, Ross Park, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 7US

The Marine Conservation Society would like to thank partners and sponsors of the Great British Beach Clean 2018 event.  
The views expressed in this report are those of the Marine Conservation Society, and not necessarily the views of our partners or sponsors.



The Marine Conservation Society's beach litter work is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.



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# Great British

# BEACH CLEAN

## 2018 Report

Includes the Great  
Channel Islands and  
Great Northern Irish  
**BEACH CLEAN**





## You've helped us double the size of the Great British Beach Clean!

The 25<sup>th</sup> Great British Beach Clean was well and truly the biggest mass participation beach clean and survey the UK has ever witnessed.

Just short of 15,000 volunteers took to the UK's beaches between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September - double the number in 2017. Just under 500 beaches were cleaned - 155 more than last year. So, it wasn't just a bit bigger... it was, quite simply, mind blowingly bigger!

Thank you doesn't really cut it! But we'll say it anyway – THANK YOU!!!!

**Whether you organised an event or just turned up on the day and joined the thousands of other volunteers - your support was incredible, invaluable and downright phenomenal.**

But as volunteer and event numbers rose on our big weekend clean-up, litter levels dropped! In 2017 you picked up an average of 717 litter items for every 100m surveyed, but this year that number fell to 601 items – that's 16% down on last year.

It may seem like good news, but the litter crisis continues to grip our shores. Litter levels fluctuate year on year and for the last 25 years the trend has, and continues to be, steadily rising. The Great British Beach Clean is just a snapshot of the UK litter story and the results must be seen in the context of the broader trending picture. There's more litter in our seas than ever before.

But there's good news too - more people are picking up litter at the beach, whether as part of organised cleans like ours or just on random beach visits. The message of oceans in crisis has really hit home.

So, thank you again for making the 2018 Great British Beach Clean the biggest ever. You really are making a difference.

**See you in September 2019!**



Lizzie Prior  
Beach and River Clean Project Officer



## A year on – are we stopping the plastic tide?

This year has been one of the biggest years for marine conservation. The level of enthusiasm and passion from the public on the issue of marine litter has been inspirational. Thanks to Waitrose & Partners we have been able to increase our Beachwatch team to allow us to support you, our incredible volunteers, to make sure we cleaned more beaches and collected more information on the types and quantities of litter we find.

Just a year ago we launched our **#STOPthePlasticTide** campaign. In a few short weeks 30,000 people took action to ask our governments, pubs, restaurants and fast food chains to ditch single use plastic items. 160,000 people (40,000 from MCS) responded to the UK Government's call for evidence on a plastic tax earlier this year. People were sending a clear message - single-use plastic must be taxed.

Up and down the UK during the Great British Beach Clean 2018, there were beaches with well over 100 volunteers cleaning and surveying - 306 people at Pegwell Bay, Kent; 270 at Severn Beach, Gloucestershire; 155 at Swansea Bay and 173 at Cramond, Edinburgh. Time was we'd have cracked open the bubbly if 20 people rocked up!



## The public have spoken - now governments must act

As usual the most common item found on our beaches was plastic. From tiny, tiny bits to bags, bottles, cups and lids. Plastic in all its forms is invading our shores.

With double the number of volunteers at this year's Great British Beach Clean and hundreds of people voluntarily picking up litter whenever they're at the beach, we're worried that there's a risk governments may take their foot off the pedal and not make those crucial decisions that will turn off the tap and reduce plastic at its source.

In the autumn budget, the Chancellor, Phillip Hammond, failed to come good on the so called 'latte levy' on disposable coffee cups, despite the huge response to the recent call for evidence. They're going to see what the takeaway industry does first. Not a budget announcement that appears to be helping turn back the plastic tide.

It's more important than ever that we make governments aware of what a colossal mistake dragging their feet on bans and taxes on single use plastic will be for our seas.

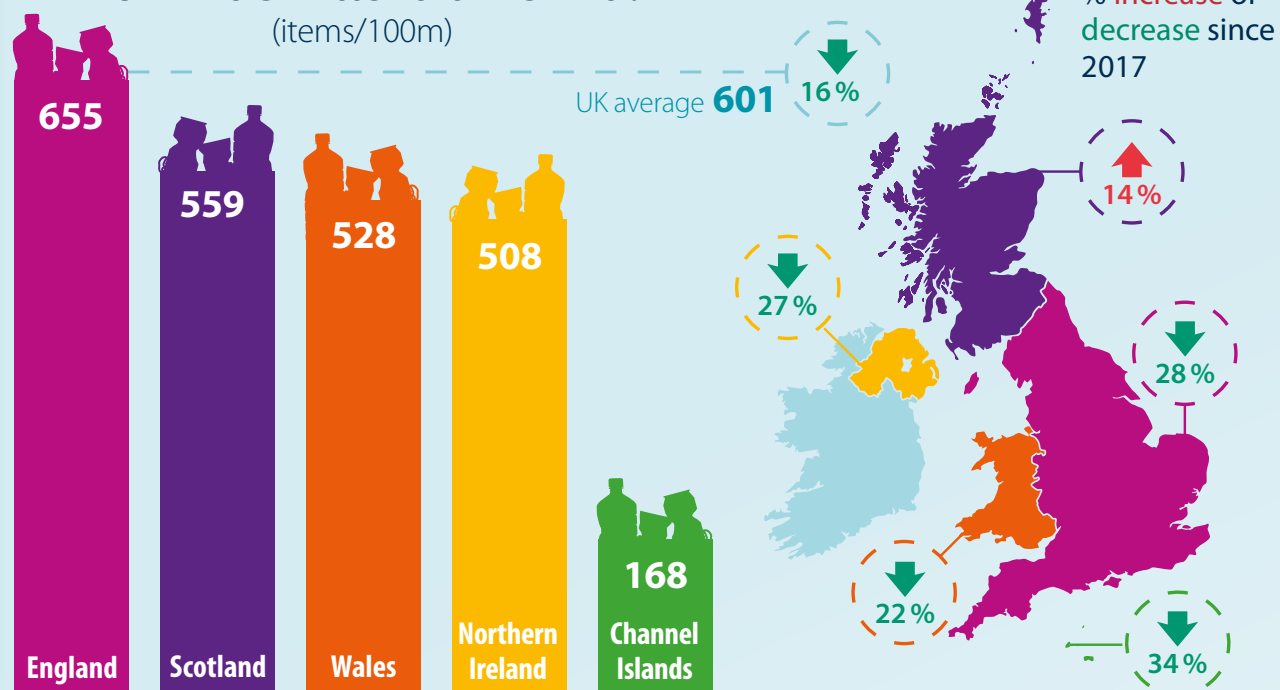




# Great British BEACH CLEAN

# The UK's 2018 beach litter story

## How much litter did we find? (items/100m)



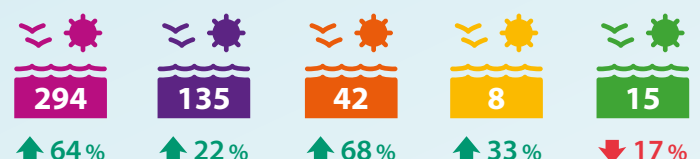
## How many volunteers took part?



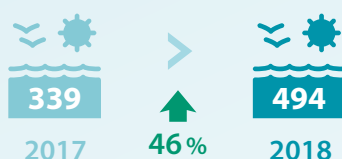
## Total no. of volunteers



## How many beaches were cleaned?



## Total no. of beaches



## What did we find?

- Plastic/polystyrene pieces (0-50 cm)**  
182.6/100m
- Glass**  
45.6/100m
- Cigarette stubs**  
35.8/100m
- Packets (crisp, sweet, lolly, sandwich)**  
35.6/100m
- String/cord (thickness 0-1 cm)**  
26.8/100m
- Caps & lids**  
26.2/100m
- Cotton bud sticks**  
21.2/100m
- Fishing net (small)**  
19.8/100m
- Fishing line**  
14.5/100m
- Plastic/polystyrene (other)**  
13/100m



## Where did it come from?

### 48.7% Non-sourced

Hard to know where it's from – mainly because it's too tiny to identify.

### 28.6% Public

All the stuff that we, the public, have a hand in helping get to the beach.

### 12.1% Fishing

All the things from lobster pots to fishing nets, that help anglers and commercial fishermen catch seafood.

### 6.2% SRD Sewage Related Debris

Stuff that's flushed down the loo but should go in the bin.

### 3.2% Shipping

Stuff lost, or thrown overboard from small craft or massive ships.

### 1% Fly-tipped

Big stuff like TVs and tyres.

### 0.2% Medical

Not very nice – pill packets to syringes.

## Everyone wants something, but WE WANT NOTHING

For 25 years that's all we've ever wanted.

No plastic bottles. No cigarette butts.  
No cotton buds. No plastic bags. No waste.

Join us today and together we can do even more to help fight plastic pollution.

[www.mcsuk.org/join](http://www.mcsuk.org/join)

The Great British Beach Clean 2018 weekend was run in partnership with

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& PARTNERS

