

Greenprint Forum Beachwatch report 2021

Part of our Plastic Action campaign towards our goal of a Pollution Free Environment

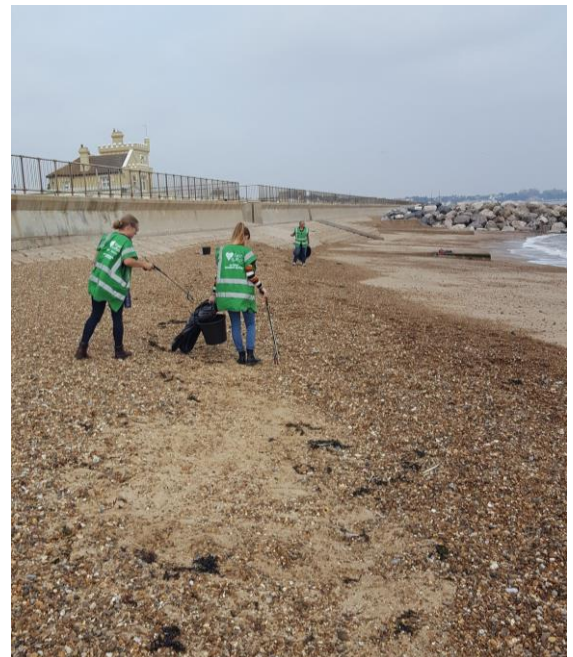
Beachwatch is the annual survey of marine litter held around the coastline of Britain by teams of volunteers who survey and categorise the marine litter they find on their designated 100 metres of beach, with all the data being collated by the Marine Conservation Society to help them understand the current situation with marine litter and apply pressure in an informed way where it is needed to influence positive change.

What did we do?

To support Beachwatch in 2021 the Greenprint Forum organised two local Beachwatch surveys for our members and Plastic Action Champions to participate in during Great British Beach Clean Week 17-26 September. All who attended made it fun, we had some good engagement with passersby and it is always encouraging to see that there are those in our communities who understand the issues and are prepared to give up their time to support this form of action.

19 September – Felixstowe beach Manor Terrace to Orford Road

This, the first of our two Beachwatch activities took place on [International Coastal Clean Up Day](#) which aims to raise awareness of the impact of pollution on beaches around the world. Our dedicated team of four found just 55 items of litter on our survey transect which was very encouraging given that the average number of items of litter found during Beachwatch surveys nationwide last year was 425 items per 100m!



Numerically, small fragments of plastic, bits of fishing line, and cigarette stubs were the commonest items we found. After the survey we continued picking litter from more of the beach, Martello Park, and Manor Terrace, clearing a further 1.14kg of litter, mainly cigarette ends and food-on-the-go packaging – ensuring that this stuff wouldn't now end up polluting our marine environment.

[Results of survey at Felixstowe](#)



26 September – Pakefield below the Jolly Sailors

The following Sunday seven of us met in Pakefield where we immediately found a bunch of balloons, reminding those of us who understand the issues of the need to urge others to consider the impacts of releasing balloons into our environment which can have fatal consequences for wildlife. So please help spread the word – the Marine Conservation Society make resources available to help communicate the message through their [Don't let go campaign webpages](#), and in addition East Suffolk Council have, at the encouragement of the Greenprint Forum, banned the release of balloons (and sky lanterns) from their land and have produced this [code of conduct](#).



We didn't find vast amounts here either, with a total of 196 items recorded, again well below the national average – mostly plastic and polystyrene in particular fragments, bits of cord, cigarette ends, food-on-the-go packaging, and bits of fishing line. Along with our post-survey pick of more of the beach, dunes, and car park, we ended up removing a total of 2.18kg of litter from our environment.

[Results of survey at Pakefield](#)

Find out more and get involved:

The Marine Conservation Society is an important national data recording, reporting and campaign organisation incorporating citizen science. If you're organising a beach clean, why not incorporate a Beachwatch survey as part of your activity to help the MCS with their data-driven work. You can find out how to get involved in Beachwatch surveying here: [Marine Conservation Society | Home \(mcsuk.org\)](https://www.mcsuk.org/)

Thanks to our local event supporters:

- Adnams — who gifted a tasty local brew as a “thank you” to each of our volunteers.
- Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB team — who collate and share local results (reports from 2017-2020 available here [Beachwatch – Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB](#)), encouraged participation, coordinated local Beachwatch activities, and provided us with sharps boxes. Last year the team supported Beachwatch volunteers across Suffolk and north Essex who collectively removed 326kg of litter from our region's beach environment!
- East Suffolk Norse — who provided us with hi-vis coats, litter pick sticks and bags and arranged for the responsible removal and disposal of the litter we'd gathered.

