

PRESS RELEASE, EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 WEDNESDAY 16TH AUGUST 2023

The Marine Conservation Society's annual Great British Beach Clean running from 15th – 24th September 2023

The [Marine Conservation Society's](#) annual [Great British Beach Clean](#) is back, running from 15th – 24th September 2023, marking the 30th year that thousands of volunteers will be taking part in beach cleans and litter surveys across the UK.

Over 100 beach cleans have already been organised across the UK from Poltesco, Cornwall to Alness Point in the Highlands.

Additionally, the Marine Conservation Society's [Source to Sea](#) citizen science project allows anyone to get involved, anywhere. Much of the pollution found on beaches makes its way there from inland, finding its way into streams, rivers or drains and ending up in the ocean.

The data collected on pollution by the coast, as well as inland, enables the Marine Conservation Society to campaign for positive change to protect the ocean, and has already helped implement plastic bag charges, better wet wipe labelling, and supporting a tax on single-use plastic items.

Clare Trotman, Beachwatch Officer at the Marine Conservation Society, said: "We wouldn't be able to do the work we do at the Marine Conservation Society without the support of our volunteers heading out to the coast to collect vital information on what's polluting our seas.

"With beach cleans happening across the UK, from remote beaches to busy seaside resorts, there's so many ways to get involved and support us this year. If you can't make it to the beach, you can still take part by doing a local litter pick and survey where you live."

This year's Great British Beach Clean is sponsored by Ireland's number one soup brand, [Cully & Sully soups](#).

Cullen Allen, aka Cully of Cully and Sully soups, said he is "delighted Cully and Sully are sponsoring the Great British Beach Clean for a second year. As watersports enthusiasts this initiative is very close to our hearts. Marine litter is such a big issue. We love that this campaign takes action and reminds us of the importance of disposing of our waste properly and recycling plastics. I'm looking forward to taking a road trip over the week of the beach cleans, meeting lots of the fantastic volunteers on the beach and serving them up some free soup!"

At last year's Great British Beach Clean, 30 miles of beach were cleared and surveyed by 5,344 volunteers, collecting 141,048 pieces of litter. The amount of litter recorded across the whole of 2022 on beaches decreased by 11% across the UK and Channel Islands, compared to in 2021, with each UK nation seeing a reduction.

Some of the most commonly found items on beaches are from sewage discharges. Sewage-related pollution, often composed of plastics like period products and wet wipes, was recorded on 75% of beaches across the UK in 2022.

Dr Laura Foster, Head of Clean Seas at the Marine Conservation Society, said, "Sewage-related litter, like wet wipes and period products, is often a sign of a sewage discharge nearby. Sewage not only contains misflushed items but also a toxic soup of chemicals including 'forever chemicals' and pharmaceuticals. Entering our beautiful seas untreated, they wreak havoc with the ocean's delicate balance. But it doesn't have to be this way.

"The data our volunteers collect on sewage-related litter this year will help us understand the scale of the problem and keep fighting for sewage-free seas."

At this year's Great British Beach Clean, the charity is asking volunteers to take pictures of sewage-related items or sewage outlet pipes they spot during their clean. Volunteers can share pictures with the charity by tagging @mcsuk on social media and using the #SewageFreeSeas hashtag, or submit them to the charity via their website, to help show how pervasive the issue is. Find out more at www.mcsuk.org/sewage-free-seas

To join the Great British Beach Clean visit: www.mcsuk.org/gbbc

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Notes to editors

Images

Please find a selection of high res imagery linked [here](#) - credit Billy Barraclough/Marine Conservation Society

Media opportunities

The Marine Conservation Society's team will be hosting beach cleans throughout the week across the UK alongside volunteer organisers. Please get in touch if you would like to arrange filming and/or interviews on the Great British Beach Clean, or sewage pollution.

For a full list of beach cleans already organised please visit: [Find a beach clean | What you can do | Marine Conservation Society \(mcsuk.org\)](#)

There will also be a roadshow of cleans with sponsor Cully & Sully soups on the following dates:

- 15th September, Cleaner Coasts Ireland Clean
- 16th September, Langland Bay, East Swansea (for International Coastal Cleanup day)
- 17th September, Barry, West Cardiff
- 19th September, Bournemouth
- 20th September, Portsmouth
- 21st September, Brighton and Hove

Please note – these cleans are indicative beach clean suggestions at this stage - all events are subject to first obtaining permission from the landowner/local council