

Beach clean organiser guide



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Waitrose



Thanks for becoming a beach clean organiser!

Some beach clean basics

Carrying out an MCS beach clean is simple – you and your volunteers clean up litter and record on survey forms what you find along a 100m stretch of your chosen beach from the strandline (the line the tide last reached) to the back part of the beach.

We only ask you to survey 100m because 90% of all litter types will almost certainly be found over that length and regular surveys over time in a set area will clearly indicate litter trends. You can of course carry on cleaning as much of the beach as you like in the time you have on the day.

MCS runs a year-round, 100m survey initiative. You can clean up as often as you like - but ideally we need a set of results at least once a season.

Here's when you should do them:

- Winter** – mid-December to mid-January
- Spring** – April
- Summer** – mid-June to mid-July
- Autumn** (the really important one) - the third weekend in September

What's what?

Beachwatch - our ongoing programme of beach clean events including:

The Great British Beach Clean - the MCS flagship Beachwatch event takes place every third weekend of September. The data we collect feeds into the International Coastal Cleanup. The 2017 Great British Beach Clean is sponsored by Waitrose.

The Waitrose Beach & River Clean-up - will include the 2017 Great British Beach Clean but extends to a whole year of clean-up events delivered by MCS, Waitrose and our partners. Anyone can get involved, and you might get some Waitrose employees and customers supporting your event too!

Remember every year, the third weekend in September is the

Great British BEACH CLEAN

Data collected during the Great British Beach Clean, Great Northern Ireland Beach Clean and Great Channel Islands Beach Clean is part of the global annual International Coastal Cleanup. Hundreds of thousands of people clean beaches all over the world at the same time to give a global beach litter snapshot. For our part we publish our UK findings in a report at the end of the year which always receives huge media coverage.



Simple steps to a stress-free event



New this year

Give beach plastic a second life!

MCS has partnered with TerraCycle to give some of the rubbish you find at your event a second life. A TerraCycle container of rigid beach plastic (the stuff you can't tie a knot in!) can raise around £10 for MCS and means that all rigid plastics that previously would have gone to landfill will be recycled into new products such as fully recyclable shampoo bottles.

What's the process?

It's simple! TerraCycle arrange everything from delivering a container, to providing instructions and guidance, and collection of the container when it's full. TerraCycle can recycle all shapes and sizes of **rigid** beach plastics. Cigarette litter can also be sent to TerraCycle and turned into hoarding boards and other useful stuff instead of going to landfill.



← tick them off as you go

- Step 1**
Getting started - register yourself online
www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch.
- Step 2**
Give some of the litter a new life and recycle rigid plastic and cigarette butts with **TerraCycle**. Tick the box on registration that you are happy to be contacted by a member of the **TerraCycle** team. More in the box on the left.
- Step 3**
Register your section of beach online if it's a new one and hasn't been cleaned as part of the MCS programme before, or sign up to a beach which already has a page via the beach search.
- Step 4**
Start planning your beach clean event – select the date and set the time on a falling tide – you can find out tide times at www.goodbeachguide.co.uk.
- Step 5**
Check the state of the beach's risk assessment online and update if necessary or add a new one.
- Step 6**
Contact the beach owner (often the local council) to get permission to hold the clean and survey. The council may have equipment you can borrow, and you can agree a collection point for the litter from your beach clean.
- Step 7**
Add the event online to the MCS website so volunteers can register for your event (you can send group emails on the run up to the event, print off posters, put on social media and even do your own press release). Everything you need is at www.mcsuk.org.
- Step 8**
Print off your survey forms.
- Step 9**
Head to the beach and clean-up!
- Step 10**
After your event, submit results online.

Step 1 Getting started

You've probably already registered as an organiser to get this guide, but just in case you haven't, go to www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch to do this. Here are some downloadable resources that you may find helpful:

Poster: Great British Beach Clean [\(editable version\)](#)

Poster: Great Northern Irish Beach Clean [\(editable version\)](#)

Poster: Great Channel Islands Beach Clean [\(editable version\)](#)

Poster: All year round editable

Pre-event press release

Post-event press release

Promoting your event

TerraCycle

Risk assessment form

Volunteer survey form

Parental consent form

Beach litter ID

Volunteer guide

Where does litter come from?

Briefing your volunteers



Step 2 How do I sign up to TerraCycle?

When you register as an organiser, tick the box to find out more about TerraCycle. They'll get in touch and guide you through the process. If you're already an organiser or just want to know more, contact TerraCycle on **02035 152011** or email customersupport@terracycle.co.uk. They will likely ask you details of the beach owner (often the council) so they can arrange for the plastics and cigarettes to be recycled, so make sure you have this to hand.



Step 3 Choosing a beach on the website

You may find the beach you really want to clean already has an organiser registered. Don't worry! We can have up to three organisers cleaning different 100m stretches of the same beach. The online map is really helpful to see what's being cleaned and what's not.

Find the beach via the beach search and sign up to it – you will receive an email with what to do next.

If you can't find the beach you want to clean on the website

It's a new beach! That's great news – the more beaches we clean the better! Register it on the website by clicking on 'new beach'.

This is a coastal survey so your beach must be a sand, pebble or rocky beach. Make sure there's easy access, good public transport links, parking, public loos – that sort of thing.

Step 4 Check the tides

Select the date and set the time on a falling tide – you can find out tide times at www.goodbeachguide.co.uk and 1 hour after high tide is usually perfect.

Step 5 Do a new risk assessment or update an existing one

It's straightforward to do using our risk assessment template (available from the list of resources on page 4). This assessment is a vital step in keeping you and your volunteers safe on the day and it means you're covered by our insurance.

Easy steps

On your beach page click on the risk assessment button. You may find one already exists, however we recommend you visit the beach to update the risk assessment and of course you'll need to make a visit if you're starting a risk assessment from scratch for a newly registered stretch of beach.

You can't add your event until the risk assessment is in place

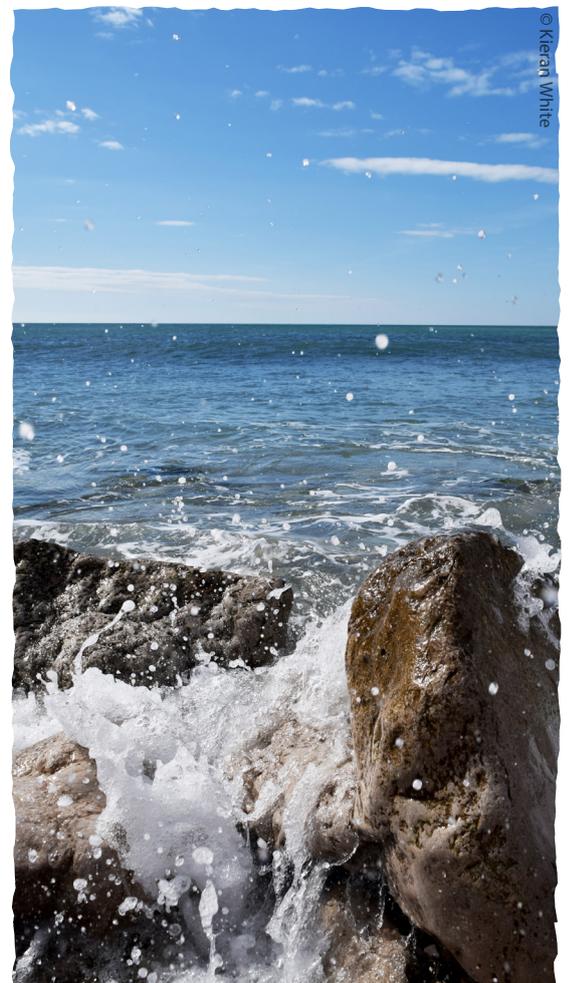
What happens to the risk assessment?

Your beach owner may want to see a copy - there is an editable PDF you can download for this purpose. This is also the best way to take it to the beach on the day so you can update it - it may have been raining so steps are slippery, there may be building work at the meeting point, etc.

TIP Take a screen shot of the risk assessment so it's in your phone and make any additions on your notes screen – then you can update it all at home later. Less paper – less fuss!



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Step 6 Now – ask permission of the beach owner

We've written content to copy and paste into an email or to **download and print off as a letter**.

Not sure who the owner is? Ring the local council – it's almost certainly them but if it's privately owned they'll know who by and pass their details to you. You can also ask at the local beach shop or café - they will know who the owner is.

Dear [Local Council/Beach Manager/Beach Owner],

Marine Conservation Society beach clean at your beach

[Beach name] is one of my favourite beaches and I've just signed up as a Marine Conservation Society (MCS) beach clean organiser there!

MCS' Beachwatch is the UK's biggest beach clean and survey programme and has been running for over 20 years. Volunteers clean up hundreds of beaches around the UK, record what they find so MCS can use it to encourage behaviour changes leading to cleaner seas. Beach clean data has led to a UK-wide carrier bag charge, microbead bans and retailers reducing the amount of plastic in their wet wipes and more clearly labelling them as non-flushable.

I'd like to run a beach clean at [beach name].

On [day and date].

At [times].

On the day our volunteers will clean and record litter from a set 100m stretch of the beach – this is the data we use for our campaigning work but we will collect litter from a much wider area too.

We will collect all the litter but it's likely there will be too much rubbish to go in the nearby bins so we'd really appreciate it if you could let us know the best place to leave the bin bags for collection by local authority waste teams.

Organisers, like myself, clean hundreds of UK beaches every year and here's a link to the MCS beach clean Organiser Guide (www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/sites/mcsuk.org.beachwatch/files/resources/Organiser_guide_new.pdf) which I will be following in the run up to the event and on the day. It gives you more details about the event and how it will be run.

I have carried out a risk assessment of the beach (which will be updated on the day) and have attached a copy to this email. The event is covered by the MCS public liability insurance which you can see via www.mcsuk.org/insurance.

You can also find out more about MCS beach cleans here – www.mcsuk.org

If you have any questions or suggestions then please get in touch either by replying to this email or calling me on [telephone number].

Thanks for your support!

[your name]

Marine Conservation Society beach clean organiser



Step 7 *Now you're ready to add your event online!*



Sign into your account and add your event by clicking on the beach.

You can also set volunteer limits and if you want to make your group a closed one, you can set your event as 'private'.

Choose a meeting place where everyone can easily see you for the briefing before the clean starts.

If you need to cancel your event – find the event listed under the beach when logged in, click on it, then click on 'edit' and change the status from 'confirmed' to 'cancelled'.

Organising your beach clean

Making your event a winner

Our 'Promoting your beach clean' guide can be found online under 'Organiser Resources' on the panel on the right hand side of the beach page.

It's packed with hints and tips for getting your beach clean event noticed locally including template press releases to send to your local paper and radio station and suggested Facebook posts and tweets.

You can find out how many volunteers have registered for your event on the beach page and you will receive an email every time someone signs up.



Step 8 Forms you'll need to take on the day...

...can all be found online under 'Organiser Resources' on the panel on the right hand side when logged in, or follow the links on page 4.

Print off enough **volunteer survey forms** – if there's 20 volunteers registered print off 10 with a few to spare - only half of your volunteers need a form.

Parental consent forms – for the parent or guardian to sign for anyone under 18. This is to comply with our insurance of young volunteers.

Beach litter ID guides – similar to the volunteer survey forms, only half of your volunteers might need one.



Stuff we recommend you take with you

First aid kit – similar to the one you may have in the back of your car.

Let people know you have one – but they can administer themselves as you don't need to be a trained first-aider.

Bucket – to collect sharp objects that will likely cut through a bin liner like glass and metal.

Sharps box – for needles and syringes – you can buy for a few £s online or the beach owner may have some.

A small container – to collect cigarettes butts in if you are recycling them. A recycled food container from home would be just the job!

A big roll of bin liners – the heavy duty ones from a DIY store are ideal. If you are recycling rigid plastics, one colour for recycling and one for everything else works well.

Litter pickers – the beach owner – especially if it's a council - may have equipment you can borrow. Alternatively, visit the MCS online shop www.mcsuk.org/shop now to get a great discount on beach clean equipment from The Helping Hand Company, who will also make a donation to MCS for each item sold.

Gloves – (if volunteers aren't using a litter picker) the beach owner may have some for loan, or gardening gloves will do.

Clipboards and pens – again the beach owner may have some you can borrow but they're pretty cheap to buy if you want to start your own stash.

Weighing scales – you can pick up a small set of scales (the ones with a hook make it easy to hang the rubbish bags from) quite cheaply online. Search for a spring hanging balance (sometimes called a Newton meter) or a luggage / travel scale.

Wear appropriate clothing – sturdy footwear is a must and outer clothing to suit the British weather. Pack sunscreen if the weather looks like being good and a reusable water bottle!



Step 9 On the day

Arrive in plenty of time and mark out the area

Use a tape measure if you have one but pacing it is fine.

TIP in your garden or along your street measure out 100 meters then how many of your steps it takes to cover the distance.

Put gloves and litter pickers in a place where people can pick up as they arrive. Hand out clipboards and pens when people are in their teams.

Briefing your volunteer group

Give the volunteers a brief introduction to the MCS **Beachwatch** programme – it started in 1994 and aims to collect data on litter, litter types and where it comes from so that MCS can build a picture of beach litter levels around the UK coast. The charity uses the information to raise awareness, influence policy makers and run campaigns to stop litter getting onto the beach in the first place.

Groups just like yours take part in beach clean-ups all around the UK. Our flagship event is on the 3rd weekend of September - the **Great British Beach Clean**. This year it's sponsored by **Waitrose** and there will be other clean-up events throughout the year as part of **The Waitrose Beach & River Clean-up**.

Think Global – Act Local

Our **Great British Beach Clean** is part of the **International Coastal Cleanup** and your beach clean data on the Saturday represents the UK entry to the Global Trash Tally. If your clean-up is during this weekend, your volunteers will be joining thousands of other like-minded people around the world taking positive action to clean up our oceans.

Here are a few pointers to include in your 'welcome' chat (but for more tips check out our website)

Marine litter is unsightly - bad for tourism and dangerous for marine creatures which can eat it or become entangled in it.

Plastics are a particular problem - consistently make up over 60% of what's found on beaches.

Plastic never disappears, it just gets smaller and smaller – and easier for marine creatures to eat which means it can move through the food chain potentially ending up on our dinner plates.

The toilets are over there – and you can get a brew at xxxx [find out before your event].

The tides today are [list high tides - which you can find at www.goodbeachguide.co.uk].

Timings for the event – when we're going to start and finish.

Please don't touch anything that looks like it might be dangerous or full of something nasty (containers, drums, unexploded shells, syringes or needles). If you're unsure, ask me.



Be careful about lifting heavy or semi-buried objects that could cause a strain injury - if in doubt don't lift!

Sharp items mustn't go in bin bags but in the bucket/sharps box provided which I will have with me so just give me a shout and I'll bring it over. Syringes and needles must go in the yellow sharps box: I will do this, so please don't touch.

We've done a risk assessment at the beach and here are a few of the hazards we identified – list.

If you've signed up to recycle some of the beach litter (rigid plastic and/or cigarette butts) with Terracycle, explain how to spot rigid plastic (you can't tie a knot in it!) and hand out separate bags for this, and small bags for the cigarette litter.

After the litter pick - bags can be weighed (if you have a set of scales), forms tallied up and handed in. Take a group photo to share.

Doing the survey

The 100m is marked out – we do 100m because 90% of all litter types will almost certainly be found over that length and regular surveys over time in a set area will clearly indicate litter trends. The survey is from the strandline (the line the tide last reached) to the back part of the beach.

When you've done your 100m – carry on cleaning but not recording. We ONLY need data from the 100m submitted.

Your survey form is split into the different materials, and the categories are listed alphabetically. It's on 2 sides – most common items on the first – less common on the back.

Ideally, work in groups of between three and five. Put your team name at the top of the sheet. Suggest one person to write, one to hold the bag and the others to collect the litter. Make sure you've got a form, a pen and a bag and everyone must have a pair of gloves – don't pick up anything without them!

Pick up every piece of litter you find over the 100m stretch.

Record every bit on your survey form using the tally system (||||).

Record it based on what the item is mostly made of - if you don't know what it is or can't find it on the form, ask me or record under 'Other' - with amount – on back of form.

Note foreign / unusual items and take photos if possible on your mobile phone.

Nurdles – you may spot these (see photo to the right). They're the building blocks of pretty much anything plastic. Tell your volunteers to record under small plastic pieces and make sure you add them as being 'present' when submitting the results later.

Don't pick up any natural stuff – wood is fine to leave if not covered in resins or paints.

Some commonly mistaken items are cotton buds and lolly sticks: cotton bud sticks are thinner with notches at the ends! String or fishing net? Net is generally green!

Add it all up at the end and fill in the 'total' column.

After the beach clean

Count the bags of rubbish and if you have a pair of scales – weigh all the bags and record the weight as you will need this when submitting the results.

Take a photo of your volunteers altogether – ideally with the bags they've collected. Everyone photographed must sign the model release form which is downloadable from the resources section of the website. This gives MCS permission to use the image for digital and printed publications until an individual withdraws consent.

You can post the photo on your own social media networks as a thank you and also send to us at beachwatch@mcsuk.org or use [#beachclean](https://twitter.com/mcsuk) on twitter [@mcsuk](https://twitter.com/mcsuk).

Collect the volunteer survey sheets so you can input the results at home.

If you have arranged for the council to store and aggregate rigid plastics for recycling with TerraCycle, make sure to clearly mark the bags from the rest of the rubbish. If you have your own TerraCycle container simply empty the rigid plastics into the container, and stack bags containing all other materials at your arranged collection point to be disposed of.

To recycle cigarette butt collections put them in an old tub to minimise the smell before shipping to TerraCycle.

Thank everyone on behalf of MCS for their participation and if you have a date for your next clean – let everyone know!



Step 10 Submitting your results

MCS publishes an annual report in November following the **Great British Beach Clean** but the results of all the surveys that are carried out are vital new evidence for our ongoing campaigns so please submit your results, to our national database, within **two weeks** of your event taking place.

Add up the total numbers for each litter item from all the **Volunteer Survey Sheets** and add to the database as one survey summary.

Login > click on your beach > click on the big red **'add survey results'** button. Make sure you transfer any notes from the forms to the online summary.

Troubleshooting your event

We hope nothing out of the ordinary happens but here's a guide of what to do if...

Volunteers find something that might be hazardous or dangerous

Warn everyone to keep well away and report immediately to the **Maritime and Coastguard Agency** by calling 999 and asking for the Coastguard.

Volunteers find stranded animals or oiled seabirds

Call the **RSPCA**: 0300 1234 999 or the **SSPCA**: 03000 999 999

British Divers Marine Life Rescue: 01825 765546 (office hours), 07787 433412 (out of hours)

Portrush Coastal Zone, Northern Ireland: 028 4461 5520

Make sure you tell them the exact location and the condition of the animal.

In the meantime, keep people away, and follow this advice whilst you wait for assistance:

Cetaceans (dolphins, whales and porpoises)

- Avoid physical contact for their stress levels and your health.
- Keep it cool and wet with seawater – avoid getting water down the blowhole.
- Draping in a damp blanket is good as long as it doesn't cover the blowhole.

Seals

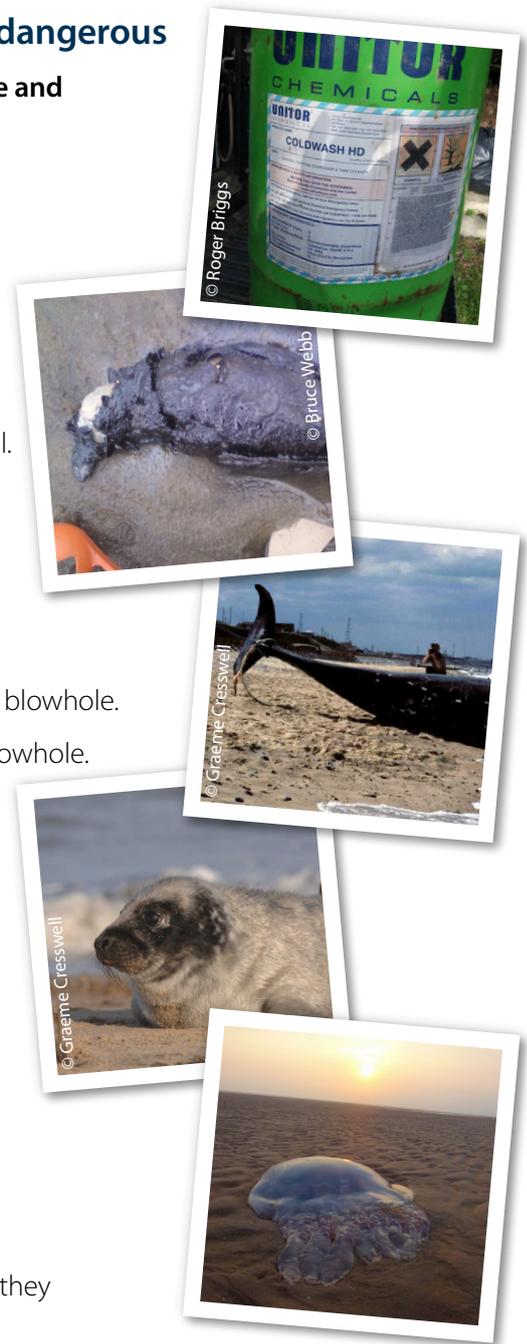
- Seals regularly come out of the sea to rest and mothers can leave pups on the beach whilst they hunt offshore.
- Seals bite so keep your distance.
- Only get help if you think the seal is injured, sick or has been abandoned.

Turtles

- Get assistance immediately as every second counts with turtles.

Jellyfish

- Strand quite regularly and can do in large numbers - don't touch as they may sting and report to www.mcsuk.org/sightings



What can you do?

Sign up for your next event!

We run events all year round as well as over our flagship weekend event in September
- **The Great British Beach Clean** @ www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/events

At home

- Re-use, reduce and re-cycle
- Take re-useable shopping bags with you when you go to the shops
 - Only put the 3 P's down the loo – Poo, Pee and Paper
 - Follow MCS on Twitter and Facebook @[mcsuk](https://www.facebook.com/mcsuk) to keep up-to-date with our litter campaigns.

Thank you 

...for supporting the Marine Conservation Society
By doing so you're making a huge difference to
our beaches and seas, making them safer
places for wildlife and for people.

More information at

@ www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch

Email: beachwatch@mcsuk.org

or call 01989 567807

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