

Keep Scotland Beautiful launches first wave of bathing water campaign

16 July 2018

My Beach, Your Beach, Keep Scotland Beautiful's latest campaign to improve bathing waters at three well known beaches, was launched today.

The campaign, funded by Scottish Government, will aim to make a difference by tackling littering, dog fouling and feeding gulls by those visiting the beach.

Launching on one of busiest beach days of the year, the start of the Glasgow Fair, we will be focusing on three beaches in particular:

- South Beach, Ayr
- Portobello Beach, Edinburgh
- Fisherrow Sands, Musselburgh

All three of the beaches selected for this campaign trial have faced challenges in improving the quality of their seawater as measured by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), whose research confirms the strong link between behaviour on the land and the cleanliness of the local seawater.

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said:

"This campaign is one of a number of measures to improve three of Scotland's best loved beaches and bathing waters, which are enjoyed by thousands of people on a daily basis. Sadly, some of those users leave more than just footprints behind, with dog fouling and littering, which attracts gulls, impacting on water quality.

"Keeping our beaches and bathing waters clean is a priority for the Scottish Government, which is why we're helping to fund Keep Scotland Beautiful's campaign, and working closely with stakeholders to provide long term solutions to the problem.

"I know the people of Scotland will be keen to support the campaign, and I would encourage them to do so by carrying out some simple actions to help us all continue to enjoy Scotland's amazing beaches and bathing waters."

A campaign team were on Ayr South Beach today to meet and inform local beach users of the importance of responsibly collecting and removing their rubbish from the beach at the end of their visit, not letting dogs foul the beach, and discouraging the feeding of gulls which then leads to further negative impact on the local environment.

Members of the public were urged to get involved in a #2MinuteCleanUp and share their successes on social media, and dog owners were encouraged to

enter the 'doggy portrait' competition which could see their pets feature as the face of a dog fouling campaign – reminding dog owners to 'bag it and bin it'.

Nicola Turner, Community Projects Officer at Keep Scotland Beautiful, commented:

“We can all play a part in cleaning up our nation’s bathing waters, improving the experience at the seaside for locals and visitors alike. Whilst visitor behaviour is only part of the solution, by taking our litter home, bagging and binning dog poo, and not feeding the gulls, we can all be part of the solution and get cleaner water for us all to enjoy.

“The launch of our ‘My Beach, Your Beach’ campaign emphasises our shared responsibility, and we look forward to meeting lots more local beach users as the campaign period unfolds.”

The pilot project covering the three beaches will trial a number of interventions, including:

- Business packs for local business including stickers, posters and information on how they can get involved,
- Colourful bin wraps with key campaign messaging,
- Signage around the beachfront raising awareness of the campaign,
- A series of community engagement events involving dogs, litter and gulls, communicating how these can seriously impact on water quality.

Councillor Ian Cochrane, South Ayrshire Council’s Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and the Environment, added:

“We’re extremely proud of our beaches in South Ayrshire and work incredibly hard throughout the year to keep them looking their best and to ensure – as far as we can – that our bathing waters meet national standards.

“Where standards aren’t quite what we want them to be, we work closely with SEPA and other partners to address pollution issues – and visitor behaviour is one way to do that. By being responsible and picking up after ourselves and our dogs and making sure that we feed our bins, not the gulls, we can help reduce the amount of dog and bird poo and litter that makes its way into our waters.

“That’s even easier this year thanks to hundreds of new bins that are being put in place at our beaches in South Ayrshire. And, with tens of thousands of people flocking to our beaches during the summer, people power really can make a difference and allow us all to enjoy our stunning coastlines and My Beach, Your Beach.”

The campaign is also designed to complement the range of work currently undertaken by SEPA on bathing water quality.

Terry A’Hearn, Chief Executive of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), said:

“Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland’s stunning environment, and we are committed to ensuring all of Scotland’s designated bathing waters meet water quality standards.

“By targeting behaviour on land that can affect bathing water quality Keep Scotland Beautiful’s ‘My Beach, Your Beach’ campaign will complement SEPA’s work. Recently Scotland has seen the best rates of compliance since the Bathing Water Directive began and by working in partnership we can further improve the quality of Scotland’s bathing waters including at Ayr South Beach, Portobello and Fisherrow Sands.

“Working with partners, we’re continuing our focus on bathing waters rated as ‘poor’, with tailored improvement plans prepared by SEPA. These projects will result in major improvements to bathing water quality in the future and should see improvements over the coming season.”

To watch as the campaign unfolds this summer, check out the [My Beach, Your Beach](#) pages and if you see any of the beach interventions tag us with #MyBeachYourBeach.