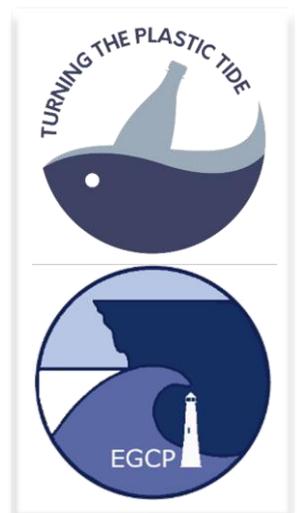


EGCP - Turning the Plastic Tide Annual Review

January 2019 to December 2019



N.E. Scotland Fisheries
LocalActionGroup



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Part-funded by the European Union's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund



VATTENFALL





Top: Cairnbulg beach at 09.00 on 25th April 2019. **Bottom:** Cairnbulg Beach at 16.00 on 25th April after 4.14 tonnes was removed by Premier Oil during a staff beach clean day out.

Cover Photo: Marine litter on the shores of Rattray Head (photo by Crawford Paris).

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Executive Summary

EGCP - Turning the Plastic Tide is a two-year marine litter initiative for the East Grampian Coastal Partnership delivering marine litter education and supporting volunteer beach cleaning in the North East of Scotland from Fraserburgh to East Haven in Angus. The following review outlines these two core activities, highlighting key achievements and developments throughout 2019. During this time, the project has considerably overdelivered on its targets, reaching ten times the number of volunteers than initially projected in its first year and running twice as many clean-ups since the launch of the project in August 2018.

The following metrics illustrate the extent of the project’s accomplishments in 2019:

Beach Clean Events

- **53** beach cleans organised/supported (60 in total)
- **1870** volunteers (2200+ in total)
- **20.86** tonnes of marine litter removed (23.52 tonnes in total)
- **4,478** volunteer hours (5000+ in total)

School Engagements

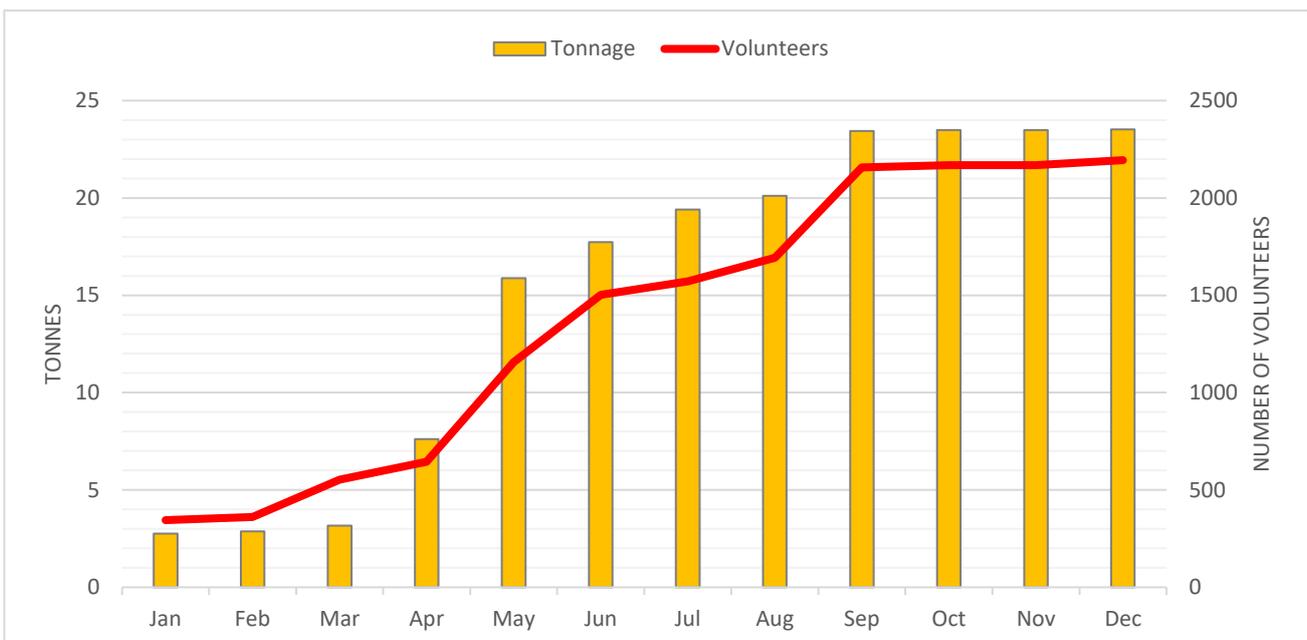
- **21** school visits
- **2,100+** pupils engaged in marine litter education
- **13** school beach cleans
- **734** engaged in beach cleans
- **1450+** pupil volunteer hours

Media Outreach

- **1100+** social media followers
- **10+** press releases
- Featured on STV News for inaugural Great Angus Beach Clean (10th May 2019)
- Featured on BBC Radio Scotland *Out of Doors* Programme (14th September 2019)
- Mentioned on Scottish Parliament TV by Minister of Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (3rd October 2019)

Industry Engagements

- **7** companies actively engaged in beach cleaning (Premier Oil, Shell, BP, Siemens, Wood, National Grid and Blue Manta)
- **13** corporate/staff beach cleans organised
- **8.5** tonnes removed
- **3** Oil and Gas UK events attended including the Environment Forum (11th June), HSE Conference (6th November) and Industry Awards (7th November)



Gross monthly marine litter tonnage removed against number of beach clean volunteers in 2019. A total of 23.5 tonnes has been removed by over 2200 volunteers since the project started in August 2018.

All beach cleans organised or supported in 2019

<i>Date</i>	<i>Beach Location</i>
26/01/2019	Cruden Bay
09/02/2019	East Haven
24/03/2019	Blackdog
30/03/2019	Inverbervie
30/03/2019	St Cyrus NNR
31/03/2019	Lunan Bay
13/04/2019	East Haven
14/04/2019	Gourdon-Bervie
20/04/2019	Montrose
25/04/2019	Cairnbulg
27/04/2019	Inverbervie
09/05/2019	Ythan Estuary
10/05/2019	Arbroath (Harbour)
10/05/2019	Carnoustie-Arbroath
11/05/2019	Carnoustie-Arbroath
12/05/2019	Carnoustie-Arbroath
12/05/2019	Craigewan
15/05/2019	Inverbervie-Gourdon
17/05/2019	Catterline
23/05/2019	Newburgh
25/05/2019	Sandford Bay
31/05/2019	Cowie
07/06/2019	Stonehaven
08/06/2019	Water of Philorth
20/06/2019	Cairnbulg
21/06/2019	Balmedie
25/06/2019	Peterhead Lido

26/06/2019	Broadsea Shore, Fraserburgh
12/07/2019	North Haven
20/07/2019	Gadle Braes, Peterhead
10/08/2019	Stonehaven (cancelled)
13/08/2019	Inverbervie-Gourdon
23/08/2019	St Fergus
24/08/2019	Greyhope Bay
25/08/2019	Blackdog
29/08/2019	Skatie Shore
30/08/2019	Forvie NNR
11/09/2019	Inverbervie-Gourdon
12/09/2019	Inverallochy Shore
13/09/2019	Arbroath (Harbour)
14/09/2019	Carnoustie-Arbroath
15/09/2019	Carnoustie-Arbroath
19/09/2019	East Haven
20/09/2019	Ferryden
20/09/2019	Scurdie Ness
21/09/2019	St Cyrus NNR
22/09/2019	Bridge of Don
22/09/2019	Lunan Bay
23/09/2019	Montrose
26/09/2019	Forvie NNR
29/09/2019	Cruden Bay
30/09/2019	Craigewan
02/10/2019	Newburgh
07/12/2019	Newburgh



Introduction

EGCP - Turning the Plastic Tide is a two-year marine litter awareness initiative which started in August 2018 and spans the coastal area between Fraserburgh and East Haven, in Angus, with the exception of Aberdeen City due to the nature of the main funding scheme. This review highlights the core activities of the initiative, as well as some of its additional partnership work throughout 2019. During this period, the project delivery has moved from strength to strength as educational work continues to raise awareness of the impacts of marine litter in the North East of Scotland, and events have been organised to encourage greater participation in beach cleaning.

Having built momentum in the latter stages of 2018 with the initiative's inaugural beach clean in September, followed by a hugely successful clean-up event in December at Stonehaven where over 150 members of the public joined in, 2019 presented a promising opportunity to exceed the targets and demonstrate the project's true potential.

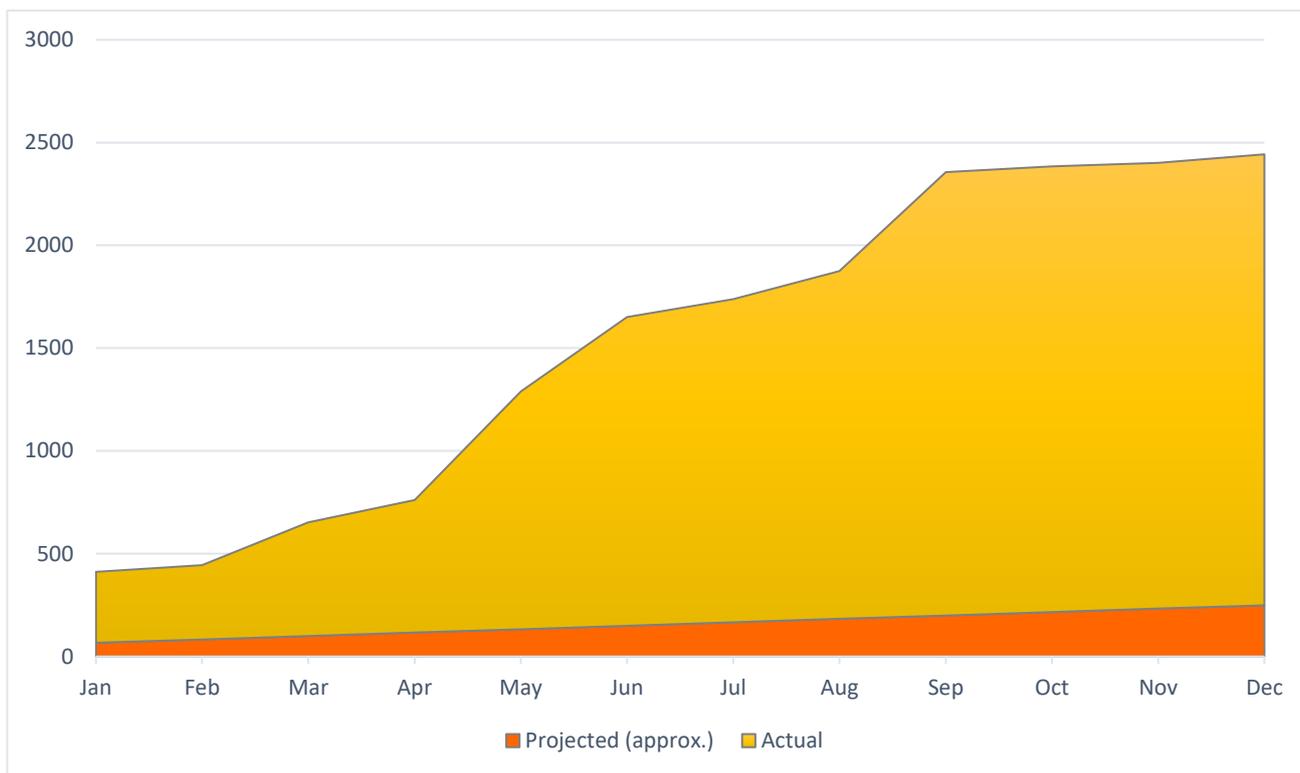
A promising uptake in school engagements indicated the desire for marine litter to be incorporated into classroom learning. Each school visited had classes already learning about marine plastics or similar topics, complimenting the delivery of the initiative's workshop series, and suggesting that this set up, coupled with a curriculum inclusive of marine litter subjects across all schools, could further aid learning and behaviour change.

From the beginning of the year, the initiative has benefitted from a clear and urgent desire from communities in the project area to address marine litter issues. Through the delivery of the Beach Clean Event Series, participation numbers have rapidly accelerating to almost 10 times higher than the original target for 2019. This has been the result of organising and supporting an average of one beach clean per week throughout the year, each across key sites where marine litter is a significant issue including the two known litter sinks. As the initiative moves forward, it also intends to tackle accumulations at isolated coastal locations and has already tried and tested a remote beach clean operation in ahead of 2020.



Craigewan Beach, Peterhead.

Now past the half-way point, the initiative is exploring new opportunities for acquiring alternative sources of funding by means of increasing its engagement with the Energy Sector. In April 2019, Turning the Plastic Tide held its first company beach clean, showcasing its ability to facilitate corporate involvement in solving the urgent and topical issue of marine litter. This was followed by a successful run of staff outings with several key organisations from the sector, as well as attendance at the Oil and Gas UK HSE Conference and Industry Awards in November. Moving forward, the initiative plans to implement a corporate sponsorship scheme, with the intention of replacing current funding which will no longer be available after August 2020. Outlining key benefits of being involved with Turning the Plastic Tide, the scheme is designed to create a stronger partnership with important industries in the North East of Scotland and encourage shared responsibility to reduce marine litter.



Under the current funding, an initial outreach target of 400 volunteers was agreed for the duration of the two-year initiative. Now just over half-way through, the project has reached a total of approximately 2,200 volunteers, particularly excelling in the months of April, May, June and September in 2019.

Acknowledgements

The project is funded by NESFLAG, the European Union’s European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the Scottish Government, with additional sponsorship from Peterhead Port Authority, Vattenfall, Scottish Fisherman’s Trust, Aberdeen Fish Producer’s Organisation, Angus Council and Shell. Turning the Plastic Tide would like to thank each of the funders for the opportunity to deliver its core activities across the North East of Scotland.

This project would also not be possible without support from Aberdeenshire and Angus Council who have assisted with marine litter collections throughout the year, and special acknowledgments particularly to Fraserburgh Harbour and Aberdeenshire Council’s Landscape Services for their crucial help in removing large nets and other heavy waste from the shores of Cairnbulg, Inverallochy, Craigewan Beach, Gadle Braes and Sandford Bay.

We would also like thank the Marine Conservation Society, Surfers Against Sewage North East Scotland, Marine Scotland, SCRAPbook, Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service, staff at Forvie and St Cyrus National Nature Reserves, KIMO UK, Pick Up Peterhead, East Haven Together, Littoral Art Project, AbSafe, PolFit, Pony Axes, Stonehaven Sea Safari, Keep Scotland Beautiful, the RNLi and the community councils for their kind collaboration and help with growing and raising awareness of the project.

Lastly, to all the companies, school pupils, teachers and volunteers who have given their time and efforts to improve our coast.

All photography is by Crawford Paris unless stated otherwise.

Core Activity 1 – Marine Litter Education Programme

The delivery of a Marine Litter Education Programme forms one of two core activities of the initiative. A workshop approach was chosen for delivering the programme, the content of which covers single-use plastics, litter from source-to-sea, impacts on Scottish wildlife and on local beaches, as well as certain actions that can be taken to reduce these impacts. The structure of the session consists of a 30 to 45 minute interactive presentation followed by a quiz, and given that there is enough time available, an optional group activity challenging the pupils to think about how long certain types of litter last in the marine environment before they begin to fragment.

In the last year, the programme has been successful in reaching not only primary and secondary schools, but also several youth groups throughout the region including Cubs and Scouts, and where possible has followed up with a clean-up at a local beach.



Marine litter assemblies were delivered to entire schools (Photograph by Milena Tkacz).

School and Youth Group Visits

To initiate interest among schools throughout the project area, a flyer was designed and distributed through an Aberdeenshire-wide newsletter via the Council in January, sparking a flow of interest predominantly from primary schools in the region, two secondary schools and laterally three youth groups. In total, 19 schools were visited mainly between March and June, particularly in the run up to the Summer break. Some were also visited multiple times in order to deliver the sessions to individual classes. Other visits consisted of delivering the presentation to the entire school in an assembly format before breaking off into individual classes to run the quiz and group activity.

A key lesson learned was that each school has varying needs and expectations, generally determined by the time and staff available on a given day. However, with the workshop format consisting of multiple teaching approaches, such as presentations and group activities, the delivery of the content could be adapted as desired. Similarly, the presentation style could also be tailored to particular age groups, for example when a session is intended to be for younger groups in Primary 1 or 2. This could be done

without changing the content and ensuring the same message was still being conveyed. Having such flexibility enabled the programme to be delivered to an optimal number of schools and as many age groups as possible. The result was approximately 1800 school pupils engaged in marine litter education and a further 80 from Cubs and Scouts groups in 2019.

School and Youth Group Beach Cleans

A major element to the education programme was the added option for each school or youth group visited to take part in a beach clean, as a means of enhancing the learning experience in the classroom. In particular, it provides an opportunity for the pupils to identify the various types of marine litter present and assess which possible sources they may have come from. For example, being able to distinguish a cotton bud stem from a lollipop stick and then deducing that it could have been flushed down a toilet. Similar lessons on the beach, such as identifying crisp packets or sweet wrapper, further help the pupils understand how easy it is for litter

to make its way into the marine environment from further inland or upstream. Hence, the beach clean follow-up is a crucial aspect of helping to fully develop an awareness and understanding of the source-to-sea content taught in the classroom.

Including events with both schools and youth groups, a total of 734 young adults have been involved directly in cleaning up approximately 750 kilogrammes of marine litter from the project coastline along Angus and Aberdeenshire. This truly astounding effort was the result of 13 individual beach cleans and roughly 1,500 hours of volunteer time from schools and youth groups in the area.



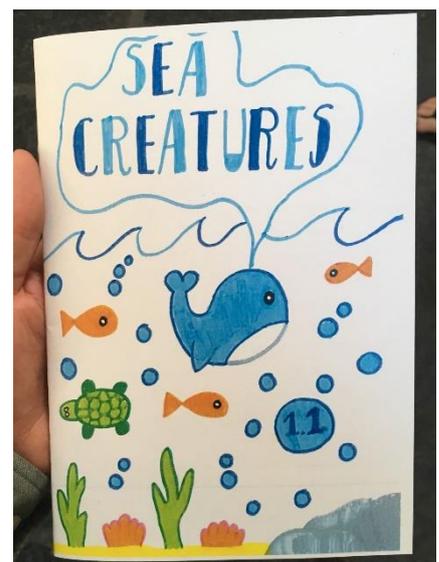
A record number of 104 pupils from Arduthie Primary cleaned Stonehaven beach on 7th June.

Highlights

Pupils Get Creative with Marine Pollution Education

Many of the schools that participated in the Marine Litter Education Programme were promisingly already actively learning about similar topics in class prior to the visit. In general, the workshop complimented each school's class curriculum, with content aiding learning and in most cases, it contributed to creative projects such as artwork, posters and in one instance a fully choreographed interpretative dance with littoral lyrics from a Primary 6 class at Kellands Primary in Inverurie.

An outstanding example was from first year pupils from Banchory Academy, who provided an inspiring interpretation of the workshop content through their WriteFest project. As part of their English studies, pupils used the examples demonstrated during the delivery of the marine litter session to create a series of books comprising individual stories or poems written by each pupil, creatively illustrating many of the key messages and issues outlined in the workshop. The books were then presented at the school's WriteFest Book Launch event, at which the pupils read aloud excerpts in front of a full house of



'Sea Creatures' by Class 1.1 from Banchory Academy was based on impacts from marine plastic pollution.

teachers and parents. As a thank you for inspiring these artistic books and imaginative stories, the Turning the Plastic Tide Project Officer was invited to the event to speak about the initiative and present prizes for the best entries.

Ladyloan Primary Receive Award for Outstanding Contribution to Marine Conservation

This year, pupils from Ladyloan Primary stepped up to the challenge of reducing marine litter on their local beach at Arbroath Harbour on two occasions, first to mark the launch of the inaugural Great Angus Beach Clean, and then on day one of the second year of the Angus Coastal Festival. Turning the Plastic Tide facilitated both outings where over 60 pupils participated in removing a total of approximately 300 kilogrammes from the beach and boulders that line the shore south of the harbour. In recognition of their exceptional commitment to reduce waste on their local beach, the pupils were awarded Marine Litter Champions status by Angus Council. While also maintaining the school grounds which are only a few hundred yards from the beach, the pupils have now adopted it, committing to keep the area clean and continuing their beach clean activities into next year assisted by Turning the Plastic Tide.



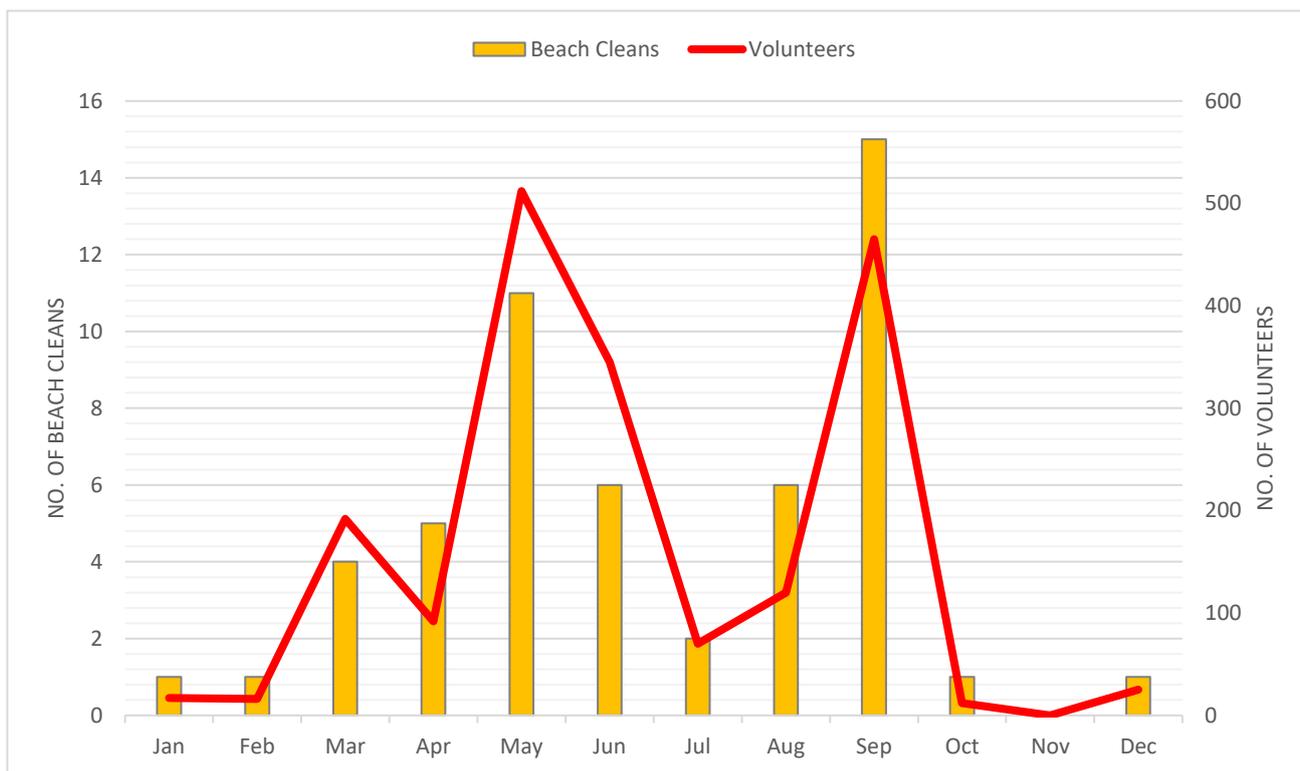
Pupils from Ladyloan Primary in Arbroath were awarded Marine Litter Champions status for their commitment to reducing marine litter. Cllr Julie Bell presented their award which was a 1960s Fairy Liquid bottle found during their beach clean at Arbroath Harbour on 10th May (photograph by Wendy Murray).



To launch the inaugural Great Angus Beach Clean on 10th May, pupils from Ladyloan Primary worked tirelessly all morning removing marine litter from their adopted beach south of Arbroath Harbour.

Core Activity 2 – Beach Clean Event Series

At the beginning of January 2019, Turning the Plastic Tide began to implement its first comprehensive Beach Clean Events Series, with the plan to organise and support a minimum of 30 clean-ups until the end of the year, reaching a target of 200 volunteers. The outreach of the events, however, proved to be far higher, partially as a result of engaging with community councils, grass-roots environmental groups, local businesses and nationwide marine litter campaigns, but also through collaborating with other event programmes in the project area. This, coupled with an overwhelmingly positive response from schools throughout the project area, saw the initiative surpass its initial target within the first few months and achieve an impressive a total of 53 beach cleans and engaging around 1870 volunteers in 2019 alone.



Number of beach clean events and volunteers per month in 2019. Spring and Autumn were by far the busiest periods, with a record of 512 volunteers in May and 15 beach cleans in September. A total of 1870 volunteers took part across 53 beach cleans in 2019.

Community Events – Organising, Collaborating and Supporting

Climate Week North East 2019

Throughout the year, the initiative has endeavoured to collaborate with as many well-established events in the region as possible as a means to help raise the profile of the project and build momentum. The first opportunity on the 2019 calendar was Climate Week North East (CWNE) in March, which saw one of the initiative’s most well-attended events of the year at Blackdog Beach. The area had been specifically highlighted by the SCRAPbook marine litter mapping project as a priority location with significant accumulations of debris, providing an ideal setting for people across Aberdeen and the Shire to witness the issue first-hand and make a difference.

The clean-up was promoted with the assistance of volunteers running CWNE on the event website and through social media, which resulted in 50 attendees. Among the group were residents from Blackdog, however most were from Aberdeen including a group of staff from a local business. Over the course of two hours, the volunteers removed a mixture of rope, polystyrene and hard plastics, amounting to an impressive 200 kilograms, which subsequently featured in a press release in the Press and Journal.



A Golden Wonders crisp packet was found at Lunan Bay which dated back to 1971 – year given away by the price label with both old and new money.

Surfers Against Sewage – Spring and Winter Campaigns

Collaborative work with Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) Campaigns has been instrumental in growth of Turning the Plastic Tide throughout 2019, in particular from the support of its volunteer staff and their strong links with communities in the area. SAS is run by a network of Regional Representatives around the UK, of which there are currently three that run beach cleans across the project area Turning the Plastic Tide covers.

In March, the initiative teamed up with SAS Campaign’s South Aberdeenshire Representative, Amy Barclay, to help support a series of events at St Cyrus, Lunan Bay, Gourdon and Montrose. For each, Turning the Plastic Tide assisted with event promotion through social media and provided additional beach cleaning equipment. Across all four events, the initiative reached over 160 participants and through working alongside a recognized campaign helped Turning the Plastic Tide gain credibility throughout the South Aberdeenshire area.

The initiative continues to work closely with SAS Campaigns in North East Scotland through attending public events, collaborating on beach cleans and sharing event promotion where possible. In December 2019, a Winter Beach Clean event took place for the second year running, this time at Newburgh Beach where microplastics, called nurdles, are known to accumulate. The event was promoted through social media, local schools, Aberdeenshire Council, Marine Scotland and Forvie National Nature Reserve. Despite deteriorating weather, 21 participants collected 25 kilogrammes of marine litter, including around 300 nurdles.

Turning the Plastic Tide – Spring Clean Series

Building on the momentum from the SAS Campaign events in March, Turning the Plastic Tide held its own Spring Clean Series between April and May. This involved the delivery of 12 beach cleans, organised primarily for individual communities but also for a number of schools and the initiative’s first corporate event.

The series presented an opportunity for the initiative to employ a coordinated approach to tackle areas that have been severely affected by marine litter, especially those that had previously been highlighted by local people as in need of attention, such as Craigewan Beach in Peterhead. Also included in the target list for the series were two of the known litter sinks in the project area, Cairnbulg Beach and Sandford Bay. All of these beaches have accumulated vast quantities of litter in recent years, meaning that a conventional approach using only manual labour from volunteers alone is no longer viable to make a significant reduction in the substantial amounts of litter present. Therefore, mechanical assistance was sought for each of these events, including help in kind from Fraserburgh Harbour’s bobcat, as well as tractors, quad bikes and trailers from Aberdeenshire Council’s Landscape



Aberdeenshire Council’s Landscape Services removed bulky ghost fishing gear at Sandford Bay, amounting to 4.38 tonnes in only 2.5 hours – the record for 2019.

Services team. This, along with 135 volunteers, removed an incredible 9.32 tonnes of marine litter in total from these three high-priority sites at Craigewan, Cairnbulg and Sandford Bay.



Fraserburgh Harbour's new NESFLAG funded Bobcat provided all the heavy lifting at Cairnbulg on 25th April. This along with 45 volunteers removed 4.14 tonnes in 4 hours from this kilometre stretch of beach.

The Great Angus Beach Clean

Notably during the Spring Clean Series was the planning and execution of the inaugural Great Angus Beach Clean in May. Spanning the coastline from Arbroath to Carnoustie, this three-day event was the largest of its kind ever to take place in Angus and was organised in collaboration with local charity East Haven Together (EHT).

This stretch is prone to bulky items washing up such as creel pots, tyres and ghost nets. Suffering the impact from the sheer volume of this debris, the group also recognise that a conventional beach cleaning approach is not sufficient, and to that end, purchased an all-terrain vehicle through LEADER funding in April 2019. The vehicle enabled an alternative approach where the public were encouraged to "go the extra mile", leaving from anywhere between Carnoustie and Arbroath, walking as far as they could collecting litter and leaving it above the high tide line when it became too heavy to carry. Piles of large debris and bagged waste were then systematically collected by the vehicle at periods of low water during each of the three days and brought back to a collection point at East Haven. A full report on how the event was planned, lessons learned and recommendations can be found on the EHT website: [<http://www.easthavenangus.com/>].



East Haven Together's LEADER funded Traxter travelled a total of 60 miles during the Great Angus Beach Clean in May. It was essential in gathering heaps of heavy marine litter piled up by the 200 volunteers that took part. Over the three-day event a shocking total of 3 tonnes was removed from the shoreline between Carnoustie and Arbroath.

Turning the Plastic Tide provided support initially through promoting a social media campaign using the hashtag #GreatABC19 to raise awareness of the event. Participants were encouraged to use the hashtag when

posting on social media while beach cleaning, in turn helping to estimate how many individuals were involved. The initiative also contributed additional beach cleaning equipment for those who did not have their own.

To officially launch the event, the initiative also organised a school beach clean with 60 pupils from local school, Ladyloan Primary, which featured in *The Courier* and on STV News. Impressive media coverage in the weeks preceding the event saw an overwhelming response from the public, with groups from all over Angus, and some as far as Edinburgh, coming along to participate. Over the course of the three days, 200 people took part in “going the extra mile”, stacking up a staggering 3 tonnes of litter above the high tide line between Carnoustie and Arbroath, which was subsequently removed using the all-terrain vehicle.



By the second day of the Great Angus Beach Clean an unbelievable amount of debris had been returned to the marine litter store at the East Haven car park. A total of 107 creels were found as well as 655 plastic drinks bottles and 335 aluminium cans.



*Around 60 pupils plus teachers, parents and local councillor, Julie Bell, came out to the beach south of Arbroath Harbour to mark the launch of the inaugural Great Angus Beach Clean (Photo by *The Courier*).*

Angus Coastal Festival 2019

After a successful programme in 2018, the Angus Coastal Festival returned for its second year running in September and featured a host of events by Turning the Plastic Tide. Four beach cleans run by the event organiser were supported and a further two individual events were run by the initiative, all of which contributed to the Great British Beach Clean – a nation-wide marine litter survey for the Marine Conservation Society.

Turning the Plastic Tide also featured a month-long exhibition at the Montrose Basin Visitor Centre. A display of photographs illustrated the highlights from the inaugural Great Angus Beach Clean in May alongside text from the East Haven Together report about how the event was organised, what kind of marine litter was removed and who all was involved in making it a success.



Pupils from Ladyloan Primary line up to weigh a Litter Cube made from fish box strapping collected from beach cleans. The experiment by Littoral Artist, Julia Barton, was used to illustrate how much energy is needed to produce plastic products which are commonly found washed up.

To launch the ten-day festival, Turning the Plastic Tide organised a beach clean at Arbroath Harbour, again with Marine Litter Champions for Angus, Ladyloan Primary, who previously launched the first Great Angus Beach Clean in May. Over 60 pupils attended the clean which also ran in tandem with an open-air sci-art workshop at Arbroath Signal Tower with artist, Julia Barton. Groups of 10 pupils were rotated from the beach clean to the workshop. Here, the pupils examined how much energy is needed to create commonly found marine plastics, represented through weighing large cubes made from the litter itself. Throughout the beach clean, the pupils collected hundreds of plastic bottles which were then made into a Litter

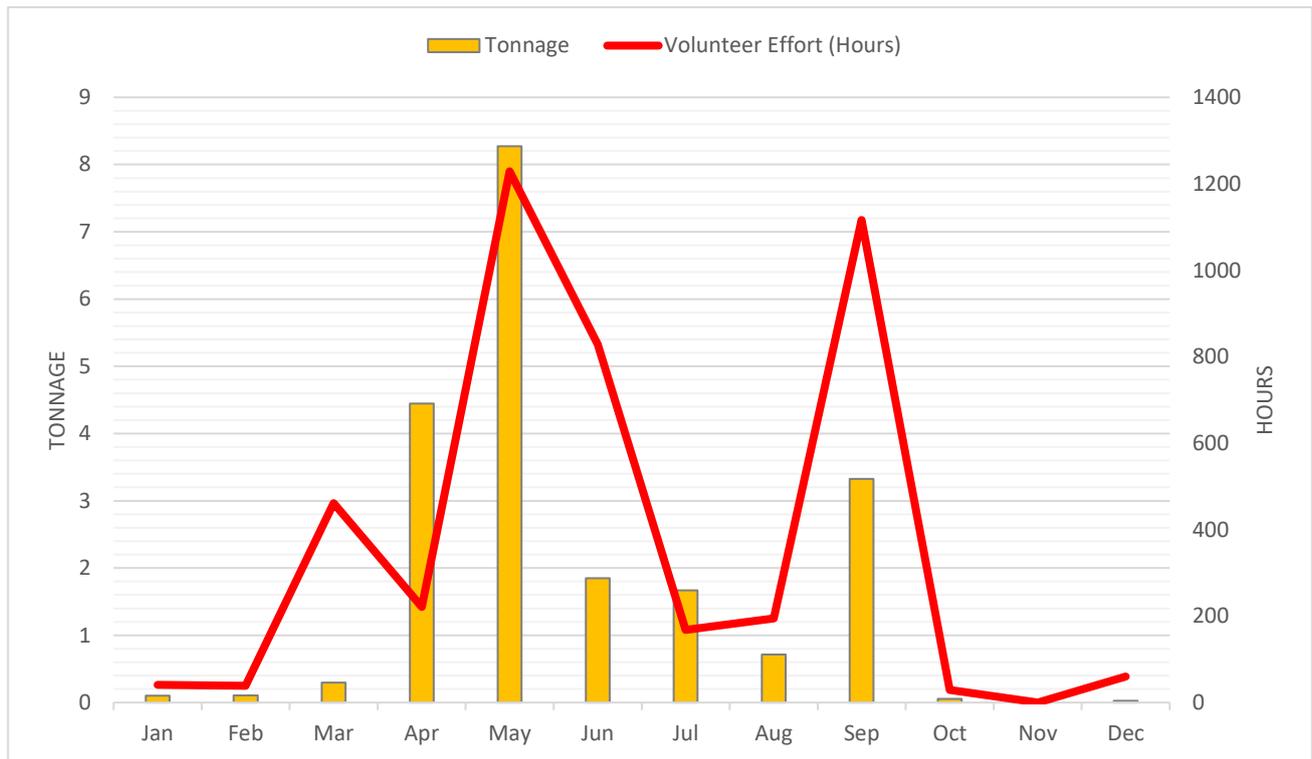
Cube and displayed at the Ladyloan Primary School Fayre the following day, at which Turning the Plastic Tide had a stall and ran a playground litter pick for the pupils and parents.

After the triumph of the inaugural Great Angus Beach Clean in May, another was planned for the opening weekend of the festival using the same methodology and philosophy as the initial event. Turning the Plastic Tide supported the event just as before, assisting with promoting a social media campaign using the hashtag #GreatABC19 and providing equipment for the event itself. Over the two days, approximately 1.2 tonnes of litter were removed, as opposed to the 3 tonnes earlier in May, suggesting that a significant difference can be made to the cleanliness of our coastline but only if ongoing efforts are coordinated and consistent.

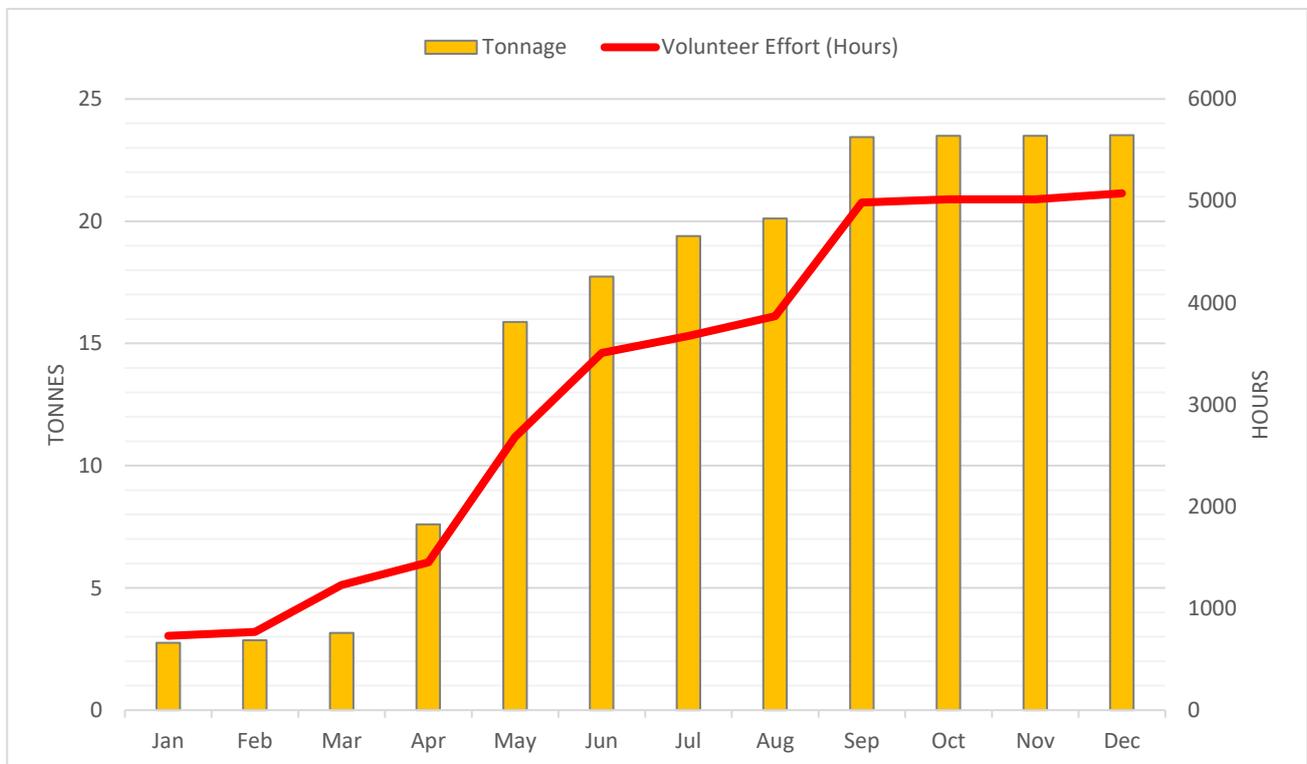
From left to right, Cllr Lynne Devine, Turning the Plastic Tide Officer, Crawford Paris, and Cllr Julie Bell, at Victoria Park in Arbroath raising awareness of littered cigarette ends and their environmental impact. The issue was raised during the Great Angus Beach Clean and featured in a press release by The Courier on 24th September (photograph by Wendy Murray).



Turning the Plastic Tide – Total Volunteer Effort



Volunteer effort measured in hours across each month, compared with the amount of tonnage removed. A total of 4,478 hours was spent cleaning 20.86 tonnes of marine litter in 2019.



Gross monthly tonnage and volunteer hours. A total of 23.51 tonnes have been collected since the beginning of the project in August 2018, with approximately 5,200 hours' worth of volunteer effort.



The Stonehaven Sea Safari RIB, also part funded by NESFLAG, provided safe transportation for a small group of volunteers during the remote beach clean operation on 29th August. Several recce trips were also carried out throughout April, May and June to assess marine litter accumulations in isolated coastal areas around Stonehaven.

Additional Work

Remote Beach Cleaning

Since August 2018, Turning the Plastic Tide has worked closely with marine litter mapping project called SCRAPbook to identify priority sites for clean-ups. After having mapped the initiative's project area, results revealed several remote bays and coves along the Aberdeenshire coastline that were in general only accessible by sea, or where boat-based access was more appropriate than landward access on foot.

Since the discovery of these areas in late 2018, Turning the Plastic Tide has been challenged with finding a partner with the resources and expertise to remove marine debris on such a notoriously exposed area of coastline. Operations using small vessels have been carried out successfully on the West coast of Scotland, however, there had been little evidence of similar approaches in the North East. This presented an exciting opportunity to lead on what could become an ongoing coordinated approach to safely and efficiently tackling marine litter accumulations in remote coastal locations.

Towards the end of 2018, Turning the Plastic Tide began discussions with a new part NESFLAG-funded business venture, Stonehaven Sea Safari, that had expressed an interest in collaborating to help access challenging coastal areas nearby Stonehaven with the use of a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB). A series of recce trips were carried out between April and June to assess priority locations in terms of ease of access and amount of litter present.

An operation was then devised that incorporated the use of two vessels – the main RIB that would transport volunteers to the locations and a second smaller boat used to ferry volunteers ashore. This was then overseen by three crew from the RNLI in Stonehaven, who supervised the landing



A small team of volunteers was assembled for the trial operation at Skatie Shore including staff from Marine Scotland, Mairi Gougeon MSP and RNLI crew (photograph by Sandra Fraser).

of the smaller vessel on the shore and assisted volunteers during transfer between vessels. It was also agreed that instead of transporting the collected litter back to the harbour with the volunteers, it would be stowed safely above the high tide line and collected by the RNLI later the same day as part of a training exercise.



Mark Stephen from BBC Radio Scotland interviewing Mairi Gougeon MSP about the importance of cleaning remote beaches.

In late August, a trial of the operation was carried out north of Stonehaven at Skatie Shore with five volunteers from Marine Scotland, including Chief Scientific Advisor Marine, Colin Moffat. Also in attendance was MSP for Angus North and the Mearns, Mairi Gougeon, who is also Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment. Highlighted as one of the first coordinated attempts to address cleaning up remote areas in the North East, Mark Stephen from BBC Radio Scotland's 'Out of Doors' programme was invited along to document the operation. Interviews featured the Stonehaven Sea Safari Director, Andrew Buchanan, EGCP's Project Manager, Ian Hay, Turning the Plastic Tide's Project Officer and the aforementioned volunteers who stressed the importance of removing marine litter in remote locations. The piece resulted in a ten-minute segment about the initiative's collaborative efforts which was broadcast on Radio Scotland on 14th September. Subsequently, the operation was praised by Ms Gougeon at a parliamentary debate in Holyrood on 3rd October, with compliments to Stonehaven Sea Safari, the RNLI and Turning the Plastic Tide.

After the successful running of the operation, widespread media coverage and positive appraisal in the Scottish parliament, Turning the Plastic Tide plans a series of remote beach cleans in 2020 targeting key areas highlighted by the SCRAPbook project.

EGCP – Turning the Plastic Tide in Aberdeen City

In January 2019, Turning the Plastic Tide was shortlisted by the award-giving body, Neighbourly, which was providing grants through local businesses to projects involved in litter reduction in the UK. In March, both TK Maxx and Homesense stores in Aberdeen voted the initiative as their preferred cause, each donating £800, allowing work to be extended into Aberdeen City, which had previously been excluded due to requirements of the main funder, EMFF. Similarly, additional City-based funding from Co-op in Sheddocksley further supported the extension of Turning the Plastic Tide's core activities into Aberdeen.

As the main core funding source for Turning the Plastic Tide pays the Project Officer's full time to cover the Aberdeenshire and Angus areas only, the work in the City was carried out by the EGCP Project Manager. Since August, there have been



76 volunteers turned out at the Donmouth on 22nd September for 2 hours during the Great British Beach Clean weekend (photograph by Ian Hay).

two beach cleans within the city area at Greyhope Bay in August and the Donmouth in September, both of which were run for staff from Co-op and members of the public, collectively reaching 95 volunteers. The additional funding has also facilitated visits to a further two schools, including two assemblies and three workshops, reaching a total of approximately 330 pupils.

Engaging with Industry

Launch Corporate Beach Clean – Premier Oil

In 2019, the initiative has endeavoured to engage not only schools and local communities in reducing marine litter, but also to encourage greater participation and responsibility from industry, in particular the Energy Sector. A link with the sector was established in late 2018 with Premier Oil, which expressed a keen interest in the initiative, and plans for Turning the Plastic Tide's first corporate beach clean event were thereafter coordinated with Managing Director, Paul Williams.

To demonstrate the challenge of marine litter that the North East faces and the tangible differences that can be achieved by a coordinated approach, one of areas worst-affected beaches was selected for the staff outing with Premier. Cairnbulg beach, near Fraserburgh, is one of the key litter sink sites in the North East, where debris is known to continually accumulate. It had been cleaned two years before where over four tonnes were removed in a single attempt with mechanical assistance from Fraserburgh Harbour. Prior to the event, the initiative approached Fraserburgh Harbour again, who agreed to provide heavy-lifting in kind, lending their NESFLAG-funded telehandler and an experienced operator for the entire day.

On 25th April, approximately 40 volunteers from Premier spent five hours filling half-tonne sacks along the kilometre stretch, while the telehandler ferried the full bags back to the skip, as provided by Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services. In the first hour, 280 kilogrammes of recyclable materials were collected before a further 3.8 tonnes of mixed waste were removed. Of the total 4.14 tonnes gathered, 557 intact Showa blue rubber gloves were recorded, along with 49 intact oil filters from medium sized vessels and a significant amount of fabric rags.



Aberdeenshire Council provided the disposal of 4.14 tonnes of marine litter from Cairnbulg beach in April, 280kg of which was separated for recycling.



A shocking 557 intact blue Showa 660 rubber gloves were recorded in 4 hours across the 1 kilometre stretch.

Coverage of the event featured in the Press and Journal on April 26th, with an article highlighting Premier's involvement and the sheer amount of waste collected. The event was also documented using drone footage and interviews, from which a video was created showcasing how businesses can get involved in beach cleaning, and the initiative's intentions to engage more with corporate bodies. The video now is available on the EGCP YouTube channel and Turning the Plastic Tide's social media platforms and currently has just over 300 views.

Further Engagements – OGUK and Corporate Clean-up Events

After the impactful corporate event launch on 25th April, links were made with the Oil and Gas UK (OGUK) Environment Forum, later leading to an invitation to present to the group on 11th June to promote corporate engagement in beach cleaning. Around 30 delegates were present, and the event proved to be pivotal in raising the profile of the initiative amongst the OGUK network, resulting in a series of enquires from companies in the sector, including Siemens Gas and Power, Blue Manta, Shell, Wood, National Grid and BP.



Graduates from BP were put through their paces at Inverallochy, tackling a previously uncleaned stretch of shoreline by the golf course. With help from Aberdeenshire Council's Landscape Services, the group removed 1.2 tonnes in 4 hours.

Since the initial event with Premier Oil, Turning the Plastic Tide has facilitated a further 8 beach cleans with 6 companies within the Energy Sector, targeting priority sites at Forvie National Nature Reserve and areas previously uncleaned such as the Inverallochy Shoreline. All together, these efforts accounted for the removal of a further 3 tonnes of litter from the marine environment since the initial corporate launch in April, and in total, voluntary beach cleans with the Energy Sector have accounted for almost one-third of the overall tonnage removed since the launch of Turning the Plastic Tide in August 2018. Now with a proven track record of significant litter removal from key sites, it is evident that one of the key strengths of the initiative is its ability to direct effort to affected communities, enabling greater corporate inclusion in solving the urgent and highly topical issue of marine litter across communities in North East Scotland.

Corporate Sponsorship

Turning the Plastic Tide continues to build relations with the energy sector, recently exhibiting on a stall kindly donated by OGUK at their HSE conference on 6th November and attending the OGUK Industry Awards on 7th November, at which approximately £2,200 was generously donated. These events have further raised the profile of Turning the Plastic Tide within the sector and corporate interest continues to grow.

Further donations, including a £3,000 contribution from Premier Oil and match-funding from volunteer hours with BP staff, have been essential and will allow the initiative to continue into 2020 delivering above and beyond the initial targets. However, the key challenge is finding new financial sources to sustain the core activities beyond August 2020. By this point, the majority of the current funding from the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) will not be available. Hence, the initiative is now in a critical position to establish a new approach to secure financial support.

Turning the Plastic Tide presents an effective means to facilitate corporate social responsibility and direct involvement with relevant local issues, and for those companies interested in supporting and maintaining strong links with the communities around which they work, there is great potential to continue the initiative under a new framework of sponsorship. Plans are now underway to apply a structured approach to obtaining sponsorship, consisting of a consortium of concerned organisations, not limited to the Energy Sector. Timely

implementation in early 2020 with funding from a series of key sponsors will be necessary to guarantee the continuation and potential expansion of Turning the Plastic Tide beyond August 2020.



Forvie National Nature Reserve is affected in several sensitive areas by the blight of marine litter. Further funding in 2020 will ensure work continues to reduce its impact on the diverse flora and fauna on the reserve.

Next Steps: Beyond August 2020

EGCP – Turning the Plastic Tide: Phase 2

EGCP Turning the Plastic Tide was originally established in August 2018 as a two-year initiative part funded by NESFLAG, the European Union's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the Scottish Government, plus financial contributions from Peterhead Port Authority, Vattenfall, Scottish Fisherman's Trust and Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation, Angus Council and Shell UK. The project has been very successful but no further support from EMFF, the main funder, is available.

Just over half-way through completion, the project has already surpassed its targets, with double the amount of beach cleans and reaching more than five times the expected number of volunteers within the first year. With growing momentum and public interest, new sources of funding are essential for the continuation of the project and potential expansion.

A new Corporate Support Scheme proposes a framework for financial contributions from key sponsor organisations. Under this framework, the project will continue to deliver its core operational activities including beach cleans and education, enabling continued growth of its volunteer base and creation of a more coordinated and coherent approach to beach litter removal in the North East Scotland region.

As well as finding long-term solutions to the wider issue of marine litter in the North East, the Corporate Support Scheme creates opportunities for strong partnership working between sponsors and the project, which now has a proven track record as a highly successful local environmental initiative delivering demonstrable benefits to member organisations involved, including facilitating corporate inclusion in solving local issues.

Financial Break-down

Annual Costs

Project Officer and oncosts	£31,000
Travel and expenses	£4,250
Equipment	£1,000
Video production	£1,000
Social media marketing	£1,000
Waste disposal	£5,000 (in kind from Local Authorities)
Hosting and admin.	£5,000
Total	£48,250
Total excluding in kind	£43,250

Suggested Funding – Corporate Support Scheme (CSS)

For the EGCP - Turning the Plastic Tide project to continue and reach its full potential it needs new sources of funding. The suggested CSS provides a clear framework for organisations willing to offer financial support for its continuation. Sponsorship through a tiered system of involvement will enable the initiative to deliver its core operational activities, while also presenting several key benefits to sponsors.

The structure below sets out two Platinum Sponsors for the main project deliverables, as well as additional support from a consortium sponsors at Gold, Silver and Bronze levels. The CSS packages include:

Platinum Sponsors

- (1) **Beach Cleans** – The Platinum Beach Clean Sponsor will be the chief funder for the ground delivery of clean-up activities throughout the project area.
- (2) **Education** – The Platinum Education Sponsor will be the chief funder for the delivery of engagements with schools and youth groups throughout the project area, including school beach clean events.

Key benefits for Platinum Sponsors include:

- Credit on all social media and press releases related to the project, as well as on all EGCP media and publications, including those of other EGCP projects, except for the *Discover Maps (*separately funded project).
- A specialised video created by EGCP highlighting their involvement with the project, which will be shared on the social media platforms and YouTube channel of EGCP and the marine litter initiative.
- EGCP will endeavour to help with all the sponsor's promotions including internal and external videos.
- EGCP will endeavour to aid the company at internal events and training days.

In return:

- Contribution of **£10,000** per annum to the project.
- Fulfilment of CSR: Engagement in practical activities to reduce marine litter, including at least one beach clean organised by Turning the Plastic Tide.

Gold Sponsor

- Contribution of **£5,000** per annum.
- Take part in at least one beach clean.
- Credited on materials such as banners and merchandise linked to EGCP Turning the Plastic Tide.

- Credited on social media (3 promotions).
- Credited at the end of all EGCP – Turning the Plastic Tide videos.

Silver Sponsor

- Contribution of **£3,000** per annum.
- Take part in at least one beach clean.
- Credited on materials such as banners and merchandise linked to the EGCP Turning the Plastic Tide.
- Credited on social media (2 promotions).
- Credited at the end of all EGCP Turning the Plastic Tide videos.

Bronze Supporter

- Contribution of **£1,000** per annum.
- Take part in at least one beach clean.
- Credited on materials such as banners and merchandise linked to the EGCP Turning the Plastic Tide.
- Credited on social media (1 promotion).
- Credited at the end of all EGCP Turning the Plastic Tide videos.

<i>Corporate Support Scheme Levels of Support</i>	Corporate Support Scheme			
	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum
<i>Specialised video</i>	-	-	-	X
<i>Large logo on project merchandise (e.g. banner, t-shirts)</i>	-	-	-	X
<i>Credited at the beginning of project videos</i>	-	-	-	X
<i>Credit at the end of project videos</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Support in company events and promotions</i>	-	-	-	X
<i>Credited on all EGCP Publications (excl. Discover Maps)</i>	-	-	X	X
<i>Medium logo on project merchandise (e.g. banner, t-shirts)</i>	-	X	X	-
<i>Small logo on project merchandise (e.g. banner, t-shirts)</i>	X	-	-	-
<i>Credit on publications linked to the project</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Annual Project Review</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Number of social media promotions</i>	1	2	3	6
<i>Number of beach cleans (minimum)</i>	1	1	1	1



Staff from Premier Oil were thrilled to remove 4.14 tonnes of marine litter from Cairnbulg Beach on 25th April and subsequently EGCP produced a specialised video highlighting their achievement.

Get in touch

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 @TurnPlasticTide

 @turningtheplastictide

 @turning_the_plastic_tide

 @EGCP



The EGCP Beach Litter Officer with the Marine Litter Champions at Ladyloan Primary School Fayre on 14th September (photo by Kelly Ann Dempsey).

