



NEWS

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For immediate release

Dorset's beaches need you

Dorset residents are being encouraged to help clean up their world-class coastline by taking part in the Great Dorset Beach Clean on Sunday, 15 April.

Every year tonnes of rubbish are washed up on our shores from waste disposed of at sea. This year, debris from the stricken MSC Napoli has made things worse – but has also highlighted the problems faced by Dorset's beaches and the importance of keeping them clean.

When oil-covered debris from the Napoli was washed ashore, disaster was averted thanks to quick action by Dorset County Council's Countryside Ranger and Access teams, contractors deployed by the Marine and Coastguard Agency and willing volunteers. In five days, the teams removed about 120 tonnes of oiled debris from the 6.5 miles of Chesil Beach between Abbotsbury and Burton Freshwater.

Next month, volunteers will be called on again – this time to take part in the 19th Great Dorset Beach Clean, an event started in 1988 to mark the MARPOL convention, designed to prevent pollution of the English Channel.

A total of 22 beaches from Lyme Regis to Christchurch will be cleaned in just one day, with volunteers helping to remove plastics and other rubbish from the shore.

The vast majority of litter found on Dorset's beaches is made of plastic, which steadily accumulates if not removed. As standard plastics never degrade, they circle around the world in ocean currents and can cause long-term damage. Whales, dolphins and turtles can mistake floating plastic bags for the jellyfish which form part of their diet. Once swallowed, the plastic bag blocks the stomach and leads to a slow death through starvation.

This year the Great Dorset Beach Clean has been organised by Durlston Marine Project and Dorset Coast Forum in conjunction with Dorset County Council's Countryside Service and supported by West Dorset and Purbeck district councils. The event plays a vital role in protecting and improving the appearance of Dorset's beaches.

Thousands of volunteers have contributed to the beach cleans over the past 19 years. Last year more than 300 volunteers took part, and removed almost 500 bags of rubbish from 25 beaches along the Dorset coast. Organisers hope local people will once again give their time to help spruce up our spectacular coastline and make this year's event the biggest yet.

Kirstie Snow, Dorset coast and countryside promotions officer, said:

"Dorset has one of the most dramatic coastlines in the UK, enjoyed by visitors and local residents alike. Marine and coastal litter represents a significant threat to the natural beauty, safety and wildlife of the beaches that we all enjoy."

Jodie McGregor, Dorset Coast Forum officer, said:

"We have already had a great deal of interest from members of the public wishing to support this year's Great Dorset Beach Clean. We need every pair of hands available on the day. So if you can spare the time to help, please head to one of the beaches listed, where you'll find a beach master who will provide protective gloves and bags."

For further information, contact Durlston Marine Project on (01929) 424443 or visit www.jurassiccoast.com

ENDS

Notes for editors

1. Beach times and meeting points:

1	Lyme Regis	10am-12pm	Outside Lifeboat Station
2	Charmouth	10am-12pm	Charmouth Heritage Centre
3	Seatown	10am-12pm	On the beach
4	Eype	10am-12pm	Eypesmouth Car Park
5	West Bay	10am-12pm	East beach Car Park
6	Burton Bradstock	10am-12pm	Car Park outside café
7	Cogden	10am-12pm	Cogden Car Park
8	West Bexington	10am-12pm	Beach Car Park
9	Abbotsbury	10am-12pm	Beach Car Park by toilets
10	Ferrybridge	10am-12pm	Fleet Information Centre
11	Chesil Cove	10am-12pm	Promenade by Cove House Inn
12	Church Ope Cove	10am-12pm	On the beach
13	Portland castle and Sailing Club Beach	10am-12pm	Portland Castle Car Park
14	Weymouth	10am-12pm	Stone Pier by Nothe Fort
15	Bowleaze Cove	10am-12pm	Beachside centre Car Park
16	Ringstead	10am-12pm	Bottom Car Park at Ringstead
17	Durdle Door	10am-12pm	Far Car Park by gate & by steps to Durdle Door
18	Lulworth Cove	10am-12pm	Car Park near shop
19	Kimmeridge	10.30am-12.30pm	Fine Foundation Centre
20	Worbarrow Bay	10.30am-12.30pm	Tyneham Car Park
21	Chapmans Pool	10am-12pm	Chapman's Pool (on foot only)
22	Swanage	2pm-4pm	Seafront by Ocean Bay
23	Shell Bay and Knoll Beach	2pm-4pm	End of beach off Ferry Road
24	Steamer Point, Christchurch	10.30am-12.30pm	Steamer Point Visitor Centre - End of Penney

			Way off Seaway Avenue
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2. A jpg photograph is attached showing the kind of rubbish which washes ashore on Dorset's coastline.

3. For further information contact on Kirstie Snow, Dorset coast and countryside promotions officer, on (01305) 225037.

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