

**PROJECT BEACH CLEAN**  
**UK WIDE**  
**KIER UTILITIES**

## BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: Innovation

### Project overview

In conjunction with the annual Kier Group Environment Week (held this year between 4th – 10th June) the Kier Utilities environment team delivered ‘Project Beach Clean’ on beaches located on the coastline of the 4 home countries in which we work: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

### What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

Everyone with a degree of interest in the ‘environment’ will have been moved by Sir David Attenborough’s Blue Planet 2 report highlighting the plight of our oceans and wildlife due to the amount of pollution found within the marine environment. Inspired by this, we decided as a team we should contribute in respect to trying to reduce this increasing problem and where better to start than in the areas in which we work. As a team we set out to organise several ‘beach cleans’ and engaged with our staff, schools, volunteers and the Marine Conservation Society.

### What were the reasons behind this project ?

It is estimated; 50% of the plastic we use are single use, 5400 wet wipes are being removed from the River Thames annually, 500 billion disposable bags are used worldwide every year, 5.6 million cigarette butts are dumped into the environment every year, 1 million plastic bottles are bought every minute around the world, 13 million tonnes of plastic are found in our seas and oceans every year. A focus of the ‘beach clean’ initiative was to improve the marine environment safeguarding many of our endangered species from plastic and other waste.



*Kier Beach Clean 2018:*



*Waste from Porthcawl:*

## What were the biodiversity measures taken?

During the annual Kier Group Environment week, the Kier Utilities environment team visited the coastlines at Portobello (Scotland), Ballyholme (Northern Ireland), Mundesley, and Bridgwater Bay (England) and Porthcawl (Wales).

The team engaged with their respective clients (including several water companies), recruited volunteers, engaged with school children, Natural England, Wildfowl and Wetland Trust and the Marine Conservation Society as well as local councils who recovered the waste.

A total of over 115kg of waste was collected, this was waste that if not removed would have been washed back into the seas and oceans around our coast, or left to degrade on the beach, both of which massively impacts our marine environment and recreational spaces. It's worth noting that several items found have been datable and include a Smarties' lid c.1973 and beer crate c.1980, which illustrates how long these items have been in the environment.

As a team we know that our contribution was small, however through engagement and interaction with our clients, volunteers, schools, we believe we have made a difference to our seas and beaches. By entering this into the BIG Bio-Diversity Challenge, we hope to inspire others to do the same.

A video of our efforts can be viewed here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0wiC\\_Y7jvs&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0wiC_Y7jvs&feature=youtu.be)

Small actions such as this can be a catalyst for highlighting the problem associated with single use plastic and general rubbish found along our coastline and within oceans. The issue of pollution within our marine environment isn't something found in far off waters, there is a real problem on our doorstep too that can be improved if people are inspired to change their lifestyle habits.



*The extra hands and paws from the volunteers helped our cause!*



*View at Ballyholme beach clean*



### Further information

Since the conclusion of the environment week beach clean project, there has been an impressive interest in undertaking more beach cleans by Kier staff that could not attend the original dates. Our beach clean video has been circulated around Kier and to all the supporting stakeholders proving what can be achieved in a small amount of time. The marine conservation society, organising body for 'Beach Watch' also received the video and are hoping to use it within their own website to inspire others to join the movement. The Kier environment team are in the process, from popular demand, planning more beach cleans into this Autumn and the 2019 environment week on a much more ambitious scale.

### Project Team

- Kier Environment Team; Rozy Gray, Grace Burdge, Jamie Edmonds and Craig O'Brien
- Marine Conservation Society
- Natural England
- Wildfowl and Wetland Trust

### What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

What started out as a small scale Kier project has now flourished into a project that is owned personally by all those involved. Plastic and other waste is a massive contributing factor to the pollution of our seas and oceans and while this initiative was 'a drop in the ocean', it will be the first of many to be delivered by the environment team. Our motivation for the beach clean project was to leave the beaches cleaner and safer for our vulnerable coastal wildlife than when we arrived and to highlight the issue that affects everyone.



*Discarded lobster/crab pots from North Norfolk*



*Porthcawl volunteers with rubbish found along beach*