



ANNUAL REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 2018 - SEPTEMBER 2019

HIGHLIGHTS

397

businesses
signed up

51

schools
assemblies

165

schools took
part in
plastic-free day

43

beach
cleans

FROM THE TEAM

The Final Straw Solent aims to inspire people from all backgrounds to be more cognisant of our impacts on the local and wider environment, with particular emphasis on the amount of plastic waste we produce, how we deal with it and how we can stop it from entering marine ecosystems.

In over the last year have carried out 43 beach cleans, met with multiple local councils, signed up many additional businesses that have pledged to remove at least one item of single use plastic from their business and day to day lives, taking our total of supporting businesses to 397. We have have carried out 51 school assemblies in the last academic year. Our hugely successful 8th May Plastic-Free Day reached 65,000 students. This academic year we have an aim of engaging with another 50 schools to inform pupils about the plastic pollution crisis and what we can all do to combat it. We will also be working to engage and sign up new businesses to the campaign whilst nurturing our close relationship to the local councils and reaching out to more council bodies along the Solent area.

In June we launched 'The Final Fat Fish', nicknamed 'Nellie', with generous funding from the FatFace Foundation and the Portsmouth City Council High Street Clean Up Fund. Nellie has already travelled to 18 locations across the Solent area and beyond, and she is booked in to attend another 9 events up to the New Year. Safe to say, she has been a very busy fish, helping us spread the message of plastic pollution. She is an amazing visual representation of plastic inside our fish and sea life. We hope she continues to travel and influence people to cut back on their plastic use at even more events over the coming years.

Much of our success this year has been down to the support that we have received from the community, businesses, schools, volunteers and in particular 11th Hour Racing. We want to thank everyone who has come to a beach clean, picked up litter in their local area or changed their buying habits to avoid single use plastic. Your engagement and care for our planet is what will ultimately help to turn the tide on plastic pollution. Last, but by no means least, we would like to thank The Portsmouth News and Team Locals Media for their unrelenting support, helping us spread this important environmental message throughout local communities.



BUSINESSES

The campaign has gone from strength to strength over the year, with many businesses contacting us proactively to see if they can join up. To date, we now have **397 businesses** signed up along the Solent and further afield, which is incredible.

Why is this important? We want to show that changes can be made in all sorts of businesses. From cafes, bars and restaurants, to beauty salons, dentists and offices, there is always something we can change to make some positive environmental changes. Have a look around, and see if you can identify the single-use plastic items present in your business that could be cut. Single-use plastic to reusable cups at water fountains? Disposable cutlery to reusable metal cutlery? Or even getting the milk man to deliver local milk in glass bottles? Compost bins for food waste? This campaign is open to businesses large and small and we welcome any changes.

How do we thank our businesses? We shout about them over our social media pages and add them to our website. It's the least we can do for them when they are making these great changes for the planet. Plus, you all need to know what businesses are making these positive changes so you can support them too.

If you want to join the campaign or recognise a business that should already be on our list that isn't there, then please get in touch. Or if you're already on our list but want to take things further then we would be very happy to help. Alternatively, if you would like us to complete a waste audit, focusing on single-use plastics in particular for your business, then please do get in touch. We can also provide after dinner talks if your business or group has an event coming up.



SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Over the last 12 months we have visited 51 local schools, reaching thousands of schoolchildren, where we have either provided a whole-school assembly, a class specific assembly, a plastic ingestion and entanglement workshop or assembly and workshops. The workshops supplement the children's learning and really bring the issues faced by wildlife to life. Our assemblies are tailored to the age group, with separate presentations for primary KS1, KS2 and secondary school students.

Each school is offered a printable 'Ocean Defender' certificate from us, where each child can pledge their own support to the campaign, the local environment and our oceans. We have found that this establishes ownership of the campaign for the children, giving a sense of empowerment and creates an amazing feeling of community engagement. We also give out copies of the Wild Tribe Heroes books for KS1 children to supplement the topic.

This year we have given talks at dozens of local community groups and provided after-dinner speeches to several groups. We have attended local business networking events to raise awareness of the campaign and the issues around single-use plastic pollution in our area. We have also discussed in depth the alternative products available to make sustainable switches.

We are looking forward to continuing this work over the coming year, and have several assemblies, presentations for community groups, and after dinner slots booked in over the coming months. It's going to be a busy, but rewarding time, with positive changes taking place across the area and lots of new people hearing the campaigns message.

If you are a teacher, governor or a parent that would like an assembly for a school then please do get in touch by emailing info@finalstrawsolent.org

SEABINS

Currently there are, to our knowledge, 7 Seabins in the UK. One each in Ireland, Scotland and Bristol. And then finally, 4 in the Solent - and 3 have been installed in association with the Final Straw Solent. We would like to thank Helistrat and Premier Marinas for facilitating the installation of two Seabins in Port Solent and Gosport Marinas, also Chichester Harbour Federation and Emsworth Marina for the purchase of the Seabin in Emsworth. This Seabin has already been visited by 4 school groups, so it is not only removing plastic and waste from the ocean, but also helping to raise awareness of plastic in our local seas and tying in with our schools outreach programme. Thank you to all involved in these projects.



BEACH CLEANS



Our beach clean programme has been incredibly well supported, with over 1,850 attendees in total at the 37 cleans we have organised over the last year. The passion and dedication of the volunteers who come along, no matter what the great British weather throws at them, always astonishes us. We have removed 36,700lbs (16,682kg) of waste from our shores over the course of these cleans to date. Yes, you read that right, 36,700lbs or 16,682kg. Shocking reading. This waste and pollution consists of thousands of pieces of plastics, including micro plastics and nurdles to bottles, bags, tyres, packaging, wrappers, tarpaulins, fishing nets, the kitchen sink, a toilet cistern and two broken up boats. Our best find to date is a cannon ball that is being dated for potential display in Portsmouth Museum. From one 3m square area on Hayling Island we removed 4,500 plastic cotton bud sticks in a mammoth 6 hour clean up.

The thing that always shocks new volunteers, and even frequent beach-cleaners, is that a beach can look superficially clean - until you really look closely. We are continuing our efforts in areas where the micro plastic level is really high. In particular the Ferryboat end of Hayling island, Farlington Marches, Portsmouth and under the Itchen Bridge in Southampton.

We also have 10 #2minutebeachclean boards in the local area. They have been very well received. Watch this space as more may be coming.

8TH MAY PLASTIC-FREE DAY

In honour of Sir David Attenboroughs' 93rd Birthday in May, we ran a single-use plastic-free schools day. We organised materials for schools to download including lesson plans focussed on plastic pollution and ocean health, videos and ideas for fun and educational activities. We were thrilled that 153 schools signed up and took part (64,000 students!) in the day.

Children had plastic free lunch boxes, watched videos on plastic pollution, carried out litter picks on school grounds and wrote hundreds of compelling letters to local MPs and the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove. The Plastic-Free Day had great press coverage, featuring on local and national television news programmes and across various printed press media. The event had amazing uptake and very positive feedback, so it is something that we will definitely run again in 2020.



MEET NELLIE 'THE FINAL FAT FISH'



In March 2019, the Portsmouth Grammar School contacted us to work together on a project to highlight plastic pollution for their enrichment week. After some initial meetings with teachers and students, The Final Fat Fish project was launched, as a visual representation of the plastics contaminating fish in the oceans, and how we all need to think more about the amount and type of waste we all create. Nellie would be created to travel around the area, raising awareness of plastic pollution and hopefully making people reconsider their use of single-use plastic items, particularly bottles.

The Fatface Foundation and Portsmouth City Council Community High Street Fund agreed to sponsor the fish, and a local company Sailboat Trailers & Deliveries came up with a stunning design for Nellie, perfectly engineered for easy transport and use. Nellie is 6 metres long, made entirely from scrap metal and can hold thousands of plastic bottles. She has been to 18 locations since her launch in June 2019 and is booked to many more events over the coming months. Yes she's big, but so is the crisis we are facing at the moment.

If you'd like 'Nellie' to attend your event or to visit your area then please do get in touch.

NURDLE TROMMEL ACTION

This year we were excited to be able, with the help of some fantastic individuals, to raise enough funds to purchase a 'nurdle trommel'. The trommel is a piece of kit that helps to remove secondary microplastics and particularly primary plastic nurdles from sandy beaches. Made by Nurdle Coasts, this equipment helps to reduce the man hours put into trying to collect the tiny bits of plastic that we would otherwise struggle to collect from beaches. We have used it to remove many thousands of microplastic pieces, some of which used to be part of something bigger made from plastic and some which are the primary plastic pellets (nurdles) used in the manufacture of plastic. It is a sad fact that many manufacturers do not seem to take care when handling these nurdles and they contaminate our seas and coastline in their millions. This is a particular problem around areas where we find breeding seabirds, who mistakenly pick up the nurdles thinking that they are fish eggs and often feed them to their chicks.

While the amount of microplastic we pick up using the trommel can be impressive, unfortunately in the face of the amount of microplastic pollution along our coasts it doesn't make a huge impact. However, and this is the key point, it is a fantastic (and quite fun!) way to raise awareness of the issue, and we find it really helps us to illustrate the scale of the problem we face and helps us to be able to put pressure on the companies that are causing this pollution. It helps us to collect large samples and we can feed that data to other organisations also working on the issue such as Fidra and the Great Nurdle Hunt.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE CAMPAIGN

So far the campaign has been incredibly well supported from the sales of our water bottles, originally funded by Portsmouth Water and Postcode Publications. We have been incredibly touched to have received donations from individuals and schools who have fundraised to help support our work. Several businesses that have requested our help on beach cleans to fulfil their corporate social responsibility commitments have followed up by donating to the campaign, often as a result of being so shocked by the amount of litter we removed together on a clean up. With these funds we have purchased and donated to local schools; 500 bamboo toothbrushes, 1,000 metal water bottles, 1,000 reusable tote bags and 50 sets of 3 books on plastic pollution, as well as using some of the funds to purchase more beach cleaning kit essentials.

The campaign has also had fantastic support from the Village Hotels and Sunsail, who enabled us to purchase 5,000 reusable bags to distribute to school children that participated in our 8th May Single-Use Plastic Free Day. Last but not least, Havant Borough Council and the Emsworth Business Association sponsored 2,000 reusable bags to be donated throughout shops in Emsworth. Bags were given out to shoppers to try to eliminate the need for plastic bags in the village.

All of this support has not gone unnoticed and we are astounded by people's generosity and passion for the environment. As the campaign continues to grow, we will continue to support local schools and communities and help them on their journey to being single-use plastic free wherever possible.

A HUGE THANK YOU

Finally, we'd like to say an enormous THANK YOU to all the organisations and individuals that have supported us over the last year with time, energy, skills and funding. These include:

11th Hour Racing
Explore Worldwide Ltd
Marine Resources
Sunsail UK
Village Hotel Portsmouth
Portsmouth Water
Postcode Publications
KEEN Footwear
WesCom Signal and Rescue UK Ltd.
Havant Rotary Club
Emsworth Business Association
Emsworth Residents Association
Westbourne Open Gardens
Confetti Coast Photography
Portsmouth News
Team Locals Media
Love Southsea
Solent Sky Services
Shaun Roster Photography
The Directory Group
Sailboat Deliveries and Trailers
FatFace Foundation
Portsmouth City Council

And also to all the other brilliant charities, CICs, community groups and organisations that we have worked and collaborated with over the last year, including:

The Final Straw Cornwall and Action Nan herself, Pat Smith
Beach Guardian
Plastic Free Portsmouth
Plastic Free New Milton
Bird Aware Solent
See Bin Sea Change
Refill
Hampshire and IOW Wildlife Trust
UKSA
RYA
Parley
Volvo
SailGP
Positive Pathways
Creating Chaos
The Scout Association
Girlguiding
Wayne Dixon and Koda, Keep Britain Tidy
The Deans Beach & Environment Volunteer Group