

MID-YEAR IMPACT REPORT 2024



PEOPLE POWER IN ACTION

SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE (SAS) HAS BEEN RUNNING PEOPLE-POWERED ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES FOR 34 YEARS.

Our UK-wide network of thousands of volunteers in communities, schools, towns and villages are fighting for cleaner, safer waters in the UK's rivers and ocean.

At the heart of our vision is the interdependency of the ocean and people. We believe that you need a thriving ocean for people to thrive and live life to the fullest. Our theory of change is that people power creates long-term systemic transformation.

We make this people-powered change happen by creating simple, yet highly effective volunteer programmes which can be easily implemented into individuals' lifestyles.

We activate a vast community of over 300,000 regular supporters, over 90,000 cleanup volunteers, over 670 Plastic Free Communities, and reach over 1.5 million schoolchildren. These incredible supporters, volunteers and communities give us the reach and mandate for change at the highest levels of Government.

THIS YEAR, OUR OCEAN SAVING WORK IS FOCUSING ON TACKLING WATER QUALITY AND PLASTIC POLLUTION ISSUES.

THESE ARE CRITICAL ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR INLAND AND COASTAL WATERWAYS, AND OCEAN AND HUMAN HEALTH.

Image: DAME KELLY HOLMES Brighton-Lia-Toby





WHY WATER QUALITY:



- Almost all of the UK's waterways are polluted. Only 14% of UK rivers have 'good' ecological status and evidence suggests they are breeding grounds for antimicrobial resistance
- Not a single river in England had received a clean bill of health from chemical contamination according to a House of Commons report on the state of UK rivers in 2022
- Our own citizen science data reveals that 3 in 4 rivers pose a serious risk to human health, with 90% of storm overflows discharging sewage directly into rivers (England/Wales)
- In 2023 alone we had 604,833 sewage discharges in bathing waters across the UK

WHY PLASTIC POLLUTION:



- Annual global plastic production surpassed a shocking 400 million metric tonnes in 2022 (Statista)
- Plastic never really goes away, breaking down over hundreds of years into microplastics which are not only harmful to wildlife but are now being found in the food chain and the air we breathe, posing risks to human health. Recent studies have even found the presence of microplastics in human blood

HOW WE'RE CREATING CHANGE: WE HAVE A DIVERSE RANGE OF NATIONWIDE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMMES TACKLING SEWAGE AND PLASTIC POLLUTION.

Below are just some of these programmes (see full report for more details):

- **Million Mile Clean** – volunteers cleaning plastic pollution from our environment
- **Plastic Free Communities** – reducing single-use plastic in towns, villages and cities
- **Plastic Free Schools** – providing vital environmental education and reducing single-use plastic in schools
- **Protecting Wild Waters** – supporting communities to apply for official bathing water designation as a mechanism for improved water quality
- **Regional Reps** – highly trained SAS ambassadors mobilising their communities on all aspects of our work
- **Safer Seas & Rivers Service** – sewage pollution alert app keeping water users safe from swimming in sewage.

These communities are making huge waves of change. We take this community action, data, and stories and bridge this through communications, influencing and lobbying, to create change to government policies and new industry practices.

Our strength is our ability to authentically connect and resonate with these communities. We stand with them on their beaches and riverbanks and amplify their efforts to ensure our programmes have far-reaching positive environmental and social impact.

This report not only highlights the achievements of the year so far, but also the transformative power of collective action and strategic advocacy. We couldn't do this without our communities and the trusts, foundations, businesses, supporters and partners who work with us to create this impact.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO, GILES BRISTOW, ON THE YEAR SO FAR:

WE KNEW 2024 WOULD PRESENT A ONCE IN A GENERATION OPPORTUNITY FOR MASSIVE CHANGE. WATER COMPANIES HAD TO SUBMIT THEIR NEXT FIVE-YEAR INVESTMENT PLANS TO THE REGULATOR AND THERE WOULD BE A GENERAL ELECTION – ALL SET AGAINST A BACKDROP OF UNPRECEDENTED PUBLIC ANGER ABOUT THE STATE OF OUR RIVERS AND SEAS.

Given our long-term campaigning to #EndSewagePollution, we take some credit for the fact that water quality was a doorstep issue. Our grassroots community mobilisation, combined with intensive and high-level policy advocacy, have culminated in huge wins for environmental protection. The timing of the General Election period caught the nation off-guard and was called earlier than most anticipated, but we were ready to make the most of it.

Being surfers and water lovers, we went on a road trip. We hung-out with communities across the UK and took our message directly to the heart of political discourse. From beach hustings, to paddle out protests and Parliamentary receptions, we've ensured that water quality remains at the forefront of the national agenda. Our collaborative approach has seen local communities galvanised, and their voices amplified through media coverage and direct political engagement.

As a charity we are proudly politically neutral. We champion radical and transformative policy not political parties. Our mandate is generated by working with communities calling for action to save our waters. Our aim was to ensure tackling the sewage crisis sits firmly on the agenda for as many parties as possible.

We're encouraged to see Steve Reed, the new Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, outline cleaning up our rivers, lakes and seas at the top of the list of priorities announced since the change of government, with creating a roadmap to move to a zero-waste economy taking the second spot in this list.

But the work doesn't stop there of course. We're looking for actual change in the health of our waters not just better policy. And we'll be keeping the pressure on to make sure it happens with a pace and scale commensurate with the dire state of our rivers and seas. Immediate investment must prioritise Bathing Waters and other places we surf and swim and high priority nature sites.

Our communities continue to take daily action to drive down the use of single-use plastic and remove plastic pollution from our waters. Through coordinated local action, they create the demand for global systemic change. We remain dedicated to ensuring they have the tools and knowledge to drive impactful change across the UK and beyond.

There's so much more to come, both this year and into the future and we are getting into our stride. Together, we're poised to have even more impact in the fight for a cleaner, safer and more sustainable ocean.

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS:

47,449

VOLUNTEERS

(Million Mile Clean)

47,489 KG

of rubbish removed (Million Mile Clean)

172,426 MILES

cleaned (Million Mile Clean)

673

active Plastic Free Communities (932 in total)

5,858

Businesses in

PLASTIC FREE COMMUNITIES
SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

310,866

ACTIVE APP USERS ON OUR



16,666 PRINTED



Vote for the Ocean posters were requested by the public during the lead up to the General Election, alongside 11,700 postcards and 2,844 electronic downloads

PROTECTING WILD WATERS
SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

70

COMMUNITIES

working with us on the Protecting Wild Waters programme (bathing water designation)

5,500

participants across 34 nationwide

PADDLE OUT PROTESTS

(the biggest one yet)

20,601 PEOPLE

emailed Water Company CEOs via our sewage alert app (SSRS)

MORE THAN 180 MPS SIT IN PARLIAMENT

with a mandate to protect and restore the ocean



1.5 MILLION STUDENTS

reached through

3,908 SCHOOLS

signed up to our

PLASTIC FREE SCHOOLS
SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

650 PEOPLE

attended our election tour hustings in 8 key communities across the UK

30 MILLION PEOPLE

live in a Plastic Free Community

THE BIG WINS

WATER QUALITY: A snapshot of the impact our Water Quality work has delivered in recent months:

- Water quality was an election issue – on the doorstep and in the media. On the announcement of an election, Sir Keir Starmer's first paragraph talked of the sewage crisis.
- Manifestos of the major parties included significant commitments to reforming the water sector and tackling sewage pollution.
- Newly appointed Secretary for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Steve Reed MP) announced at the top of his list of priorities: cleaning up Britain's rivers, lakes and seas.
- An amendment to regulations to allow for unlimited fines to be placed on polluting water companies, and to ensure dividends and pay-outs are linked to their environmental performance.
- Increased funding and resources for the Environment Agency for water company inspections. EA inspections are planned to rise to 4,000 a year by the end of March 2025 and to 10,000 from April 2026.
- 100% monitoring of CSOs (combined sewer overflows) in England (as per government requirements).

- 27 designated bathing sites approved by DEFRA, with 13 of those directly supported by our Protecting Wild Waters programme.
- Through our Protecting Wild Waters campaign, the government responded to our calls about reforming regulations and, prior to the general election, announced a review to these regulations. Post-election, we've included in our 'Plan for a New Government' that this review must be picked up and progressed as a priority.

PLASTIC POLLUTION WINS: A snapshot of the impact our Plastic Pollution work has delivered in recent months:

- The Secretary for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced he is creating a roadmap to move Britain to a zero-waste economy.
- Government commitment to a UK-wide ban on the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic.
- The Welsh government promised to include glass in their Deposit Return Scheme, holding strong on their commitment to include the most carbon-intensive material in the scheme.

WATER QUALITY

WE'RE CAMPAIGNING FOR AN END TO SEWAGE DISCHARGES INTO UK BATHING WATERS AND A 90% REDUCTION IN SEWAGE DISCHARGES BY 2030.

IT'S BEEN A MONUMENTAL YEAR IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST THIS ISSUE. OUR TEAM AND COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN WORKING TIRELESSLY TO KEEP IT RIGHT AT THE TOP OF THE AGENDA.

This year we have truly taken this fight from the beachfronts to the frontbenches because 604,833 sewage discharges across the UK in 2023 alone is completely unacceptable. It's not all smooth sailing of course. We've got a fight on our hands around data access for our Safer Seas & Rivers Service app. Defra have suspended bathing water applications in England. And we're still seeing sewage pumped into waterways daily.

Our communities across the UK are activated, galvanised and pushing hard for change with the power of their voices and actions. The momentum is building, and we have the greatest opportunity for change we've seen in decades. We absolutely cannot stop now!

BATHING WATERS:

Millions of us flock to the winding banks of our local rivers and the sandy, pebbly and rocky shores of our coastline every year. These spaces have become increasingly essential for our health and wellbeing, as well as critically important ecosystems for our planet. We're on a mission to clean them up and make sure we're safe when we dip, dunk, surf and paddle.





PROTECTING WILD WATERS
SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

protectingwildwaters.org.uk

WE'RE WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES AROUND THE UK TO APPLY FOR BATHING WATER DESIGNATION AS A MECHANISM TO PROTECT OUR RIVERS AND LAKES. WE WANT TO SEE 200 INLAND BATHING WATER DESIGNATIONS BY 2030.

Designated bathing waters are the only stretches of waterway where there is an obligation to regularly monitor for bacteria harmful to human health such as intestinal enterococci and E. coli. We see this as a key driver for improving water quality.

The application process is incredibly complex, and the amount of paperwork is vast. We offer the 70 communities we work with one-to-one support right from the beginning of the process through to designation and post-designation.



We started 2024 with just two designated river bathing sites in the UK. In May 2024, Defra announced that they approved 27 new bathing sites in England. There are now 14 rivers designated in England and 1 in Wales. We are proud to have supported 13 community-based applications, 8 of which were river locations and 5 coastal and estuarine sites.

With Defra's announcement of the 27 new bathing sites, they also controversially announced that they wouldn't be taking any new applications until 2025. This was a huge blow for the 20 communities that we have been working with to submit an application this year and the 30 additional communities in our network who were considering a 2024 application.

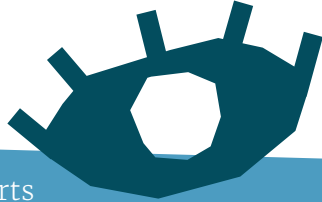
The reason for the suspension on applications is however, welcomed. With plans to reform the regulations, this very much echoes the demands we have been asking of Defra. Unfortunately, this reform has since been delayed due to the calling of a General Election.

And so – a change of plans. We've been working with communities to draft the changes we want to see in the reformed regulations and we're still prepping applications to be submitted as soon as the process is reopened. We've also used this as an opportunity to focus more on the devolved nations, expanding our support to communities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland who are still able to apply this year.

There's lots more to come in this space for the rest of the year. We'll be pushing the new Government to pick up momentum on the regulation reform, holding our second Bathing Water Conference, and ramping up our support for post-designation communities.



SAFER SEAS & RIVERS SERVICE



sas.org.uk/water-quality/sewage-pollution-alerts

WE WANT EVERYONE TO BE ABLE TO MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE ABOUT WHETHER IT'S SAFE TO GET IN THE WATER.

Our Safer Seas & Rivers Service has over 310,000 active app users who receive alerts when their favourite water spots have been impacted by sewage discharge.

The app is now covering 526 locations across the UK. As well as providing a valuable source of information, users can also fuel our #EndSewagePollution campaign by submitting sickness reports and taking direct action by emailing their MP or water company CEO when pollution alerts occur.

The app is in continuous development to bring improved usability and functionality to water users. Already this year we've brought forward several new features which include increased coverage, accessibility and support.

We're calling for a standardised system for data reporting from water companies. Challenges with accessing data from water companies has hindered our ability to provide accurate information to app users and puts them at risk. Whilst the recent publication of regional sewage maps by water companies is a welcome step forward, our view is that true transparency can only be achieved through an independent narrative of water quality status across the UK, such as that provided by the SSRS.



KEY STATS THIS YEAR SO FAR:

310,866

Total active users

38,511

Sewage discharge alerts (Jan-June)

8,105

Emails sent to MPs (Jan-June)

20,601

Emails sent to Water Company CEOs (Jan-June)

526

Total locations Covered

696

Sickness reports (Jan-June)

DRIVING CHANGE:

We've witnessed people power in full force so far this year. We've been in the water, on the road, and even in behind the doors of Westminster - standing with the communities who have been leading the charge for change. And we won't stop until we see an end to sewage pollution.



PADDLE OUT PROTESTS

Water users from all over the UK came together to highlight sewage pollution in our inland waterways and the ocean. May saw our biggest set of Paddle Out Protests ever - on rivers, lakes and beaches. The photos from this tell a story of people from all walks of life, in different places, coming out to protest and protect the places they love.

We held 34 on-the-water protests nationwide with an estimated 5,500 participants.

Dame Kelly Holmes lent her presence to the protest, conducting supportive and impactful interviews with the media. We also saw key water quality influencers such as Fergal Sharkey and Lucy Siegle, amongst others, getting involved and amplifying the issue of the UK's poor water quality.

The protests made a huge splash across media outlets with 1,050 pieces of coverage secured including top-tier coverage on Sky News, ITV News, BBC Breakfast, The Guardian and The Independent.

This coverage further cemented SAS's reputation as one of the leading ocean conservation and water quality campaigning organisations, further elevating water quality issues up the public agenda, which in turn influences government environmental policy.

Off the back of this people power, we launched a digital action encouraging people to email the Chair of Ofwat to demand they play a role in the water companies delivery plans to end sewage pollution. Over 7,000 emails were sent through this action in just a week. Whilst Ofwat announced they were delaying further announcements on the matter until after the General Election, they can be left in no doubt of the public mandate to make change in this area.



ELECTION CAMPAIGN:

OUR STRATEGY FOR THE PAST 18 MONTHS HAS BEEN TO MAKE SEWAGE POLLUTION A CORE ISSUE DURING THE GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND TO ENSURE WHOEVER FORMED THE NEXT GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE ACTION TO END SEWAGE POLLUTION.

Nearly all parties included commitments to tackle the issue in their manifestos, and whilst we of course wanted to see more ambitious plans, the fact sewage pollution featured at all is a huge achievement given the other issues affecting the nation.

Within 24 hours of a July 4th election being called, we launched 'Vote for the Ocean' and 'Vote for our Rivers' posters - downloadable and printed versions in both English & Welsh. Within one day, 1,500 people had signed up to receive their printed version (in total, over 15,000 printed posters and over 11,000 printed postcards were sent out with 2,844 electronic downloads). These posters, displayed in the windows of homes and businesses around the UK, demonstrated the importance of this issue for the public.

In June, we kicked off our Election Road Trip, taking a highly visible bus on a nationwide road trip.

We travelled the length and breadth of the UK, visiting key constituencies within our communities and speaking to activists who are fighting to clean up their local bathing spots. From Portobello Beach in Edinburgh to the River Dart in Devon, anger at the state of our wild waters was at fever pitch.



And so, we invited local party candidates to attend hustings and centred the questions around water quality – this was a critical time to raise the noise levels on sewage pollution.

The road trip visited Edinburgh, Saltburn, Richmond (Yorkshire), Gower, Reading, Hastings, Plymouth and St Agnes, Cornwall. We held 8 hustings with 32 candidates attending in total. We had a great turn out at each event showing the depth of feeling in each community and across the UK with an average of 50 attendees at each husting, with Plymouth, Hastings and St Agnes attracting around 100.

Our Reps hit the ground running and spread the word about these events, tapping into their local knowledge and networks to ensure maximum visibility and attendance.

Whilst on the road, we also visited communities we work with who are campaigning locally for change – bringing the tour bus and extra media coverage to their cause – this included joining several protests, and wherever possible dipping in the very waters they are trying to protect.

As well as manifesto commitments, we have seen parties and party leaders consistently referencing sewage pollution throughout the election period. The hard work will of course continue after the election to ensure the new government delivers on their promises, but we have set ourselves up in a strong position to drive action from this new government to end sewage pollution.



PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION:



READ THE FULL MANIFESTO
sas.org.uk/water-quality/our-water-quality-campaigns/the-end-sewage-pollution-manifesto

IN MARCH, WE BROUGHT TOGETHER THE END SEWAGE POLLUTION COALITION – A COLLECTIVE GROUP OF BUSINESS OWNERS, WATER-USERS AND LOCAL ACTIVISTS, WHO HELPED FORM OUR ‘END SEWAGE POLLUTION MANIFESTO’.

Following last year’s soft launch at Party Conferences, we officially unveiled this manifesto in Westminster Parliament to a room full of policymakers, with 26 MPs and Lords from across parties attending, including the Environment Shadow Minister, Chair of Environment Audit Committee, Liberal Democrats Deputy Leader and former DEFRA Secretary of State Theresa Coffey.

To emphasise the urgency of the situation, we brought along those individuals most impacted by sewage pollution. They shared firsthand accounts of the impact on their communities, further highlighting the need for immediate action.



THE END SEWAGE POLLUTION MANIFESTO HAS 5 SIMPLE ASKS:



ENFORCE THE LAW
 We have the regulations and laws we need to End Sewage Pollution. Now we must enforce them.



PRIORITISE HIGH RISK POLLUTION
 Take immediate targeted action to tackle the highest risk pollution events.



STOP POLLUTION FOR PROFIT
 Water companies’ first responsibility must be to the environment, not their shareholders and executives.



EMPOWER A NATURE LED APPROACH
 Harness the power of nature to End Sewage Pollution.



REVEAL THE TRUTH
 Deliver UK wide transparency about sewage pollution.

PLASTIC POLLUTION:

WE'RE HARNESSING THE POWER OF COMMUNITY ACTION TO TURN BACK THE PLASTIC TIDE CHOKING THE OCEAN.

From cleaning up the places we love, to stopping single-use plastic at source, our aim is to end plastic pollution once and for all. Cleaning up plastic pollution is an important part of the solution, but it also needs to be eradicated at source. Our community-based programmes tackle both.



COMMUNITIES ON TOUR:



It's not just the Election Road Trip that's had our team out and about engaging with communities. We've visited 50 of our Plastic Free Community leads on a Regional Tour which aimed to harness the collective voice on plastic pollution and strengthen links with communities. Following this, we saw communities taking increased action on our Plastic Pollution calls on a national scale, through learning more about Deposit Return Schemes and Extended Producer Responsibility, as well as a galvanised response to our General Election calls.

Meanwhile, our Education Team also hit the road joining forces with 'Running Out of Time', an annual climate relay that raises awareness and celebrates great climate campaigns, projects and events around the country. We reached diverse communities nationally from Fort William to the south coast offering Trash Mob workshops and supporting schools in developing knowledge and understanding around democracy and citizenship, using our newly developed 'Election Resource Pack' – an impartial guide to teach children about the power of their voice and the language of debate.

MILLION MILE CLEAN

sas.org.uk/plastic-pollution/million-mile-clean

THERE IS NOW SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT BEACH AND NATURE CLEANS ARE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT.

Experts from NORCE found that within just one year of volunteers removing plastic waste from the shores of an island near Bergen, the amount of microplastics reduced by an incredible 99.5%.

The Million Mile Clean is a truly unique programme in the volunteering space, it is a people-powered initiative which aims to support 100,000 volunteers across the UK to conduct cleans on beaches, waterways, green and urban spaces to eradicate plastic pollution.

Members of the public, students, community groups and businesses register their cleans on the SAS website and we then provide free equipment, public liability insurance, documentation and support.

The programme allows participants to directly tackle the issue of plastic pollution in their local area and we find that after their first clean, they subsequently do more cleans and embark on other SAS environmental initiatives to continue their journey and impact.



PLASTIC FREE SCHOOLS

plasticfreeschools.org.uk



THE PLASTIC FREE SCHOOLS (PFS) PROGRAMME WAS DESIGNED TO ENGAGE, EMPOWER AND MOBILISE CHILDREN, AGED 2-16, ACROSS THE, UK TO USE THE POWER OF THEIR VOICE THROUGH CURRICULUM-BASED, ACTION-ORIENTED EDUCATION

We provide the tools and knowledge needed to drive change in school, at home and beyond. In the first half of the year, 151 schools signed up to the programme, 20 schools were awarded their Plastic Free Schools status, we trained 205 educators and in total reached over 700 young people through in-person workshops.



Upcoming plans for our Plastic Free Schools network include our Nationwide Trash Mob, Pupil Power Assembly and further workshop delivery.

KEY STATS THIS YEAR SO FAR:

1.5 MILLION
total students reached

151 SCHOOLS
joined this year (joining 3,938 total schools)

20 SCHOOLS
awarded PFS status this year

50 SCHOOLS
joined nationwide Trash Mob event

205 EDUCATORS
trained this year (conferences, webinars)

720 CHILDREN
received workshops this year

TRASH MOB!

I SAY TRASH MOB,
YOU SHOUT TRASH MOB!

PLASTIC FREE COMMUNITIES

plasticfree.org.uk

Plastic Free Communities is a huge growing nationwide network of towns, villages, individuals and businesses who have joined our programme to eradicate single-use plastic and achieve their Plastic Free Communities Award – there are now over 30 million people in the UK living in a Plastic Free Community.

Over 670 communities including 5,858 businesses across the UK are tackling plastic pollution at source. By kickstarting this grassroots community movement, we supersize local actions to create powerful national voices calling for an end single use plastic on beaches by 2030.

Our communities played a vital part in Everyday Plastic's The Big Plastic Count. The result of this nation-wide survey with over 224,000 people participating was that UK households are throwing away 1.7 billion pieces of plastic per week. That's an estimated 90 billion plastic pieces annually!



KEY STATS THIS YEAR SO FAR:

932

Communities (673 active with 45% awarded).

298

Council Motions to support plastic free campaigns

5,858

Businesses (with 80% awarded)

319

Businesses joined this year

OCEAN ACTIVISTS EVERYWHERE:

WHILE SOME OF OUR PROGRAMMES ARE FOCUSED SPECIFICALLY ON WATER QUALITY OR PLASTIC POLLUTION, WE ALSO WORK WITH COMMUNITIES AND VOLUNTEERS TACKLING BOTH THESE ISSUES AS WELL AS WIDER OCEAN-RELATED CAMPAIGNS AND EDUCATION. WE WANT TO MAKE OCEAN ACTIVISM ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE FOR ALL. WE BELIEVE THAT A DIVERSE VOICE IS A MORE POWERFUL VOICE.

REGIONAL REPS

sas.org.uk/take-action/regions

A passionate and empowered community of 145 highly trained super-volunteers from across the UK who are working within their local communities to power our campaigns, from organising Paddle Outs and hustings, to giving school talks and media interviews.

Our incredible Regional Reps have been instrumental in all our activities throughout the year so far. They've organised 15 Paddle Out Protests and 48 Million Mile Cleans around the country; participated in water quality testing, supported the 'Running Out of Time' relay; and represented SAS at various events locally and nationally including 'Out & Wild Festival', the UK's biggest festival for LGBTQ+ women and those who are non-binary, and the 'Restore Nature Now' rally in London where they joined over 60,000 people marching to demand politicians take action to restore nature.

This year we held a Reps weekend at the Wilderness Centre in Gloucestershire, where 22 Reps and 6 SAS staff gathered to reconnect, build relationships, foster peer-to-peer support and further develop the Reps programme.

Reps also supported a Tower Hamlets, London engagement initiative in collaboration with the 'Get Out Charity' which involved 12 engagement sessions with young people mostly from the Bangladeshi community.

One of our Northern Ireland Reps, Ruby Free was featured in the Power List 2024 (ENDS Report), she won the Environmental Hero



award at the Spirit of Northern Ireland Awards in 2023 and has just published her first wildlife book with Blackstaff Books entitled 'Rathlin – A Wild Life'. All of this is testament to Ruby's incredible work as an Ocean and Environmental Activist.

Chani Courtney is another Rep doing amazing work on the Isle of Wight. She is incredibly active in the water quality space, having engaged in 17 Southern Water meetings and 16 consultations. She has engaged with 39 councillors, 3 MPs and 12 candidates. Chani has also attended 5 OFWAT events, 6 sewage treatment and network tours, 8 sustainable drainage sites, and organised 2 Paddle Out Protests, 2 hustings and numerous beach cleans.

We're actively recruiting new Reps this year to bolster the network and continue maximising our impact on the ground across the UK.

COMMUNICATIONS

OUR COMMUNICATIONS PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN ENSURING THAT SEWAGE AND PLASTIC POLLUTION ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF PEOPLE'S MINDS ACROSS THE UK.

We made sewage pollution front page news, and a key issue in the general election. Those in power were listening to our calls and we took every opportunity to make them heard. As a result, already this year we generated unprecedented media coverage.

KEY STATS THIS YEAR SO FAR:

Total Media Coverage:

5,547

Online Media Coverage:

4,471

Broadcast Media Coverage:

1,198

Print Media Coverage:

149

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS:

Instagram 177,795

Facebook 174,571

X 80,899

LinkedIn 21,256



OUR OCEAN SCHOOL BEACH SESSIONS RUN DURING THE SUMMER AND WELCOME YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS TO THE BEACH TO FACILITATE AN EDUCATIONAL CONNECTION WITH THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT.

We've already delivered sessions for 100 young people and have more scheduled throughout the rest of the summer.

This year we've reached out to wider organisations including Black Voices Cornwall, Black2Nature and charities supporting refugees and young parents. We've also continued to strengthen our relationship with Go Beyond who offer residential trips to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, young carers and those with special educational needs.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Our aim to create Ocean Activists Everywhere isn't a tag line, it's a mission to create systemic change within marine conservation. Alongside the work already highlighted in this report (such as the Out & Wild Festival, Tower Hamlets engagement initiative, working with other organisations such as Black Voices Cornwall and Black2Nature) we've continued reaching diverse communities through our work and we've been taking further action to make ocean activism more accessible and visible.

We partnered with the EY Foundation to host two young people on an internship as part of their 'Impactful Futures' programme, designed to show participants a path into ocean advocacy, activism and conservation in a way that is relevant to them in their urban settings in and around London.

During an immersive 3 days, a broad range of the Surfers Against Sewage programmes were showcased, including Regional Reps, Education, Communities and Storytelling. This ensured that the interns had a clear overview of the many avenues open to them and the many ways in which they can affect change.

The two young participants were also mentored by our EDI Manager, Yvette Curtis, and another SAS employee for 6 months, resulting in Yvette being nominated for a volunteering award within the EY Foundation for her work.

And this year Yvette has been nominated in the 'National Diversity Awards 2024' for her work with 'Wave Wahines' (a surf club for women and girls from all communities which is accessible, inclusive and safe).

We have also been honoured to present our work in several forums including:

- **Race Equity in Nature and Wildlife Filmmaking** – Bristol University in collaboration with Mya-Rose Craig and Black2Nature. An important event highlighting the importance of representation behind the scenes in storytelling
- **The first ever RACE Summit (Racial Action for the Climate Emergency)** – a day of talks and workshops focused on the importance of race and ethnicity in the climate emergency and the voices and experiences that have previously seen themselves as excluded from these forums. We will be participating again in the next RACE report and will be submitting data prior to their October deadline
- **Coastal Futures Conference** – The importance of Diversity and Inclusion in Ocean Advocacy, Activism and Conservation
- **Blue Marine Foundation** – how important a diverse voice at all levels within ocean advocacy is and how SAS are making changes
- **Greenpeace UK** – the current status of SAS and the plans for tomorrow to create a more diverse and inclusive space for ocean advocacy
- **Black Voices Cornwall** – what we do at SAS and how important inclusion is to our long-term values and goals

OUR WORK ON EDI AS AN ORGANISATION HAS ALSO BEEN FEATURED IN A REPORT BY OCEAN & COASTAL FUTURES, TITLED ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN THE UK MARINE AND COASTAL SECTOR – ACCELERATING CHANGE.



ORGANISATION

BEHIND THE SCENES AT SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE:

OUR TEAM OF 50 ARE THE BEATING HEART OF OUR ORGANISATION, WITHOUT THEM OUR PEOPLE POWERED PROGRAMMES COULD NOT EXIST, THRIVE AND CREATE IMPACT.

Perhaps the most important piece of work this year is a review and refresh of our current strategy to guide us with an organisational strategic framework for decision-making, plans and activities for the next chapter of SAS.

Following a high staff turnover in 2022 and then a big recruitment drive during 2023, the team still feels relatively new. We're involving as many staff as possible in the strategic planning process, to foster a sense of ownership of future strategy and plans.

We are pleased to welcome three new trustees to our board: Jen Richardson, a chartered accountant specialising in charity audits; Tom Lewis, a scientist and accountant experienced in business development; and Gabe Davis, the Ocean Marketing Manager for Patagonia and a British surfing champion.

In June, we installed solar panels at our HQ as part of our sustainability initiatives. These panels will reduce our reliance on the grid by up to 70%, significantly impacting carbon emissions and heating costs.

Our operations and HR team continue to provide the supporting function at SAS, giving strategic and operational input on people

and culture, systems and processes, charity governance and risk, and digital infrastructure and technologies. The new CRM system implementation is well on the way with the preliminary build almost complete. This exciting project will bring our data into one place, allowing us to better understand our supporters and volunteers and their journeys with us.

As we've grown so much as an organisation from 2022 to now, we're exceptionally pleased with a 90% staff retention rate (as at mid-year 2024). This is an improvement on the last 3 years and a testament to the introduction of further policies which better support staff wellbeing. This includes hybrid working, home-based roles and a period and menopause policy which provides staff with paid leave for period pain; similar to the progressive laws recently introduced by the Spanish government.

For the rest of 2024, we will complete our strategic planning framework, develop plans and budgets for 2025 (including multi-year plans), and align them with our strategic objectives. Additionally, we will collaborate with trustees to develop a handbook, conduct a skills audit, and refine our trustee recruitment and onboarding processes.



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