



MILLION MILE CLEAN 2024

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

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FOREWORD

Beaches, Streets, Rivers, Parks, Shoreline to Mountaintop, and all the places in between. Wherever you live, our outdoor spaces need you. Be a part of the Million Mile Clean...

For 34 years, Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) has been leading grassroots environmental initiatives, empowering communities across the UK to take action. Our vast network of volunteers, from individuals and local groups, to schools, towns, and whole communities, is dedicated to protecting and restoring the UK's rivers and ocean.

We demand an end to plastic pollution on UK beaches by 2030 and all plastic pollution by 2040. Plastic takes hundreds of years to break down, but it never really goes away, breaking down into harmful microplastics that threaten wildlife, contaminate the food chain, and even enter the air we breathe. Alarming research has detected microplastics in human blood and brain tissue, raising serious concerns for public health. Our communities are here to combat this by making huge waves of change, causing a ripple effect that influences government policies and industry practices for a cleaner, healthier future.

The Million Mile Clean is a people-powered initiative which aims to support 100,000 volunteers

all across the UK to conduct cleans on beaches, streets, rivers, parks, shorelines and mountaintops, to eradicate plastic pollution. **We're uniting communities to take direct action against plastic pollution**, inspiring a movement that's not only removing vast amounts of plastic from our beaches but also collecting critical data to expose the problem and push for change, while empowering volunteers to begin or deepen their journey in ocean activism.

Members of the public, groups, businesses and individuals register their cleans on the SAS website and we then provide free equipment, public liability insurance, documentation and support for them to conduct a successful clean.

The Million Mile Clean 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.





YEAR OVERVIEW

Across 2024 we have had a massive uptake of volunteers taking action to clean their local patch. An impressive **4,918 cleans** have taken place, with **118,288 volunteers** getting involved. They have covered an impressive **310,692 miles** and collected a whopping **81,076 kg's of rubbish**, covering plastics, cans, glass and fishing gear.

There have been too many incredible cases of community action to fit everything into the report, but we've included a

handful of top cleaner case studies from across our diverse mix of communities.

We were proud to continue our collaboration with the Duke of Edinburgh volunteer programme, and have seen fantastic cleaning from businesses, our Regional Reps, our Plastic Free Communities, Plastic Free Schools, our Ocean Network, and many, many more amazing volunteers, getting up and out to take a stand on plastic pollution!

Our top stats:

4,918 CLEANS

118,288 VOLUNTEERS

310,692 MILES

81,076 KG'S RUBBISH

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



There have been so many amazing moments of community action across the year, that it's hard to pick just a few. But here are a couple of highlights from the team that took place across 2024...

Tropical Pressure Festival - Porthtowan Beach, Cornwall

Summer has surely always got to be the most enjoyable time to get out and do a clean. The sun was shining and spirits were high. We had just been joined by our new Million Mile Clean Manager - Tanya, and our new Coordinator - Caroline, and we were raring to go! We had the pleasure of hosting our first clean together at Tropical Pressure festival, down where SAS was originally founded at Porthtowan Beach. From what appeared to be a pretty clean beach at first glance, revealed a mass of fishing gear, bottle tops, dog poo bags, and various miscellaneous plastics. It was great to work with our amazing festival volunteers - Michelle and Gordan, alongside the fab festival goers that showed up to take part. Thanks to their efforts **we removed 8kg of rubbish**, and worked to maintain the natural beauty of the beach.

Million Mile Scream

This year we asked volunteers to show us their best Halloween spirit by leading or joining a clean in October, offering the chance to win their own 32oz Hydro Flask.

We had some amazing entries across all the prizes:

🏆 Best Dressed: From witches and ghouls, to black cats and Harry Potter! There were too many spooktacular costumes to pick just one. The Black Saphire film crew, Plastic Free Falmouth and Plastic Free Penzance really brought the Halloween spirit to the clean! 🎃

👻 Spookiest Find: A creepy caterpillar? found by Lyndsey Henderson. Not to mention the scary mass of plastics found across all cleans.

👹 Biggest Find: Anne-Marie Eveleigh who discovered a giant blob of polystyrene - over a metre long! Talk about a monster clean up!

Our Plastic Free Communities in particular showed up for the Million Mile Scream campaign. **Plastic Free Falmouth, Penzance, North Devon, and Hastings** came out in full force to show their plastic free Halloween spirit by promoting plastic free alternatives for Halloween, and by cleaning up their local areas.



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

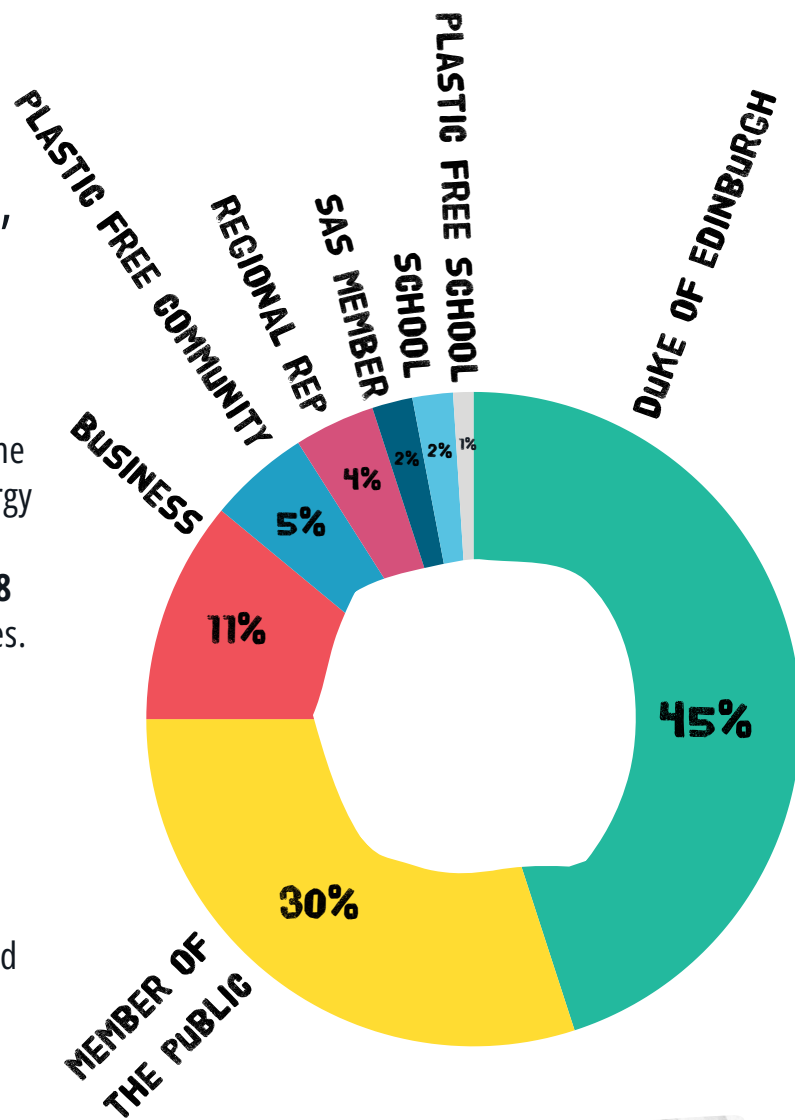
OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Our volunteers are an incredible and diverse group, all united in the fight against plastic pollution.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award participants led the way with **2,237 clean-ups**, showing the energy of young environmentalists. Members of the public weren't far behind, contributing **1,488 clean-ups** to tackle litter in their communities.

Businesses stepped up too, with **526 clean-ups**, including **9 by Ocean Network Members**, proving that team-building can make a big impact. Plastic Free Communities delivered **245 clean-ups**, showcasing the power of local action, while Regional Reps and SAS members added another **174 and 102 clean-ups**, inspiring Ocean Activists everywhere.

Schools joined in with **96 clean-ups and 50 from Plastic Free Schools**, helping nurture the next generation of activists. Together, this amazing mix of volunteers shows that when individuals, businesses, and groups unite, they can make a massive difference for the planet!



THERE WERE AN AVERAGE OF **13 CLEANS EVERY DAY!**

118,288 EPIC VOLUNTEERS TOOK PART



COMPLETING A WHOPPING **4,918 CLEANS**

COVERING **310,692 MILES**



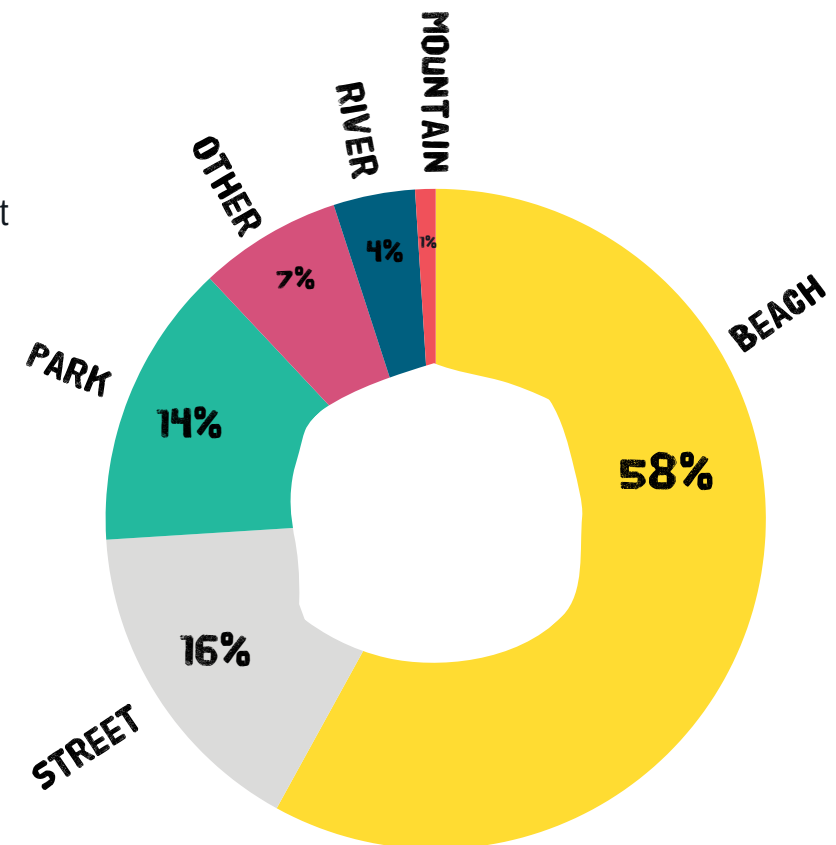
COLLECTING **81,076 KG'S OF RUBBISH!**



CLEAN LOCATIONS:

Beach clean-ups topped the list with an impressive **2,878 efforts**, highlighting the fight to protect our coastlines. It's been great to see that streets have taken second place with **793 clean-ups**, showing community action to tackle urban waste before it reaches the great outdoors.

Parks followed with **703 clean-ups**, reflecting their value as cherished green spaces. Meanwhile, **212 river clean-ups** underscored the connection between waterways and ocean health. Tackling rubbish in urban areas and along our rivers is key if we want to see an end to plastic pollution on our coasts!



OCEAN ACTIVISTS EVERYWHERE

Our Million Mile Clean programme can only exist thanks to the thousands of incredible volunteers going out every day, rain or shine, to clean up their local beach, park, river, canal, mountain or street.

But you don't need to take our word for it. Read on to see what our volunteers had to say themselves about joining the Million Mile Clean, and what it meant to them...



CASE STUDY

DUKE OF EDINBURGH VOLUNTEERS LEAD THE CHARGE!

We're constantly impressed by the commitment so many amazing young volunteers are taking to clean up their local areas and make a positive impact, accounting for 45% of cleans this year! As an Approved Activity Provider, we can assist DofE students to complete their volunteering section by acting as their official assessors. By providing free cleaning equipment, guidance and insurance we ensure that our volunteers can make the most out of their cleans.



"It felt rewarding knowing I was clearing up my community" - William Jones, Devon



"It was probably the most fun thing I did for DofE" - Mateo Ochoa, London

Duke of Edinburgh volunteers have accounted for an **amazing 2237 cleans** in 2024, highlighting the power of the younger generation and their commitment to clean up the mess laid before them.

A few of our incredible Duke of Edinburgh volunteers shared their experiences of doing the Million Mile Clean for their volunteering section ([The full blog post can be seen here](#)).

I REALISED HOW MANY PEOPLE LITTERED IN THE AREAS WE LITTER-PICKED AND **JUST HOW BAD IT WAS**, ESPECIALLY AS WILDLIFE LIKE SWANS LIVED IN THE AREAS - Haya and Lila Ibrahim, Gloucestershire



BUSINESSES AT WORK - FEATURING THE...



Our amazing Partnerships Team have collaborated with businesses across the year, including active Ocean Network members, to clean up their local spot, and connect on how we can work better together to end plastic pollution.

Finisterre clean x SAS - Perranporth - 02/2024

Back at the beginning of the year on a gusty February day, we joined the Finisterre crew to do a group clean down at Perranporth Beach, Cornwall. The team loved the chance to get outdoors and work together to clean up their local spot. Thanks to the groups efforts we removed **40Kg's of rubbish** from the beach, which included masses of fishing rope, bottle tops and cans.



CBRE x SAS Flagship Clean - Southbank - 20/09/2024

SAS hosted a volunteering day for the CBRE team where over 50 of their employees' collected tons of rubbish from the Thames foreshore. Followed up by a Brand Audit workshop, we discussed the wider impact of beach cleans and importance of Citizen Science in how it can feed into policy change.



The Ocean Network x SAS - Perranporth - 25/10/2024

SAS got together with Ocean Network Members, Regional Reps, PFC Business Champions and a range of other local SAS business supporters on a very blustery day. Between sips of Yallah Coffee and bites from Exploding Bakery, we rekindled familiar faces and forged new relationships. From discussing future collaborations to unearthing forgotten travel documents (if you've lost an American luggage declaration form, let us know), **it was an afternoon filled with laughter and inspiration.**

The Ocean Network x SAS - Gabriel's Wharf - 19/09/2024

We gathered our local Ocean Network members and wider SAS business supporters to take to the streets of London. Since the tide was in, we focused on cigarette butts and larger pieces of rubbish.



REGIONAL REPS IN ACTION



Reps completed 174 cleans across 2024!

Our dedicated Regional Reps are spread far and wide across the UK, powering SAS actions in their communities, and **helping to create Ocean Activists everywhere**. They have been incredibly active in the Million Mile Clean, with a couple of our amazing Reps deciding to take on the task of doing a clean every single day across August, to challenge themselves, remove pollution from their local environment and lead by example in their communities, showing that single use pollution won't stand!

Jess Morris and Lee Attrill - 30 days of cleans

Jess Morris in Cornwall cleaned from Falmouth, all the way over the water to the Isles of Scilly! Jess collected a total of **26kg of rubbish** in her journeys, collecting all sorts from flip flops and fishing gear, to a lost trophy...

Lee Attrill from Southampton collected **a whopping 70kg** across his cleans. Together with the aid of fellow south coast Reps, they also took a trip over to the Isle of Wight, leaving no stone unturned.

Gemma Halliday - Hyde Park, London clean

Gemma Halliday organised an epic clean at Hyde Park, London, along with fellow Reps, Chani and Mairin. Together they rallied **24 keen volunteers** to clean up the park, coming together to take positive action in their community.

Extra shout out to Daisy and Mark for their unwavering commitment to monthly cleans in Brighton and West Sussex - **thanks for the epic work you do.**



CAITHNESS BEACH CLEANS

One of our most dedicated group of beach cleaners lie all the way up at the tip of mainland Scotland – Caithness Beach Cleans. Members go out daily, in all weather, to clean some of the most remote locations where rubbish likes to hide!

Dorcas Sinclair, who co-founded Caithness Beach Cleans with her husband Allan, shared how it all began “We started the group because we love the beach. We have always loved the beach and have, over the years, used it for surfing, sub aqua and for some stunning walks. We couldn't fail to notice that Dunnet Beach (which is local to us) was becoming more and more contaminated with plastics of various kinds.”

“Whenever we went for a walk, Allan would pick up a length of rope and start tying other things to it, more rope, buoys, bits of net etc. I would pick up a bucket and fill it. I was getting more frustrated each time we went out and found more than the previous time. I kept saying to Allan: 'We should weigh this, we should record this'.”

- A sample of the items they've removed are:
- 10 miles of plastic strapping from Ackergill Beach.
 - A kilometer of coaxial cable from Farr Beach
 - 75 mangled lobster creels from one difficult to access beach below the historic John O'Groats Mill

The Caithness Beach Cleans group have been an invaluable addition to our data collection, **conducting 804 cleans**, and having collected **11781.84 Kg's of rubbish!** What an amazing achievement!

A full post on their work can be [read here](#), and you can see more of their amazing work at <https://www.youtube.com/@caithnessbeachcleans>



WE STARTED THE GROUP BECAUSE WE LOVE THE BEACH. WE COULDN'T FAIL TO NOTICE THAT DUNNET BEACH WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE CONTAMINATED WITH PLASTICS OF VARIOUS KINDS...



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 2025

We know our epic volunteers are already ready and raring to go! So here's what you can look forward to joining...

THE BIG SPRING AND AUTUMN CLEANS

We're bringing back the Surfers Against Sewage Big Spring and Autumn Cleans as part of the Million Mile Clean!

BIG SPRING CLEAN, 28TH - 30TH MARCH

Wherever you are in the UK, this is the time to get cleaning! Find a clean to join on [our map](#) or [register your own](#). Prizes will be up for grabs for clean results submitted across these dates.

BIG AUTUMN CLEAN, DATES TBC

We'll be timing more cleans to take part in the Autumn, with more prizes up for grabs.

PEOPLE VS PLASTIC

In collaboration with our campaigns team, we'll be helping bring together our community programmes—Million Mile Clean, Plastic Free Communities, Regional Reps, and other Ocean Activists—to tackle plastic pollution under one banner - People vs Plastic! This campaign will mobilise voices across our communities, using citizen science data to push for policy change, turning grassroots efforts into a cohesive, nationwide movement.



TAKE ACTION

Join the thousands of volunteers getting up and out to clean their local patch. They are making a huge difference in their communities whilst making a positive impact on the environment.

How to sign up?

Join a public clean organised by volunteers and shown on our map, or organise your own. Whether you want to take part in a big community event or do it solo, each clean counts. Simply find a time and place that suits you, show up, and get stuck in! We'll send you a free kit and provide insurance and guidance for organising and running a clean.

Free kit that we provide:

- Reusable SAS sacks
- Reusable gloves
- Hand sanitiser
- First aid kit
- Litter pickers
- Posters and info leaflets

Collecting plastic pollution data

As part of your clean, we ask that you submit as much data as possible on the items collected. The more data submitted, the more power we have to hold plastic polluters to account, and demand they reduce their plastic and switch to models of reuse and refill.



Photograph by: Ailce Cooke

SCAN THE QR CODES TO CONTINUE YOUR OCEAN ACTIVIST JOURNEY

Register your clean, submit your results or find a clean at www.sas.org.uk/plastic-pollution/million-mile-clean

Find out more about everything that Surfers Against Sewage is up at www.sas.org.uk



MILIE
MILIE
CLEAN



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COMPANY REGISTERED NUMBER: 02920815 | CHARITY REGISTERED NUMBER: 1145877