



 An Taisce

PROTECTING IRELAND'S  
BEACHES, SEAS AND  
MARINE LIFE  
SINCE 2003

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## DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, PLANNING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It gives me great pleasure to be associated with the Clean Coasts initiative. This programme does so much to improve the quality of our beaches both environmentally and as amenities for our enjoyment. It also plays a vital role in raising general awareness and understanding of environmental issues amongst our citizens. It is a mark of the continuing success of this programme that I have included it as one of Ireland's formal Programme of Measures to protect the marine environment under our Marine Strategy Framework Directive requirements. As such, my Department is committed to supporting this initiative on an ongoing basis.

I am also pleased that similar actions supported by my Department such as, the #Two Minute Beach Clean, the Love Your Coast photography and similar programmes, represent just some of the many high profile and high value initiatives which An Taisce operates. These are tremendous vehicles for encouraging public participation, stakeholder involvement and fostering a sense of environmental responsibility.

During Clean Coasts events, hundreds of clean-ups are organised and thousands of volunteers mobilised to remove tonnes of litter from Ireland's marine environment. As well as physically improving the standard of our coast, this excellent and well supported work does much to raise the collective consciousness in relation to the marine environment amongst our citizens. I cannot stress enough the importance of An Taisce's work and that of each clean coast volunteer group.

I am delighted that my Department continues to support this programme and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of An Taisce, the myriad of coast care groups dotted around the Coast and the coastal local authorities in relation to improving our marine environment.

As current custodians of the marine resource, it is incumbent on us to bequeath as pristine as possible an environmental inheritance to future generations.

Eoghan Murphy, T.D.  
Minister for Housing, Planning, and Local Government



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## INTRODUCTION

# CLEAN COASTS

Engages communities in the protection of Ireland's beaches, seas and marine life.

The programme is operated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce and is currently funded by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and Fáilte Ireland. Clean Coasts is made up of two elements; Clean Coasts Volunteering and the Green Coast Award.

### What We Do?

- Promote and facilitate coastal clean-up initiatives and marine litter surveys which result in a tangible and immediate improvement in Ireland's coastal environment.
- We organise hundreds of beach clean-ups annually mobilising thousands of volunteers, removing considerable quantities of marine litter from Ireland's beaches and waterways.
- We have developed a wide variety of community engagement initiatives that has led to the expansion of the Clean Coasts programme, including; Clean Coasts Corporate Volunteering, Love Your Coast Photography Competition, the Big Beach Clean, Ocean Hero Awards and the Clean Coasts Roadshow.
- We work actively with local authorities and community groups to promote best practice in coastal management.

### The Story So Far...

Clean Coasts began as a pilot project in Pembrokeshire, Wales in 1999. During the following two years a partnership was struck up between Keep Wales Tidy and Wexford County Council. A pilot programme which included the Clean Coasts initiative and an award for beaches, known as the Green Coast Award, was rolled out. The success of this pilot scheme led to plans of expansion of the programme in both countries. Keep Wales Tidy joined forces with An Taisce - The National Trust for Ireland to roll out the programme along the East Coast of Ireland and in Wales through the Ireland/Wales Interreg 111A Community Initiative Programme. As Clean Coasts group numbers rose along the east coast so did an interest in the programme from non-participating counties. In 2008 An Taisce, kindly supported by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Coca Cola and Failte Ireland, was in a position to offer the programme to all coastal counties in the Republic of Ireland. Currently, over 600 Clean Coasts Groups have been established and over 62 beaches awarded the Green Coast Award in Ireland. The programme is also offered in Northern Ireland, giving the programme and award an All-Ireland status.

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## CLEAN COASTS PROGRAMME

Over the past number of years Clean Coasts has grown not only in volunteer numbers but also in initiatives. We are proud to say we have developed eight community engagement initiatives and have joined two international campaigns, Beat the Microbead and #2MinuteBeachClean.

### Clean Coasts Volunteering



All members of the community are welcome to participate in the Clean Coasts Volunteering Programme. You can do this individually or as part of a group who takes guardianship of a local stretch of coastline. Each Clean Coasts group formulates their own aims, objectives and activities to clean up and protect their adopted stretch of coastline with the support of An Taisce's Coastal Programmes Officers. A Clean Coasts

group maybe a new specifically assembled group or an already existing group such as a school, residents association, sports club or business.

#### Clean Coasts volunteering aims to:

- Facilitate community guardianship of adopted stretches of coastline.
- Establish and support Clean Coasts groups who form a network engaged in coastal management, environmental actions, and education activities.
- Enhance the value of the coastline by reducing the impact of litter and other environmental damage and thus restoring the aesthetic appeal and increasing the amenity and economic value to local communities and tourists.

#### How to get involved:

- Complete a Clean Coasts group registration form on our website [www.cleancoasts.org](http://www.cleancoasts.org).
- Contact our Head office on Tel: 01 4002210 to find out where your local Clean Coasts Officer is based.

There is no limit to the extent of projects which can be considered by Clean Coasts Groups; below are just a few suggestions for possible activities. Ideally, a combination of active work and time for socialising will produce a worthwhile experience for everyone.

#### Clean Coasts Activities:

- Coastal clean-ups.
- Marram grass planting and other dune management practices (always seek the advice of a Clean Coasts Officer/your local authority before considering any works).
- Erecting/amending coastal infrastructure.
- Eco-Adventures, incorporating fun outdoor activities with positive environmental actions.
- Natural and cultural heritage awareness raising events.
- Developing educational signage.
- Promotion and protection of sites of biodiversity importance such as SPAs/SACs/NHAs.
- Set up a social media account/newsletter for your Clean Coasts group in an effort to raise awareness about your coastal locality, what it has to offer and highlight all the positive work being carried out by your group.

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# CLEAN COASTS PROGRAMME

## Clean Coasts Roadshow



The Clean Coasts Roadshow is a series of regional talks for coastal communities which take place all along the Irish coastline. It aims to bring together all those with an interest in protecting their local beaches, seas and marine life. The Clean Coasts Roadshows run from February to April each year. If you would like the Clean Coasts Roadshow to visit your area please let us know.

## Coca-Cola Clean Coasts Week



Coca-Cola Clean Coasts Week usually runs during June with numerous events taking place including a national beach clean weekend, coastal talks and marine themed film nights. We have all seen the evidence of marine litter along our coastline, so for all you beach lovers out there, here's an opportunity to do something positive to combat the problem and also raise awareness about the issue. Celebrate Ireland's spectacular coastline by creating your own beach clean event or participating in one near you.

## Love Your Coast Photography Competition



Love Your Coast Photography Competition aims to celebrate and exhibit Ireland's amazing coastline through the following categories: Coastal Heritage, Coastal Landscape, People & the Coast, Wildlife & the Coast and Underwater. The Love Your Coast competition is open for entries from June to Mid August. It attracts huge interest from Ireland's amateur photographers.

## Big Beach Clean



Clean Coasts teams up with the International Ocean Conservancy annually for The Clean Coasts Big Beach Clean which is an International Coastal Cleanup event that takes place on the 3rd weekend of September. Recent years has seen over 560,000 volunteers across 91 countries remove in the region of 7,250 tonnes of marine litter from the world's oceans. Groups are sent out a cleanup kit consisting of gloves, bags, posters and marine litter data cards.

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## CLEAN COASTS PROGRAMME

### Ocean Hero Awards



The Ocean Hero Awards recognise the remarkable work being carried out by Clean Coasts groups and volunteers all along the Irish coast. This is achieved through several award categories which celebrate creative initiatives in coastal conservation and the wide variety of groups who contribute to the programme.

### Clean Coasts Corporate Volunteering



The Clean Coasts Corporate Volunteering programme is a great opportunity for companies to make a tangible and immediate improvement to the coastal environment. It is also a fantastic team building and personal development opportunity for employees outside of the normal working environment. By participating in these events they can make a positive impact on the coastal environment, learn about the effect that marine litter has on our environment and help restore fragile dune systems. Our corporate days include the guidance of a Clean Coasts Officer, a health & safety briefing, a marine conservation talk, a beach clean and marine litter survey, a talk on the importance of our sand dunes and dune conservation work on a dune system.



### #2minutebeachclean



The #2minutebeachclean idea is simple and inspiring; Take a little time every time you go to the beach and carry out your own 2 minute beach clean. Take a snap of the litter you collect and post your photo on instagram/twitter/facebook with the hashtags #cleancoasts #2minutebeachclean. The initiative was created by Martin Dorey which Clean Coasts are delighted to be part of. Every piece of litter removed from the marine environment is a piece of litter that won't pollute our oceans or be ingested by marine life!

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## CLEAN COASTS PROGRAMME

### Beat the Microbead



Clean Coasts is delighted to be part of the 'Beat the Microbead' campaign. The Plastic Soup Foundation launched the campaign in the summer of 2012 in partnership with the North Sea Foundation and it has gone from strength to strength. Microbeads are tiny particles of plastic found in thousands of personal care products sold around the world, such as exfoliating washes and toothpastes. When these products are used in the home they flow straight from the bathroom drain into sewage systems. The beads are so tiny that wastewater treatment plants cannot filter them out, which can lead to them entering our rivers, lakes and oceans. Certain sea creatures absorb or eat these microbeads, and particles also attract toxins and over time can bio-magnify as it moves up the food-chain to the top predator, i.e. humans who will consume the highest concentration of toxins. Microbeads are not biodegradable and once they enter the marine environment, they are impossible to remove.

### Think Before You Flush



'Think Before You Flush' is a public awareness campaign about the problem sanitary products and other items can cause in our marine environment and our wastewater systems if they are flushed down the toilet. The campaign is operated by An Taisce's Clean Coasts programme and is supported by Irish Water. The Think Before You Flush campaign invites you to join us in making small changes in your bathroom behaviour, like never using the toilet to dispose of sanitary products such as cotton buds, wet wipes and sanitary products. To find out more visit: [www.thinkbeforeyouflush.org](http://www.thinkbeforeyouflush.org).

### #2minutestreetclean



#2minutestreetclean follows the same principle as #2minutebeachclean, when you're out and about take 2 minutes out of your time to pick up litter and disposing of it appropriately. It is estimated that around 80% of marine litter is from land-based sources, lost or discarded litter items can be carried to our marine environment on rivers, drainage and sewerage systems and carried with the wind. When you have that done: SNAP a picture of what you have collected, TAG the snap with the hashtag #2MinuteStreetClean and SHARE on Twitter/Instagram/Twitter.



## CASE STUDIES / TESTIMONIALS

### Galway Atlantaquaria



Galway Atlantaquaria, Ireland's National Aquarium, has been a Clean Coasts group since 2011. They are very keen to support initiatives that promote conservation and social environmental responsibility. To date they have worked on a number of Clean Coasts' initiatives including, beach cleans, Beat the Micro-Bead campaign, Clean Coasts' week and the 'Think Before You Flush' campaign. Galway Atlantaquaria were the first business to promote 'Think Before You Flush' in the Galway region and visitors to the aquarium are made aware of the issues sewage related litter creates through awareness posters and talks. The beach cleans they organise attract a number of volunteers, beach visitors and locals.

*"Working with Clean Coasts ensures that social environmental responsibility is always directed, relevant and supported as part of national policy. We would recommend any group to support the work of Clean Coasts as it ultimately will ensure our environment is habitable and safe not just for the sea life but for us as well."*

- Garry Kendellan, Galway Atlantaquaria

### Seatrails



Seatrails is a Sligo based tour company offering guided walks, horse rides and kayak trails along the Co. Sligo Coastline. The company's founder Auriel Robinson approached the Clean Coasts programme in May 2013 and since then Auriel has been involved in the organisation of several coastal cleans up along the north-west coastline, including Streedagh, Strandhill and Culleenamore. As part of her work with Seatrails, she promotes the Clean Coasts ethos and good environmental practices to those who take her guided tours. Auriel has given a number of talks at

Clean Coasts' events, including a well received talk about Ireland's coastal archaeology at our 2015 Symposium and the 2015 Sligo Roadshow. The result of this dedication and commitment to Ireland's coastline led to Seatrails being awarded the Clean Coasts Ocean Hero Business of the Year for 2015.

*"The message I deliver throughout my trails is about environmental awareness and the marine environment, I find this is key to raising awareness on coastal issues. I often clean up as I go, which also encourages others on the trails to join in."*

- Auriel Robinson, Seatrails

## CASE STUDIES / TESTIMONIALS

### Clean Coasts Ballynamona



points of interest in the area. They were awarded the 2015 Ocean Hero Newcomer of the Year Award for Ballynamona Clean Coasts and 2015 School of the Year Award for St. Colman's Community College.

Clean Coasts Ballynamona was founded in 2015, the group is made up of local community members from the East Cork areas of Ballycotton and Shanagarry and students from St. Colman's Community College in Midleton. Since the group formed, they have carried out numerous beach cleans and have tackled ongoing litter issues caused by illegal dumping. They have also investigated invasive species in their area and promoted the 'Think Before You Flush' campaign. Their website documents their actions and special

*"Clean Coasts is great because it inspires and facilitates people to join the movement for litter free seas".*

- Proinsias O'Tuama , Clean Coasts Ballynamona

### Sandycove Tidy Towns



The group became a Clean Coasts Group in spring 2006 having already been established as a Tidy Towns Group for several years prior. They manage on-going clean ups and events around their coastal town and have a strong link with a variety of local groups in the community, including schools, businesses, local resident embassy, disability groups, local shopkeepers, and youth groups. The group has received several awards over years for initiatives such as an anti-gum campaign and have been recipient of a Clean Coasts Ocean Hero Award for 2008, 2014 and 2015. The group has also been featured on RTE's Nationwide talking about the various projects they work on.

### Wexford Sub Aqua Club



Wexford Sub Aqua Club was formed as a Clean Coasts group in June 2007. Each year they organise the 'Annual Big Kilmore Clean-up'. Over the years this event has grown from strength to strength and in 2014, 245 people attended, comprising 8 community groups from the locality. The club also arrange 'Clean Coasts Dives' and regularly update the Clean Coasts team on the types of marine litter they find and remove from the water. They were awarded a Clean Coasts Ocean Hero 'Group of the Year Award' in 2014, and members of the groups have also been successful in underwater category of the Clean Coasts 'Love Your Coast' photography competition over the past number of years.

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## THE GREEN COAST AWARD



**Green  
Coast  
Award**

The Green Coast Award is a symbol of environmental excellence and has been established to acknowledge, promote and protect the environment of rural beaches in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales. The award is for beaches which have excellent water quality, but which are also prized for their natural, unspoilt environment. A "natural, unspoilt environment" means that the special character of such a beach may not be compatible with the level of infrastructure and intensive management generally associated with more urban, traditional seaside resort beaches.

Beaches eligible for this award will generally be:

- Managed carefully and in close consultation with conservation organisations to account for their environmentally sensitive nature as part of a management plan.
- Cleaned of litter sensitively without removing natural debris such as driftwood and seaweed.
- Consideration should be given to the visual impact of facilities and signs, if they are present, on the surrounding landscape.

It also emphasises community involvement in coastal management. Green Coast Award beaches have excellent water quality and sound environmental management. The award encourages community involvement through the setting up of Clean Coasts Groups.



Applications for a Green Coast Award include an application form, a beach management plan and the submission of water quality sample results. More information and the documents that are needed are available on the website [www.cleancoasts.org](http://www.cleancoasts.org).

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## AN TAISCE'S ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION UNIT (EEU)

The EEU is responsible for developing and operating some of Ireland's most popular and successful environmental and sustainability programmes. It is the National Operator for many international environmental education programmes of FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education), including the Blue Flag Award for Beaches and Marinas and Green-Schools, the international environmental education programme in operation across 94% of Irish schools.

It also operates a number of national programmes including: Green Campus, Neat Streets, Clean Coasts, National Spring Clean (Ireland's largest anti-litter campaign), Green Home, Green Communities, and the Irish Greening Community Award Programme.





 An Taisce

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