



The Beach Clean Project

2023 Marine Litter Report



The Clean
Earth Trust

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Published by The Clean Earth Trust
November 2024

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Acknowledgements

The Marine Litter Report 2023 is the result of numerous volunteers participating in our **citizen science project** to gather data on marine litter. We are enormously grateful to all who have participated in our beach cleans and to those who have done their own beach cleans and submitted data through the survey form available on our website.

We really appreciate the involvement of all the management and staff of businesses who have supported us by arranging one or more corporate beach cleans with us. Thanks also to the members of our Beach Clean Project Team, who have put so much time into organising the beach cleans and ensuring they are a safe and enjoyable experience for all who take part.

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The Clean Earth Trust

Trustee Foreward

I am delighted to see the publication of our third annual Marine litter Report. The focus of the report is on harm caused to our marine environment by human behaviour. Our work on raising awareness in this area complements our efforts, through the Repair Café initiatives, to encourage a repair and reuse mindset to reduce the effects of waste on the environment. This is all part of our ambition to encourage movement towards a circular economy.

The cumulative publication of data in our Marine Litter Reports will continue to raise public awareness of the need to minimise waste and to dispose of it responsibly to reduce the impact on our vulnerable marine ecosystem. The data also serves as evidence to support our policy objectives, such as persuading the States of Guernsey to legislate to ban single use plastics that have already been banned in most of our neighbouring jurisdictions and to adopt policies which minimise the harmful impacts of cigarette butts.

We look forward to involving as many in the community as possible in our beach cleans and hope that they will all enjoy playing a part in our ambitions to reduce human impact on our coastal environment.

Laura Bampton & Andrew Munro

Trustees



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Sponsor's Foreward



At Suntera Global, we operate in a way that enables our people to realise their potential and improve their quality of life while protecting and enhancing the earth's natural capital.

Alongside The Clean Earth Trust, we can demonstrate our values and commitment to protecting the natural environment through sustainable practices and innovative solutions.

Preserving biodiversity and protecting local ecosystems are key priorities in our environmental strategy. By supporting beach cleans and habitat restoration projects, we aim to mitigate pollution and conserve the Island's rich marine and terrestrial environments. These initiatives not only benefit wildlife but also raise awareness and encourage environmental responsibility within the local community.

In 2022, we launched our flagship sustainability initiative, Fill a Fish, on the Isle of Man to reduce the reliance on single-use plastics, promote recycling and enhance resource efficiency.

As these challenges become more pressing, our collaboration opens new pathways and opportunities to introduce local initiatives, like Fill a Fish, which focus on safeguarding natural ecosystems. These efforts directly contribute to reducing the environmental footprint of Guernsey and protecting its pristine landscapes for future generations.

Driven by the shared vision of a cleaner and greener future, our work with The Clean Earth Trust encourages environmental practices that extend the life of materials and support sustainable consumption to encourage Guernsey to become a more resilient, low-impact economy.

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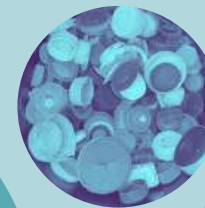
SUNTERA GLOBAL - FILL
A FISH PROJECT



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Key Takeouts

- **166** surveys collected in 2023
- **27,969** pieces of marine litter collected, weighing over 600 kilograms
- **932** pieces of litter were found per mile of coastline
- **80%** of the marine litter found was **plastic**
- **2,550 cigarette butts** were found which would have raised **£178,500** if each littering offence had been fined
- Top 5 items:
 - broken plastic pieces: 8,20
 - cigarette butts: 2,550
 - plastic food wrappers: 1,972
 - nurdles: 1,532
 - string / cord / rope: 1,354
- **1,339 scrap paper** and tissue pieces
- **121.5kg**, the highest weight recorded in one survey, during 2 hours at Bordeaux
- **L'Eree Beach** was the most surveyed beach
- **52.9%** of items were from an unknown source
- **168** was the average number of items found per survey
- **31%** of the plastic items found were single-use plastic



Contents

The Impact of Marine Litter	1
The Beach Clean Project	3
Guernsey Nature Commission	4
Marine Litter 2023 - Richard Lord	6
2023 Survey Results	7
• Surveys.....	7
• The Distribution of Beach Surveys Around the Island.....	8
• The Figures For 2023 Compared to 2021/2022.....	10
• The Difference Between Summer and Winter Beach Surveys..	11
Materials	12
• Plastic.....	13
• Paper, Fabric.....	15
• Metal, Glass.....	16
• Ceramic, Wood.....	17
• Rubber, Unknown, Pollutant	18
Industry	19
• Food and Beverage	19
• Marine.....	20
• Smoking	21
• Sanitary, Medical	22
Sources of Marine Litter	23
Raising Awareness of Plastic Pollution	24
Current CET Policy Objectives	25
How can you get involved	29
About us	31



CLICK THIS ICON ON ANY PAGE TO GET BACK TO THE CONTENTS PAGE



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The Impact of Marine Litter

Marine litter is defined as any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of, or abandoned in the environment. It is now widely recognised that the amount of litter in the environment is significant and increasing and needs to be addressed.

Plastic pollution is a particular concern because, it is the most abundant, persistent and damaging component of marine litter. It accumulates in the environment due to its longevity. Over time plastic degrades and breaks up through the action of sunlight and abrasion. But it breaks down into micro plastic and subsequently into nano particles which remain harmful agents in the environment.

Marine litter is found on coasts, on the water surface, in the water column, on the seabed and even in the deep seas. It causes harm in all these locations within the marine ecosystem.

- Every year **19-23 million tonnes of plastic waste** leaks into aquatic ecosystems, polluting lakes, rivers and seas.
- Emissions of plastic waste into aquatic ecosystems are projected to nearly triple by 2040 without meaningful action.¹

A large proportion of plastic waste is from single use plastic items (SUPs). This includes items such as single use plastic bags, drinks bottles, cutlery, cups and lids.



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The main harm caused by larger plastic items is ingestion by marine animals and entanglement. Ingestion of plastic items results in accumulation of indigestible material in marine animals and often leads to fatalities. Entanglement often results in an inability to feed or renders trapped animals vulnerable to predators either of which can be fatal. Most animals killed by marine plastics are undiscovered as the animals either sink to the bottom or are eaten by other animals making it impossible to observe and monitor the full extent of the impacts.

Apart from harm to the marine ecosystem there is also a risk that human health may be impacted. Microplastics enter the human body through absorption from food items or by inhaling tiny particles, which become airborne. The microplastics contain a large range of chemical components some of which are toxic to humans.

- **The volume of plastics in the ocean has been estimated to be around 75-199 million tonnes.**
- **Approximately 7,000 million of the estimated 9,200 million tonnes of cumulative plastic production between 1950 and 2017 became plastic waste¹**

Scientific research continues into the implications for human health of the accumulation of microplastics in our bodies. The fear is that, by the time the research has been carried out and causation established, irreversible harm to human health may have already resulted.



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The Beach Clean Project

The Beach Clean Project is a **citizen science project** that continues to run nearly every weekend throughout the year. The project conducts regular community clean ups at different beaches, along with BIG clean ups happening a few times a year. In 2023 we had the BIG Channel Islands beach clean which spanned a whole weekend and covered two big beaches, along with a joint World Wetlands Day Celebration in February. These events often have over 50 people attending, and large amounts of marine litter collected.

In 2023 the number of independent surveys quadrupled from the previous year. It is very encouraging to see so many individuals taking the time to log their finds. Every piece of litter logged is crucial in understanding what is being found on our beaches.

Corporate beach cleans continued to be popular in 2023. More and more organisations are getting outside and helping to clean up our environment. If you are interested, you can find out more about our corporate programme [here](#).



Changes to the survey form in 2023 have simplified what should be recorded in each category and have made it easier to log results.

Find out more about The Beach Clean Project [here](#).



Guernsey Nature Commission

Report by Jessi Jennings

The Nature Commission recognises that our local natural environment is declining in biodiversity and so in health. We work with other organisations, such as the Clean Earth Trust, to protect and enhance Guernsey's natural environment for the health of our economy and the wellbeing of our island community. Our aims are to:

- Encourage our island community to connect with nature
- Increase awareness, knowledge, and support for nature, including through education and effective information sharing
- Care for nature and reduce pressures on our natural environment
- Help build the evidence-base for effective management of the environment by all
- Aid in the identification of our Natural Capital
- Support the sustainability agenda gathering momentum locally and globally



Clean Earth Trust data has previously shown that over half of the litter found on our beaches originates from a public source, such as beach goers. It is very discouraging to think that some of the people that like to use the beach also don't look after that resource. Sharing information on the importance of our natural environment is essential to ensure that everyone understands why we need and want healthy ecosystems, and why we should look after our coastal areas. It's not just about the ecological services that healthy ecosystems provide us, such as protection from extreme weather events, but also the cultural and aesthetic value that we get, as well as the positive benefits to our health and wellbeing.



The coastal areas we don't frequent as often are just as important as those we do, which is why we need to think about our activities and how we can reduce our impacts holistically. Making informed choices about our activities can make a big difference, so it's important to understand the impacts of our choices. Our publication of "State of Nature 2024" on 1st October looks at our coastal habitats and species, the pressures they are experiencing, and what we can do to help protect our natural environment.

This is the first report of its kind for Guernsey and Herm It has been compiled using the best available data for local wildlife with trends in the abundance and distribution of species and habitats highlighted where possible. Repeat publications will occur every 5 years which will enable us to gauge whether we are making adequate progress to protect our natural environment and what further steps we should be encouraging government, businesses and individuals to take.

Making informed choices about our activities can make a big difference, so it's important to understand the impacts of our choices.

You can't manage what you don't measure – this is our motto. Data from numerous sources has been compiled in order to build a picture about the state of our habitats and species, including data from the Clean Earth Trust. Without the amazing volunteers who gather this data, our understanding of the state of our natural environment would be very poor indeed. The Nature Commission very much support the Clean Earth Trust, and all other volunteer groups, who dedicate their time to gathering data and reducing pressures on our environment. We each have something we can contribute, and volunteering with the Clean Earth Trust is one of those things.

Visit our website to find out more about the local impact of pollution on our natural environment: [State of Nature 2024 | Nature Commission Guernsey](#)



Marine Litter 2023

Report by Richard Lord

Last year, emails to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) were ignored. Since then, Dr Heike Deggim, Director of Marine Environment Division, has invited me to speak about shipping litter at the Marine Environment Protection Committee meeting No. 82 at the IMO in London in October 2024.

Wendy Le Prevost averaged 117 whole plastic bottles collected per month from the Guernsey shore between August 2023 and February 2024. The majority of these plastic bottles were from ships. Her plastic bottle count may give us an idea of the number of bottles washing up on the Guernsey shore over the year given the frequency of beach cleans and the number of beach cleaners.

There were no identifiable cargo losses washing up on the Guernsey shore in 2023 although about a dozen Tam Tam insecticide cans from Italy washed up in December 2023. These insecticide cans, many which were full, also washed up on the Jersey coast.

There was a brief hiatus of shipping litter around September and October 2023. We thought the decline in shipping litter might be permanent, but this proved unfounded, as shipping litter arrived in large quantities in the last two months of the year.

The number of food and drink packaging brands washing up on the Guernsey shore continues to increase. It may be that ship chandlers sell whatever brand is available or is cheapest.

Data is accumulating at a fast pace. A database should be developed to analyse all the shipping litter washing up.

FOREIGN WATER BOTTLES THAT HAVE BEEN FOUND ON GUERNSEY'S SHORES



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NONGFU SPRING PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES FROM CHINA



2023 SURVEY RESULTS

Surveys

A total of 166 surveys were submitted via our online form for 2023. This compares to 160 in 2022. The weekly beach surveys were slightly lower with 25 conducted in 2023, and 35 in 2022. Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) surveys decreased from 72 in 2022 to 12 in 2023. Corporate beach cleans remained at a similar level between the years, 14 in 2022 and 12 in 2023.

Independent surveys submitted quadrupled in submissions during 2023, going from 27 in 2022 to 108 in 2023. Special thanks go to Wendy Le Prevost who submitted 60 surveys which is over 55% of the total.

In 2023 we had a total of **736 volunteers** amounting to over 1000 volunteer hours. If these hours were paid for at minimum wage the cost would be **£13,312.50**.

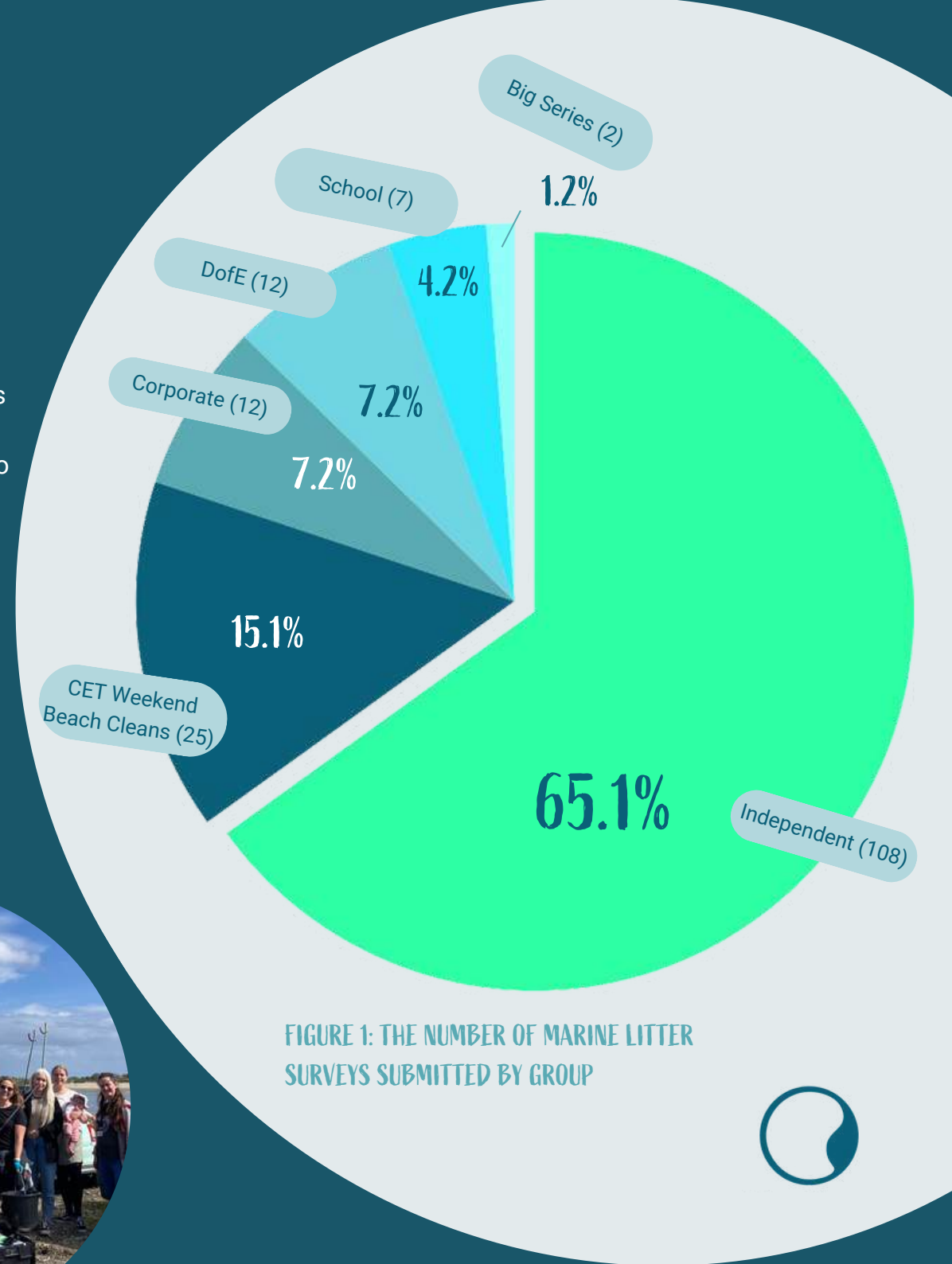


FIGURE 1: THE NUMBER OF MARINE LITTER SURVEYS SUBMITTED BY GROUP



The Distribution of Beach Surveys Around the Island



Out of the 166 surveys conducted over the course of 2023, it is interesting to see where on the island these surveys took place. The map shows the number of surveys at the various beaches.

L'Eree had the highest number of surveys this year, with many individuals dedicating their time to survey this specific bay. Beaches on the west coast proved popular with Vazon, Richmond, and Fort Le Crocq being surveyed frequently.

In total 40 different beaches were surveyed.



FIGURE 2: THE DISTRIBUTION OF BEACH SURVEYS AROUND THE ISLAND



27,969 Pieces of Marine Litter Were Collected in 2023

The 1250 volunteer hours in 2023 resulted in 27,969 pieces of marine litter being collected and surveyed, **weighing over 600 kilograms.**

27,969 pieces of marine litter equates to about **168 items per survey.**



Top 5 items in 2023	
Plastic pieces	8,207
Cigarette butts	2,550
Plastic food wrappers	1,972
Nurdles	1,532
String / cord / rope	1,354

FIGURE 3: THE TOP FIVE ITEMS COLLECTED IN 2023



What Are the Figures For 2023 Compared to 2021 / 2022

In 2023 27,969 pieces of marine litter were found weighing over 600 kilograms. Over the last three years our reports have shown an annual reduction of about 10,000 pieces of marine litter found on our beaches. At first glance this might suggest a welcome trend towards less marine litter being on our shores. However, there may be other factors at play, such as fewer volunteers being involved in surveys. For example, in 2023 many surveys were by individuals rather than by groups which means fewer people being involved in collecting the litter and less items being found.

The top 5 items have remained similar over the last few years with **plastic pieces and cigarette butts always being the top two items found.**



	2021	2022	2023
Surveys	122	159	166
Volunteers	1,147	1,117	736
Total number of items found	48,924	39,944	27,969
Total weight	2,217	1,842	625
Top 5 items	broken plastic pieces, cigarette butts, plastic food wrappers, polystyrene pieces, glass pieces	cigarette butts, broken plastic pieces, plastic food wrappers, paper scrap and tissue, polystyrene pieces	broken plastic pieces, cigarette butts, plastic food wrappers, nurdles, string / cord / rope
Plastic items	37,202	26,511	22,276
Metal items	2,102	1,352	814
Rubber items	884	455	434
Fabric items	1,147	763	841
Wood items	1,085	1,245	543
Paper items	2,364	3,745	1,634
Glass items	2,435	822	650
Ceramic items	1,556	256	529
Pollutants	71	58	63
Unknown	78	700	103

FIGURE 4: THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN 2021, 2022, AND 2023



The Difference Between Summer and Winter Beach Surveys

It is interesting to discover the different kind of items that are found on the shore at different times of year. In 2023 94 surveys were conducted in the Summer and 72 in the Winter. Summer included May through to the end of September and Winter from the start of October through to the end of April. In the summer months, 22 more surveys were submitted.

The quantities of many items found were similar in summer and winter, although there were some noteworthy exceptions. The most stark contrast is the polystyrene pieces, with nearly 600 pieces more being found in winter. Likewise, plastic pieces were also found more frequently in the winter. There were slight increases in clothes / towels, cigarette butts, food wrappers, scrap paper, and marine items in the summer months. This probably reflects the greater numbers of beachgoers in the summer.

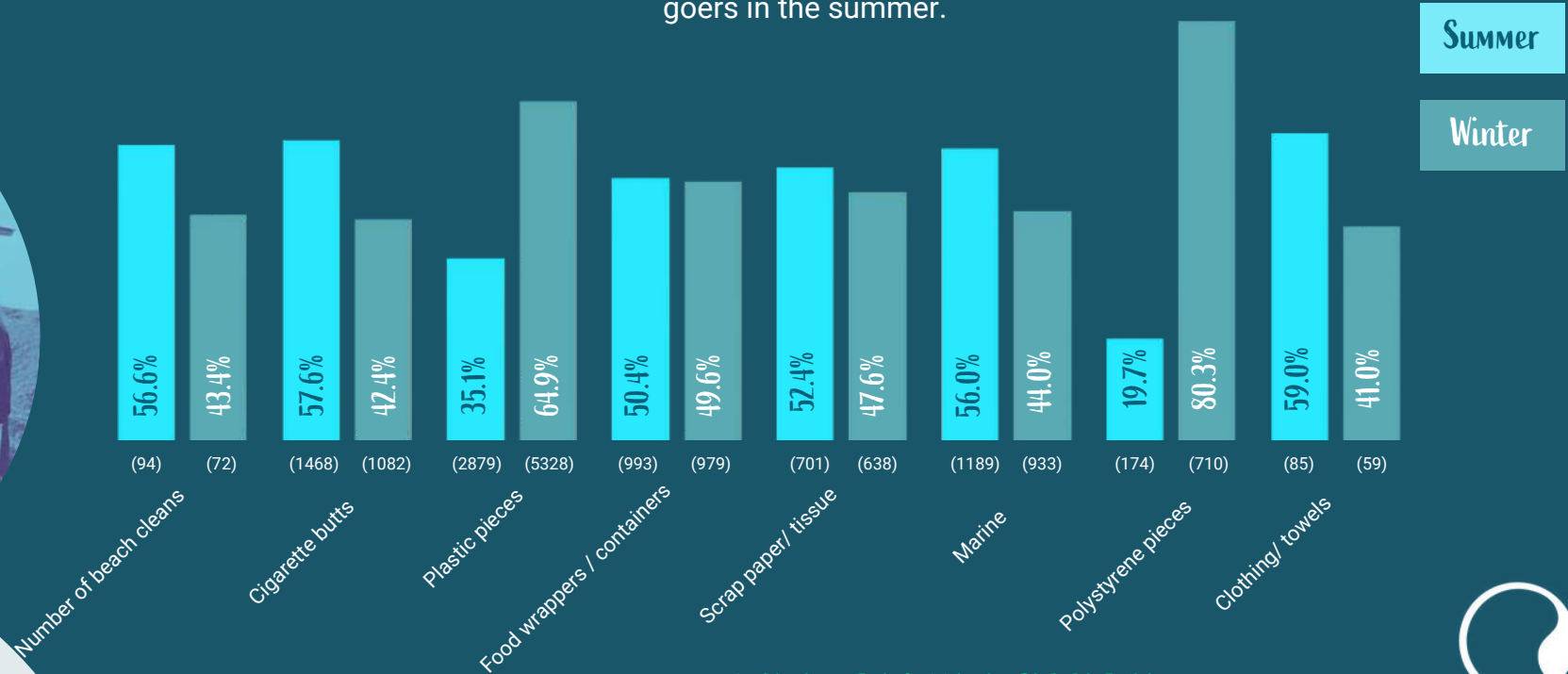


FIGURE 5: THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUMMER AND WINTER BEACH SURVEYS



MATERIALS

The chart shows how the marine litter found in 2023 was allocated to the various survey categories.

As Guernsey's shoreline is roughly 48km our surveys show there were **583 pieces of litter were found per km**. The true figure is obviously much larger.

Plastic items accounted for 80% of items surveyed, which shows that it continues to be the greatest component of marine pollution on our shores.

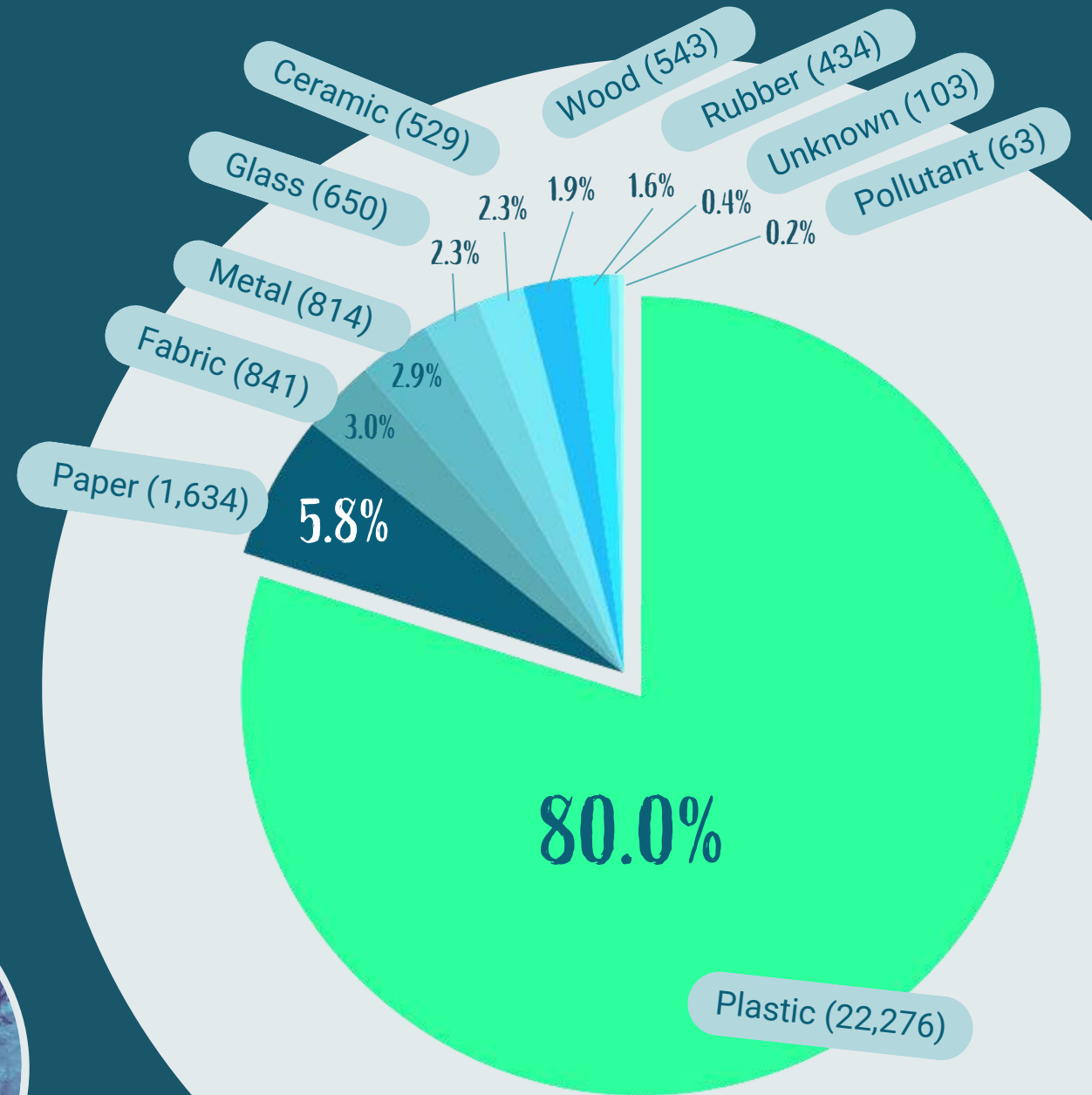


FIGURE 6: THE SPLIT OF TOTAL ITEMS FOUND BY MATERIAL

Plastic (80.0%)



80% of items found on Guernsey's shores were plastic

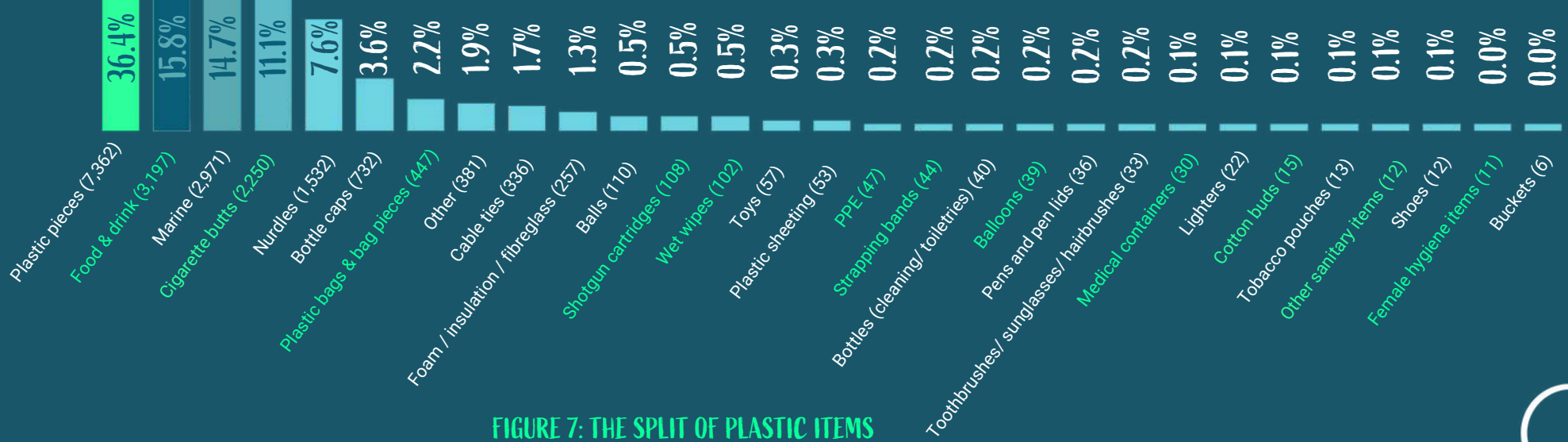


FIGURE 7: THE SPLIT OF PLASTIC ITEMS

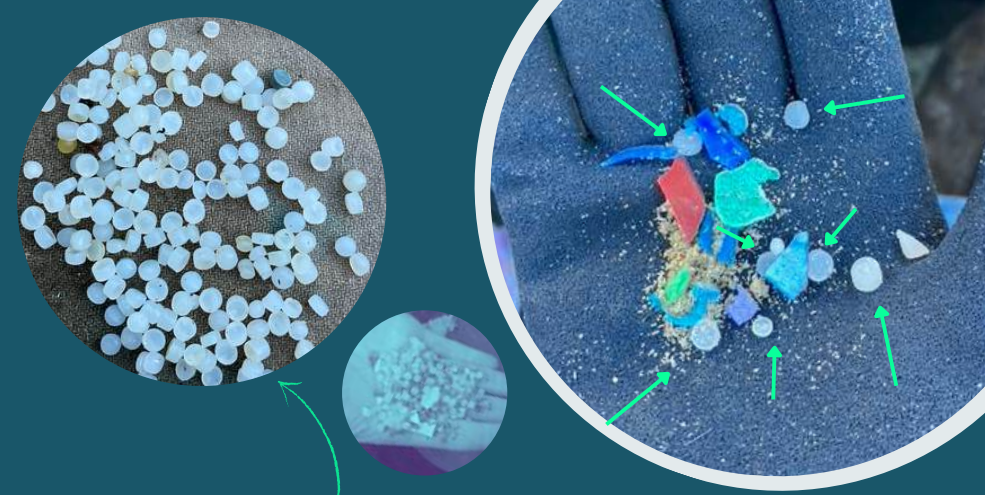


1,061 Plastic Pieces Were Found in 2 Hours at Richmond

In 2023 our survey form was simplified by consolidating three different categories of plastic pieces into one category, which has made the inputting of data more user-friendly.

Of the plastic items found in 2023, **6,300 were single-use plastic** ("SUP") items, which is 31% of all plastic items.

Single-use plastic products are used once, or for a short period of time, before being thrown away. **The items highlighted in green in figure 7 are all single-use plastic items.**²



1,532 nurdles were found in 2023.

At the start of 2023, thousands of nurdles were washing up in France, Northern Spain, and here in Guernsey. 676 nurdles were collected in just one hour at Grandes Roques It's suspected there was a cargo spill in the Atlantic that caused these nasty plastic pellets to wash up on our beaches.³

Nurdles can be mistaken for food by birds, fish, and other marine animals which can cause serious problems such as blockages in intestines because plastic is indigestible and and poisoning through absorbing toxins used in manufacturing nurdles.



² https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/plastics/single-use-plastics_en

³ <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/france-beach-plastic-pellet-nurdles-1.6725947>



Paper (5.8%)

Paper was the second most frequent material found on our beaches in 2023, with the top item in this category being scrap paper and tissue. This essentially is any paper that doesn't fit into any of the categories and looks to be scrap. Tissues are also included in this category, including napkins and items of that sort. Cardboard is the next most popular item found, followed by miscellaneous. 24 paper cups were found, but often looks are deceiving, these cups may have plastic within them.

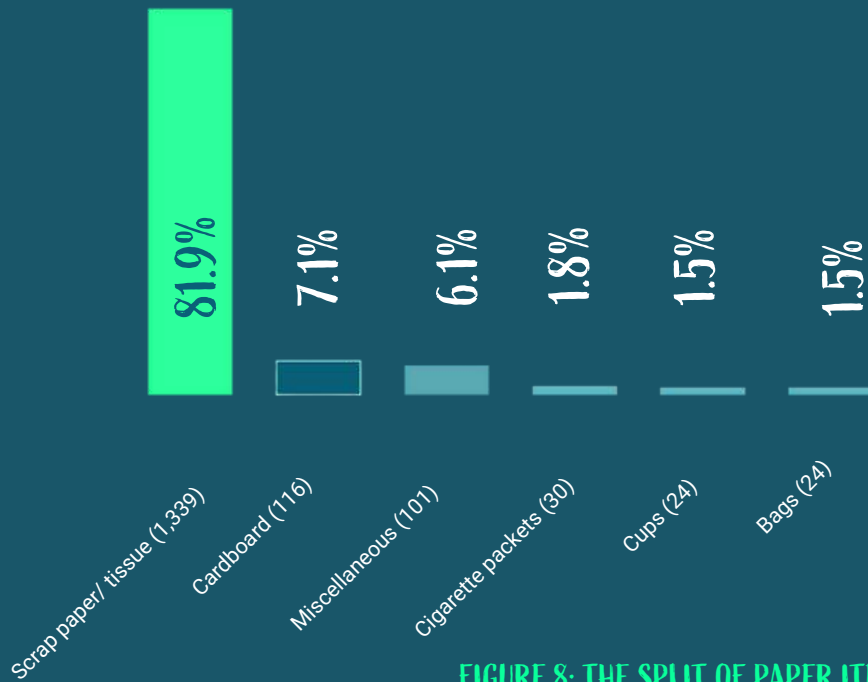


FIGURE 8: THE SPLIT OF PAPER ITEMS



Fabric (3.0%)

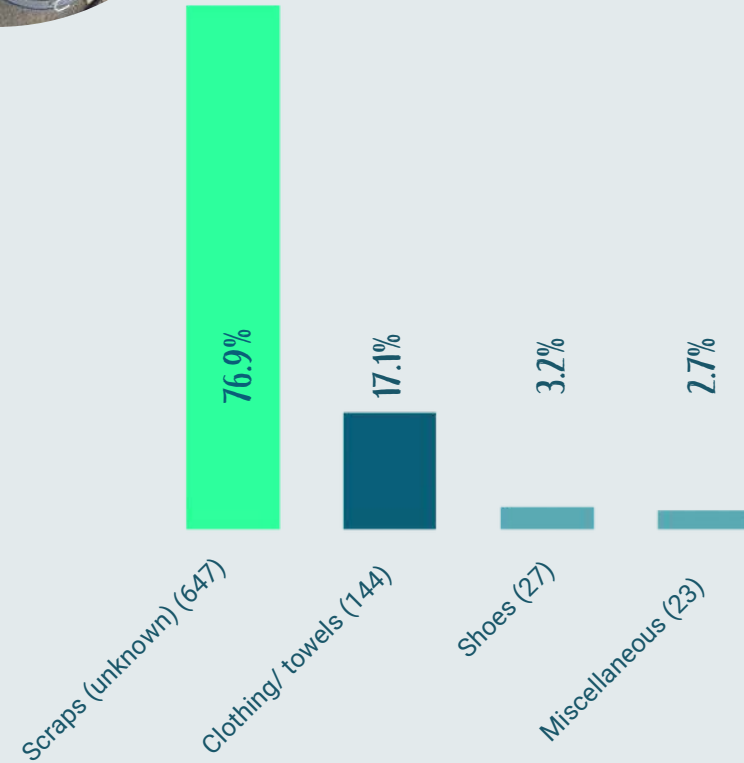


FIGURE 9: THE SPLIT OF FABRIC ITEMS

Fabric can often be hard to identify when conducting a survey as often the pieces are very small and could be plastic, this is reflected in the fact that 76.9% of the fabric items found were scraps. **144 items of clothing were found, 60 % of these were found in the summer,** showing that these items are often left or forgotten by beach goers.



Metal (2.9%)

Metal was the third most frequent material found on our beaches. **63 metal nails** were found in one hour at Grandes Rocques. Foil wrappers and drinks / food cans were commonly found. The metal items can often be hazardous to beach-goers if they are rusty or sharp. **Items are highlighted in green represent items related to the food and beverage industry.**



FIGURE 10: THE SPLIT OF METAL ITEMS



Glass (2.3%)

Glass pieces topped the glass category in 2023 with 593. This might suggest a reduction in glass as a contributor to our marine litter, but the data may also reflect differences in the surveying carried out in 2023, such as fewer volunteers per survey on average resulting in less glass being found per survey. **177 glass pieces were found in one clean at Salerie Corner.**

Glass items	650
Pieces	593 91.2%
Bottles	52 8.0%
Miscellaneous	5 0.8%

FIGURE 11: THE SPLIT OF GLASS ITEMS



Ceramic (2.3%)

Ceramic pieces are often small pieces of pottery that can be found on the beach - these were the largest quantity of ceramic items in 2023. 451 pieces of ceramics were found, with 283 of these pieces being found in one hour at Portinfer. Construction materials refers to anything that could be used in construction, for example bricks and tiles. Construction materials made up a larger percentage compared to 2021 and 2022.

Ceramic items	529	
Pieces	451	85.3%
Construction material	75	14.2%
Miscellaneous	3	0.6%

FIGURE 12: THE SPLIT OF CERAMIC ITEMS



Wood (1.9%)

Scrap wood pieces were the most common wood item found on our beaches in 2023, and it is likely that these scraps are broken pieces of larger wood items that are unrecognisable. Chip forks and lolly sticks are likely to have either been discarded or left accidentally by members of the public.

Much of the wood found is natural but there are some pieces of wood that have nails or toxic paint coating which can be dangerous to wildlife and people, especially swimmers, who might be struck by them in the water.

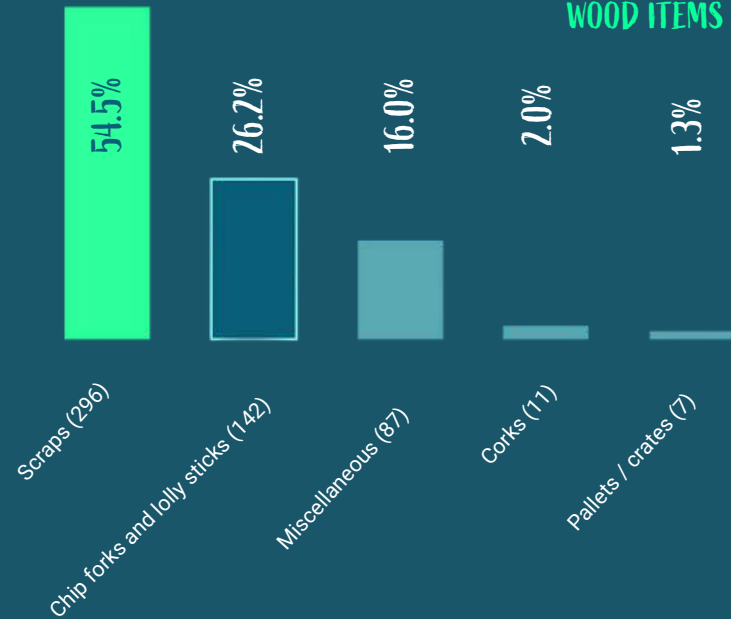


FIGURE 13: THE SPLIT OF WOOD ITEMS



Rubber (1.6%)

Rubber items were a small percentage of what was found during 2023. Similarly to fabrics, scraps were the highest occurring item, as rubber items can often be hard to identify. Rubber bands are also frequently found - these can be hair bands, elastic bands, or bands used in fishing. Fishing is the predominant industry for rubber items, specifically tyres used for pots and fenders.



FIGURE 14: THE SPLIT OF RUBBER ITEMS



Unknown (0.4%)

Unknown items refer to all the 'other' columns in our survey. In 2023, 103 items were listed as unknown, which was 0.4% of the overall findings.

Pollutants (0.2%)

Bagged dog faeces were counted 45 times. If the dog owners were fined for each littering offence this could have resulted in £4,500-£45,000 worth of fines. 12 paraffin wax pieces were found.



INDUSTRY

Food and Beverage

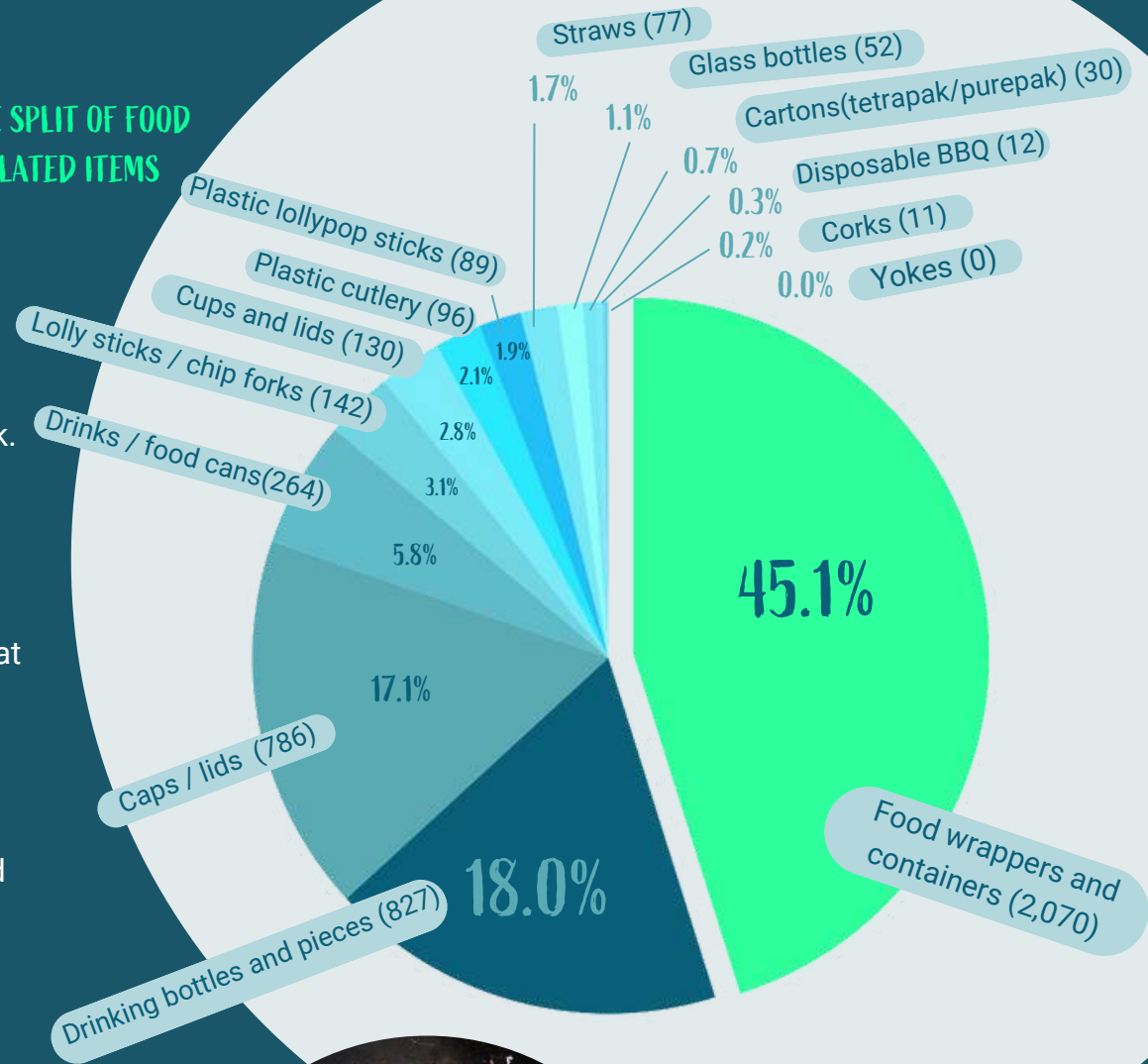
29.0% of all items found in 2023 were related to food and drink. Food wrappers and containers topped the list, mirroring the results from 2021 and 2022.

330 food wrappers and containers were found in one summer's afternoon at L'Islet, illustrating that items found on the beach can often be from public sources, people using the beach, and litter blowing from the land.

Coffee cup lids, straws, and plastic cutlery are items that are single-use and banned in the UK and EU. 77 straws were found and 96 plastic cutlery items.

827 plastic bottles and pieces of bottle were found in 2023. Many of these bottles can be identified as shipping litter by studying their labels to see if they are in foreign languages and are not likely to have been retailed in Guernsey.

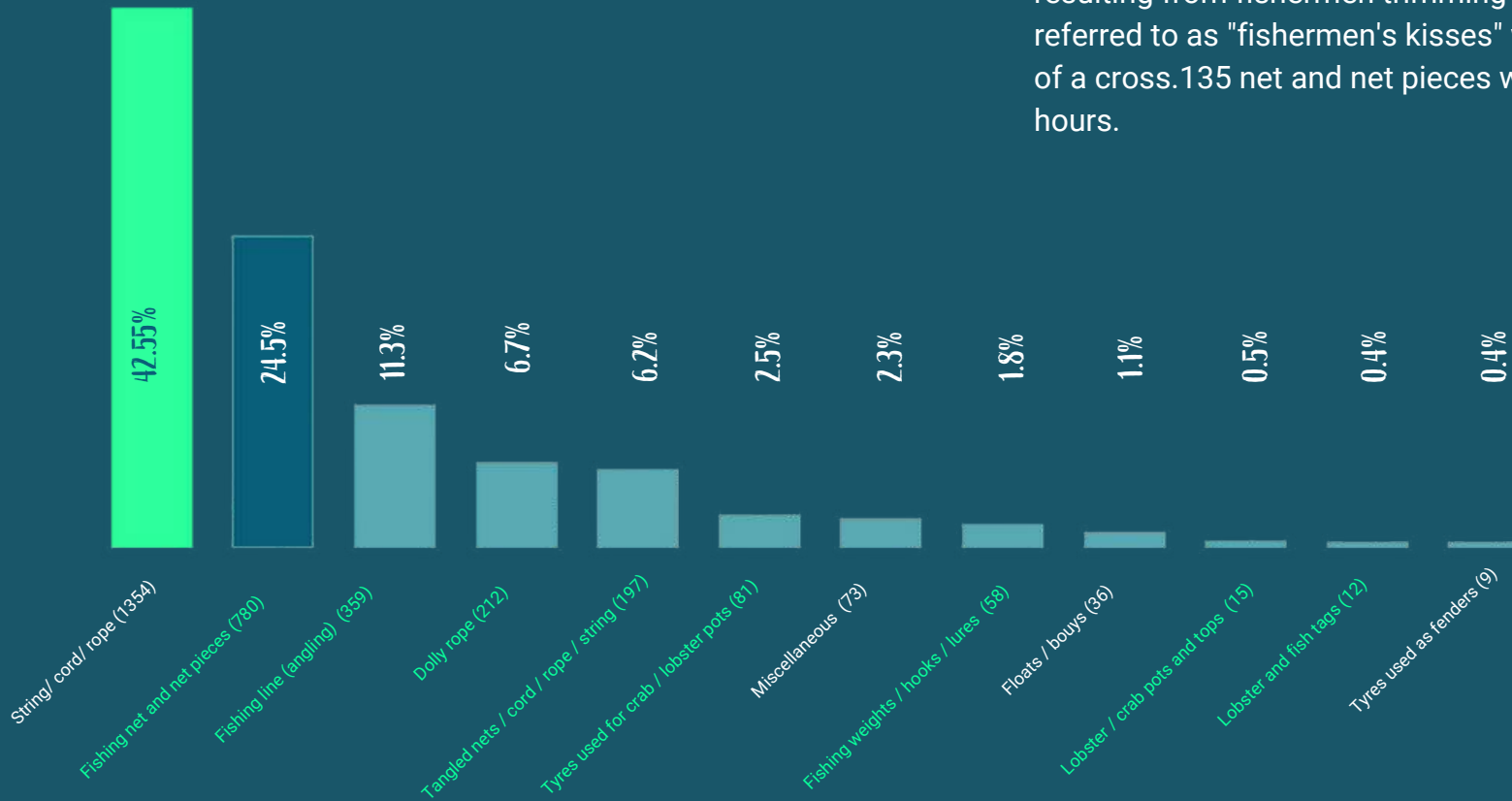
FIGURE 15: THE SPLIT OF FOOD AND DRINK RELATED ITEMS



Marine



1,354 pieces of string, cord, and rope were found in 2023



Marine items contributed **11.4% to all items**. String, cord and rope are dangerous to animals which can become trapped in them and become unable to feed or vulnerable to predators resulting in fatalities.

150 lengths of string / cord / rope were found in two hours at Vazon.

Net and net pieces refer to the small green pieces of rope resulting from fishermen trimming their nets, which are referred to as "fishermen's kisses" when they are in the form of a cross. 135 net and net pieces were found at Vazon in two hours.



FIGURE 16: THE SPLIT OF MARINE RELATED ITEMS



Smoking



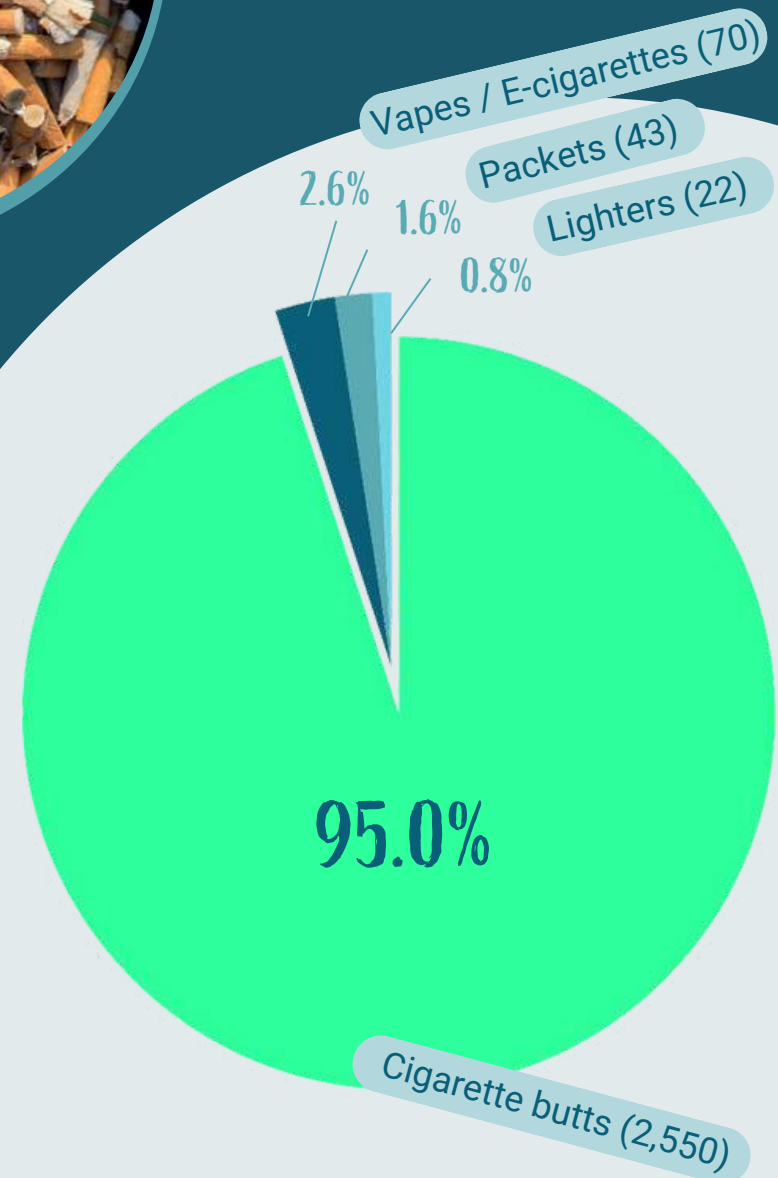
2,550 cigarette butts were found in 2023 and were the second highest item in our survey. If each littering offence that arose when the butts were discarded was fined the penalties would be **£178,500**. But there is presently no effective enforcement.

E-cigarettes and vapes were added to the form in 2023 as the number being found was increasing.

34 vapes / e-cigarettes were found in one hour at Havelet



FIGURE 17: THE SPLIT OF SMOKING RELATED ITEMS



Worst beaches for butts	Count
Vazon	1,090
Chouet	431
Grandes Rocques	405
Grandes Rocques	254

FIGURE 18: THE TOP 3 WORST BEACHES FOR BUTTS



Sanitary

Wet wipes continue to be the most common sanitary items found on our beaches. 102 wet wipes were found in 2023.

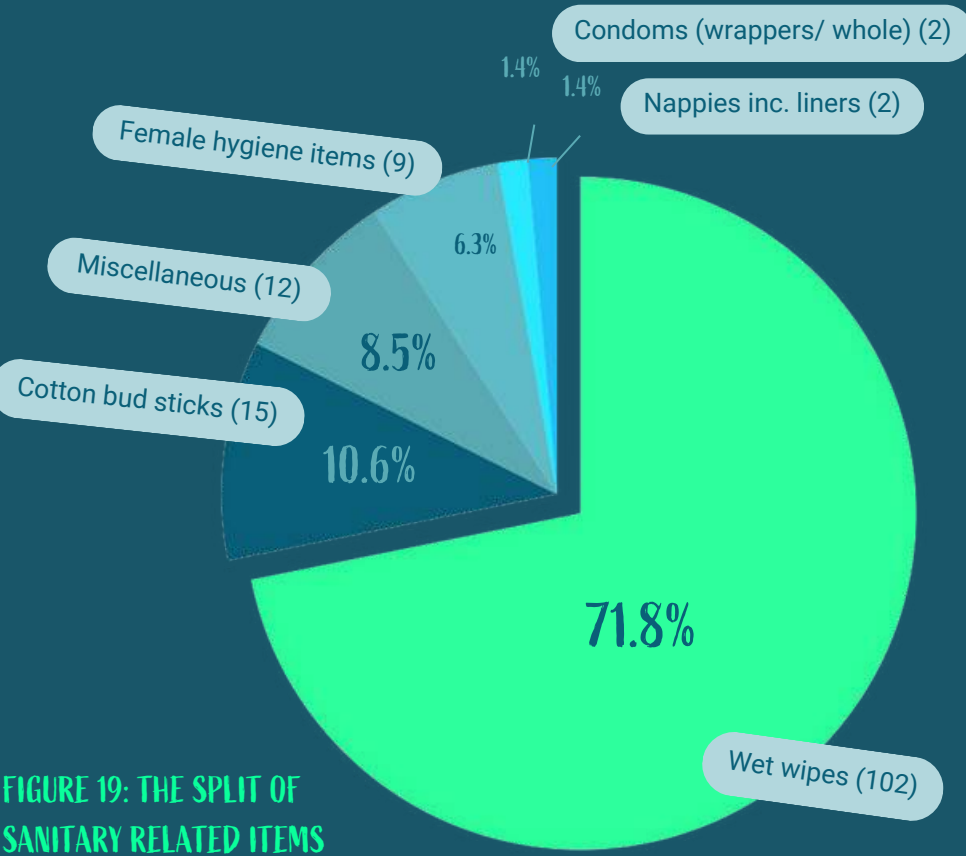


FIGURE 19: THE SPLIT OF SANITARY RELATED ITEMS

Medical

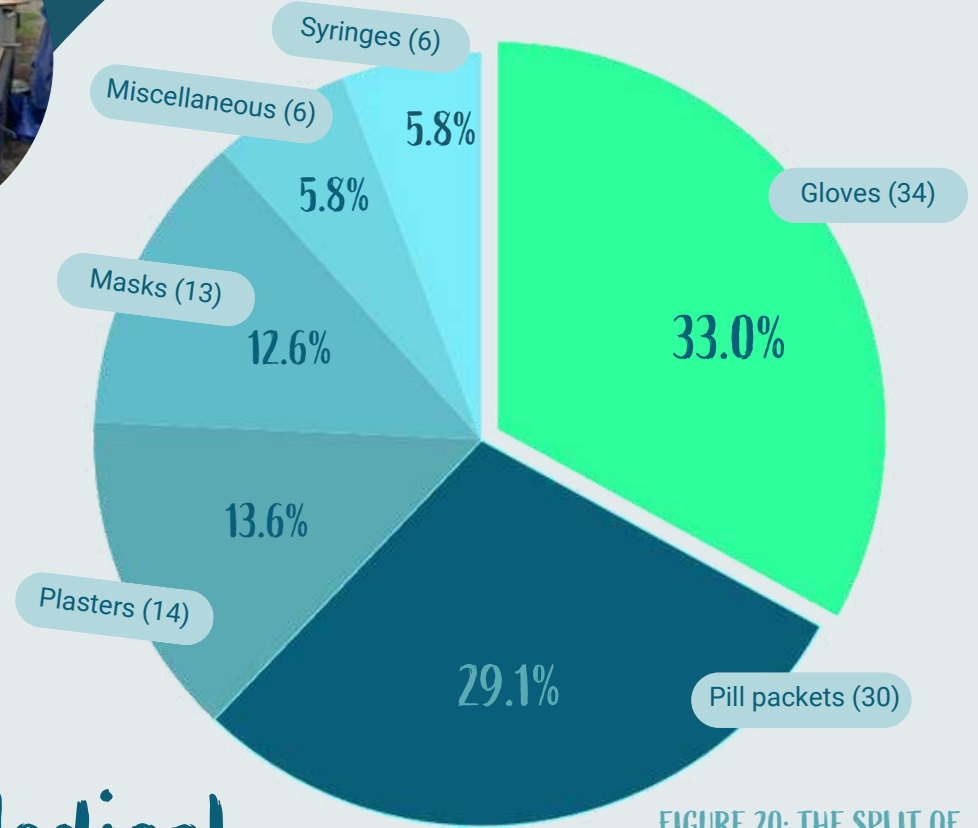


FIGURE 20: THE SPLIT OF MEDICAL RELATED ITEMS

34 medical gloves were found in 2023, which accounted for a third of the medical items found, with pill packets being the next biggest item at 29.1%. Masks decreased from 72 to just 13 in 2023. This could be a reflection of decreased use of personal PPE since the pandemic.

Medical items only made up 0.4% of items found but can still have a nasty impact. Needles and syringes are often found which can be harmful to both wildlife and the public. Only 6 syringes were found in 2023.



Sources of Marine Litter

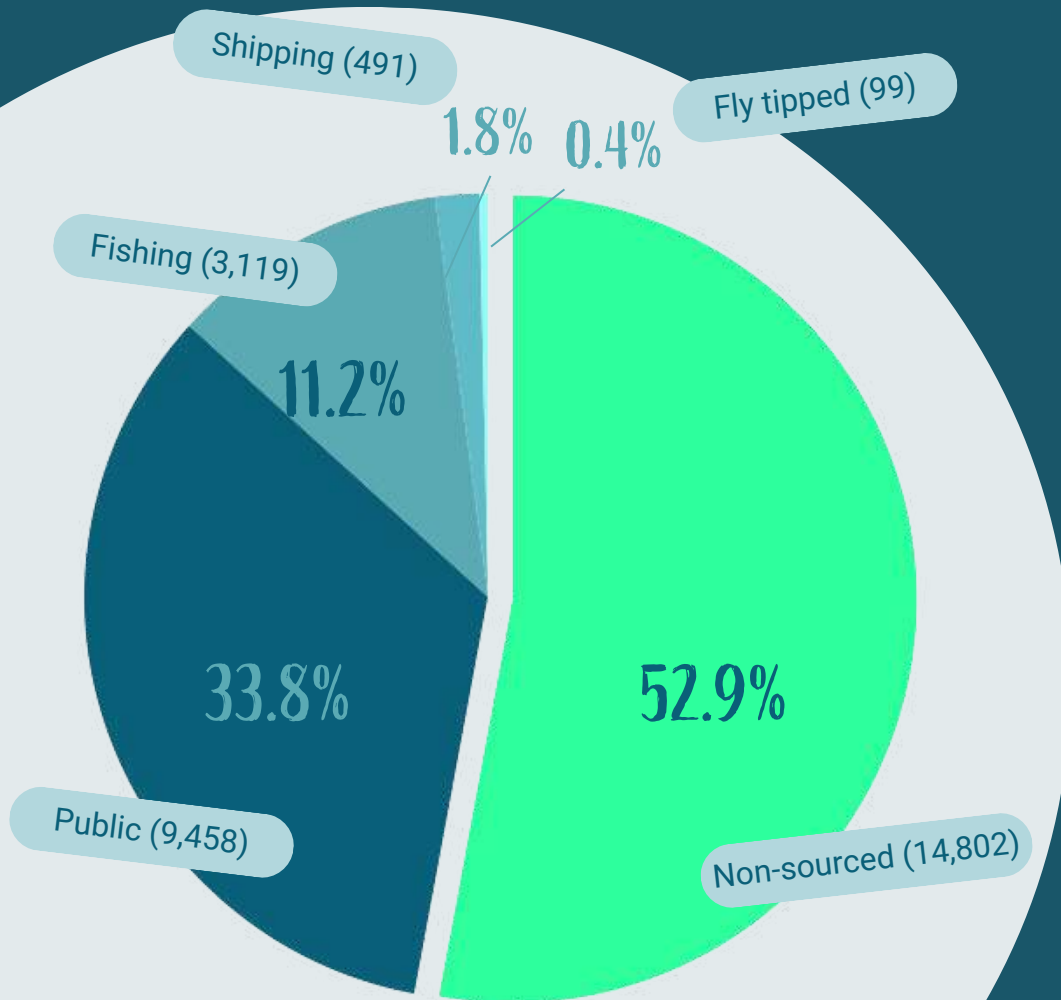


FIGURE 21: ESTIMATED SOURCES OF LOCAL MARINE LITTER

The source of **52.9%** of marine litter surveyed was recorded as **unknown**.

It is hard to know exactly where the items washing up on our shores have come from, but educated guesses can be made such as cigarette butts being a public source, rope being a fishing source, and construction material from fly tipping.

Waste from shipping can often be identified by the foreign language on items found, such as plastic water bottles. Richard Lord is currently compiling a photo database recording foreign shipping litter. Food wrappers, cutlery and other takeaway items can often be identified as public as they appear to have been abandoned on the beach recently.



Raising Awareness of Plastic Pollution: The Fill a Fish Project

We are excited to have been chosen by Suntera Global to help them to replicate, in Guernsey, a project which they have previously completed in the Isle of Man. The aim of the project is to **raise awareness of plastic pollution in our marine environment.**

This is to be done by involving many in the community in placing sculptures in locations around our coastline, which are designed to be receptacles for plastic bottles. The photographs show examples of sculptures already in place in the Isle of Man.

The project will involve all the primary schoolchildren in the island in a competition to design the sculptures. It is anticipated that four of the successful designs will then be created by engineering students at the College of Further Education and located in sites around our shores where the public can use them to deposit plastic bottles found on the beach.



The sculptures will be prominent structures and will include information for the public on the plastic pollution problem. The public involvement will be considerable as it will extend to all primary school children, their schools, the CoFE, Douzaines, the Planning Department, Agriculture and Land Management, Deputies, Guernsey Arts and all those who use the sculptures or simply pass them when out and about. They should be an attractive and informative method of highlighting the plastic pollution issues for years to come and the data collected on the numbers of plastic bottles will be valuable.



CURRENT CET POLICY OBJECTIVES:

Single-Use Plastics Ban

In November 2022 we launched a petition to the States of Guernsey seeking legislation to ban the import and sale of single-use plastic bags and single-use plastic items that have already been banned in all EU countries. We also petitioned for the States to adopt plastic free policies within government. The petition was signed by 2,258 supporters.

We have subsequently been in correspondence with the president of E&I in the course of which we have addressed the reasons why it is not sufficient for Guernsey to await the full implementation of the EU Directive in England and the other nations making up the UK. This is because bans on the import and sale of SUPs in England and/or the other UK nations has no effect on the importing or sale of such products in Guernsey, which is a separate jurisdiction requiring its own legislation to bring about these changes.

In response to the suggestion that there would be considerable delay involved in legislating in Guernsey because drafting by the Law Officers takes years, we drafted the legislation necessary to bring about the ban and presented it to the States. The draft legislation is modelled on the Isle of Man legislation which is now in operation. A copy is available on our website.

We have been offered a meeting to consider the way forward and continue to press for that to be arranged. Realistically, we are expecting that little more will happen before the election next year. But we remain determined to press for a ban on SUPs.



© Gary McHale



CURRENT CET POLICY OBJECTIVES:

Smoke Free Beaches

Cigarette butts are the most littered item on the planet.⁴ It is estimated that 122 tonnes of smoking related litter is created every day. The table shows the annual position on Guernsey beaches:

Cigarette data	2021	2022	2023
Cigarette butts	7,275	10,864	2,550
Total number of marine litter items	48,924	39,944	27,969
% of marine litter that is cigarette butts	14.9%	27.2%	9.1%

FIGURE 22: CIGARETTE DATA OVER THE YEARS



The table shows a significant number of cigarette butts are discarded on our beaches. Cigarette butts were the single largest individual item of waste found in 2022. The number of butts found in 2022 is considerably greater than in 2021. Although fewer butts were found in 2023, this does not necessarily mean that fewer are present on our beaches. This is because many of our surveys in 2023 were carried out by individuals with the result that the average number of volunteers per survey was comparatively low and is likely to have resulted in fewer butts being found.

Many butts dropped in the streets fall into drains, gutters, doulits or other water courses and eventually find their way into the sea. Butts dropped on or near our shores are blown or washed into the sea.

Contrary to popular belief, cigarette butts are not biodegradable. They contain plastic in the form of cellulose acetate. Butts can take up to 10 years to break down, but the cellulose acetate fibres remain in the environment as micro plastics for decades and find their way into the atmosphere and the guts of marine species.

⁴ <https://theconversation.com/cigarette-butts-are-the-forgotten-plastic-pollution-and-they-could-be-killing-our-plants-119958>



Cigarette butts also contain harmful chemicals including arsenic, lead and nicotine that pollute our seas and endanger animals. A scientific study concluded that leachate from cigarette butts is acutely toxic to both saltwater and freshwater fish species. Tests established that fish suffer a mortality rate of 50% from exposure to a dilution of 1 cigarette butt per litre of water. So, a single cigarette butt trapped in a small rockpool could be very harmful to the aquatic life trapped there.

There are also risks to young children and wild animals from direct ingestion of butts. Butts have been found in the guts of whales, dolphins, turtles, and sea birds and other animals, which have mistaken them for food. When butts are ingested this can lead to inflammation of the digestive system, a blockage in the gut and leaching of toxic chemicals into the bloodstream which can cause fatalities, with obvious impacts on biodiversity.

Many jurisdictions have recognised the threats to human health and to the marine eco system posed by butts and have responded by banning smoking on some or all of their shores.

We consider the time has come for Guernsey to ban smoking on our shores. This can be achieved by a simple change in the current law governing smoking in public places.

We began a dialogue with the States of Guernsey during 2023 on the possibility of banning smoking on Guernsey's beaches.

Our initiative dovetails with plans to improve public health by reducing smoking. Dr Nicola Brink MBE, Guernsey's Director of Public Health, wishes to achieve a reduction in smoking to 10% of our population by 2028. We agreed to join forces in seeking a ban on smoking in public places including beaches. This is something the UK government is also investigating.

We await the results of a recent survey conducted by the Health Improvement Commission and are hopeful this will show public support for banning cigarette smoking in public places including on our beaches. The data from our Marine Litter Reports will be made available in support of such proposals.



Lead Shot Pollution of Foreshore at Portinfer

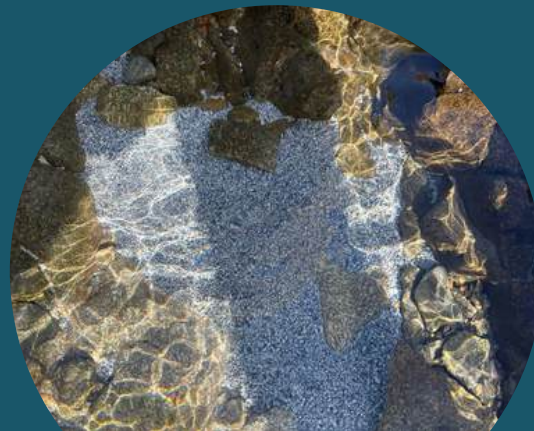
The photographs show large accumulations of lead shot in the rockpools adjacent to the clay pigeon shooting range at Portinfer. Whilst we have not attempted to obtain any empirical information on the quantity of lead shot present in the rockpools we have photographic evidence, which shows this is a serious issue.

Although the shooting club does try to collect lead shot from the rockpools our random visits show that they always contain a consistently high level of lead shot. We assume this is because any clearing of lead shot is rapidly followed by more events at the shooting ground and a resultant further build-up of lead shot. We have raised the seriousness of this marine pollution first with Agriculture, Countryside and Land Management Services and then with the Office of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation. The latter subsequently carried out a sampling exercise, which they confirmed raised concerns.

We have pointed out that other nations, such as Denmark, have banned the use of lead shot both for game shooting and target shooting. The result is that participants in both field and target shooting have been forced to use other forms of shot, which are considerably less polluting than lead. The most common alternative is steel shot.

We have met with the shooting club to discuss their approach to limiting pollution. They acknowledged that ultimately they will have to follow the general trend of moving away from using lead shot. But they appear to be in no hurry to do so.

We intend to continue pursuing this issue with a view to promoting a change from lead shot to substantially reduce the lead pollution to our marine environment caused by clay pigeon shooting.



How Can You Get Involved?

Join a beach clean

We host beach cleans and surveys every weekend, these last a couple of hours and are at a different location every week. Everyone is welcome and all the kit is provided. To find out more and where we will be each week, follow our [Facebook page](#).

Corporate beach cleans

If your organisation is interested in doing a bespoke beach clean, we offer a corporate programme. Find out more [here](#) or get in contact: hello@cleanearthtrust.org



Submit your finds

Do you wobble regularly, or are you a regular beach goer? Fill in our online survey. Every submission to the survey goes into our yearly Marine Litter Report. Individual contributions are important as they may cover beaches and bays that we haven't. If you are having trouble understanding the survey, take a look at our [Marine Litter Guide](#).



How Can You Get Involved?

Duke of Edinburgh

If you're doing bronze, silver, or gold DofE you can beach clean as part of your volunteering. Do a beach clean once a week for the allocated time for your DofE and record your finds on our survey. Find out more and sign up [here](#).



Litter Picker Lending Scheme

We have litter pickers located around the island for the public to use. We are currently expanding this list and looking for more outlets to have some pickers. If you are a kiosk, café, or community centre and would like to host some litter pickers, please get in touch.

Adopt a Patch

Our land-based litter survey can be found [here](#). If you are a land-based womble, fill in our survey with what you find whilst out and about.



About Us

The Clean Earth Trust is a local Guernsey based charity helping limit human impact on the environment. Established in 2018 by Andrew Munro, the Trust was formed following the success of its #pickitupguernsey campaign through which it won, and was nominated for, several community awards.

Since its inception the team have launched a number of initiatives to raise awareness of the growing challenges that face our natural world. We focus on community led and data driven projects that create meaningful and measurable impact, alongside campaigns that highlight important local environmental issues.

In addition to our projects and campaigns, we run outreach programmes with schools, youth organisations and corporate groups.



The Clean Earth Trust





The Clean
Earth Trust

Limiting human impact on the environment

www.cleanearthtrust.org

Guernsey registered charity CH592

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