



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

outstanding scilly

 nature  access  beauty  heritage

Beach Plastics Recycled!

By Nikki Banfield, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Communications Officer

When you spend a lot of time outside carrying random large objects around and filling up black sacks you generally attract attention. Curious bystanders pass comment on what they think you're doing, sometimes in hushed tones that they think you can't hear, and the brave ones might even pluck up the courage to ask. If they're not brave I generally pipe up with an explanation because usually what they are surmising is wrong.

One such incident happened in early October. It was a Sunday and I'd taken it upon myself to have a bit of a clean up of the boulder beaches just around the corner from Old Town in Carn Leh Cove.

It's been on my hit list for ages. I knew it was a vehicle job, having seen the number of plastic bottles and other marine debris, including a wheelie bin (!), washed up on the rocks.

As I was merrily filling bags with marine debris I heard a voice from above commenting that it was disgusting that residents and visitors to the Islands disrespected them in this way. This caused me to look up and enquire as to what the observer making the comment meant?

The response that came shocked and saddened me. The observer thought that all of the rubbish I was collecting had been discarded not only by residents but also visitors to our beautiful Islands. I explained that this was not the case and that everything I was putting into bags had washed in from the sea. But it's not the first time I've heard this type of comment and it made me think. How many other people visit our Islands, not understanding the huge issue we have with marine pollution, and think that we just leave our rubbish lying around not appreciating where we live?!

Marine debris is a huge problem here in Scilly; just this year to date through organised cleans we have removed just under TWO TONS of marine debris from our beaches and coastline (1.96 tons to be exact) and a large percentage of this is plastic (plastic bottles, plastic crates, parts of cars, fridges - many people wouldn't believe what gets "lost" or dumped at sea)

Until recently we've struggled to know what to do with it but we've now joined Terracycle's Beach Plastics Recycling Programme and have just shipped our first batch out! If you want to find out more head on over to www.ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk/news and it's the top story!



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www.ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk

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