

Is pollution damaging our Coastline? Pollution and litter has an affect on everyone and can be a major cause of damage to the coastline. The purpose of this report is to highlight what effect pollution and litter can have. An example of a beautiful coastal beach in North Wales is Aberdesach which is a sandy beach, lying halfway between Caernarfon and Pwllheli on the North coast of the Llyn Peninsula.

Aberdesach beach has round shiny pebbles, shimmering shingle and golden sand. Coastlines are always changing shape as waves and the wind wear them away.

Although Aberdesach is a beautiful beach, it is affected by litter and pollution, this is a problem that affects virtually all beaches on the coastline.

To find out what people think about litter and the coastline we did a questionnaire for people of different age groups, who were either local people walking on the beach, having a picnic with their family, or staying in the holiday chalets.

Some of the questions we asked were:

“Do you think the beach has more litter than two years ago?”

“If you saw litter on the beach would you pick it up and put it in the bin?”

“Have you ever dropped litter if you thought nobody was looking?”

After people had answered, we gave them some interesting facts which we had found on websites relating to litter and pollution:

- There are two pieces of litter for every footstep you take on beaches in Wales.
- Plastic litter on beaches has increased 121% since 1994.
- One piece of litter is found on every 50cm stretch of beach.

Many people were shocked by the above facts, the most common response was “What can we do to help avoid pollution and litter?”



Aberdesach beach

So what can be done to help? People can damage the natural environment by being careless and sometimes irresponsible. **The main causes of damage to the coastal environment are:**

- Pollution. Large amounts of sewage, rubbish and industrial waste are dumped into the sea every single day, either deliberately or accidentally.
- Litter comes from many sources such as humans, fishing activities, sewage pipes and maritime shipping; however it can all be prevented.
- Oil which spills from ships, or from illegally washing out their tanks, can harm sea animals.
- Litter looks horrible on the beach and is dangerous for wildlife and seabirds. Seabirds often mistake floating plastic and litter for food.
- Plastic just breaks down into small pieces which never biodegrades. It is found amongst sand grains on the beach.
- Over 90% of birds found dead around the Coastline have plastic in their stomachs. More than 1,700 balloons or pieces of balloons were found on 374 beaches around the United Kingdom.

You can help protect the coast by taking your litter home or putting it in the green litter bins at Aberdesach.

- Dropping litter on the street can get washed down the drain where it could end up in the sea or on the beach.
- Fires can be devastating to wildlife and habitats. Be careful not to drop a match or smouldering cigarette, as they can cause dangerous fires as well as littering the environment.
- Pouring cooking oil down the sink causes more pollution around the world than oil tanker disasters.
- Cotton buds flushed down the toilet can sometimes end up in the sea or on the beach where they can harm wildlife.

Everyone likes to go to the beach as they are beautiful places to visit. Some beaches are given Blue Flag Awards for having very clean water which is safe to swim in. So next time you go for a walk on the beach, you can help to ensure it does not become littered with plastic bottles, crisp packets and dead sea birds by taking your litter home and by being aware that whatever you put down your sink and toilet could eventually end up in the sea.

Although we only interviewed a small number of people, they did say that our questions and facts had made them think. Every person we interviewed said that they would pass on the message to their friends and family about the effect that litter and pollution is having on the coastline.



Balloons released harmlessly, still create litter for the environment.



Timber pallet washed off a ship.

Main Reporter: Melissa Lambe. Aged 13 Assistant Reporter: Efa Evans. Aged 12

Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle