

Polzeath Marine Conservation Group



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Newsletter 2019



polzeath.marine.group



@Polzeathmarine



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polzeathmc@gmail.com

www.polzeathmarineconservation.com

A message from the chair

2019 has been a fantastic year for the group with lots of work being carried out on both the inside and outside of the marine centre, this has made the centre much easier to see from the road and even the beach and has greatly increased the footfall in a year when a general contention has been that the village didn't seem quite as busy in August as normal. A massive thank you to donors for supporting this, (mentioned at end of newsletter) and to Jules and Dis Disbury, Jules and Adrian Stenning, Tess and Mark Beaumont, Hugh Toland and James Ollerhead for all their help with the painting both inside and out in freezing conditions, and to Mike Alford for mending the constant leak through the door, I don't think any of us realised what a massive difference it would make. We can now talk to large groups including disabled and children in pushchairs off the road and carry out our ever popular craft sessions outside safely.

This year Wadebridge school applied for funding to raise money to buy us a trommel to sift the micro plastic out of the sand, this has been a fantastic if a little labour intensive tool to use during school visits to the beach and the main focus of this summer. The children were shocked to see how much micro plastic was on what looks like a very clean beach. We have picked up over 27,000 pieces of micro plastic-under 5mm pieces-1.8 kg of slightly bigger pieces of plastic and 308g of tiny bits of broken up netting and fishing line. I seriously think the beach will be multi coloured in 100 years time, but we will carry on regardless as all bits picked will save a creature ingesting or injuring themselves on it.

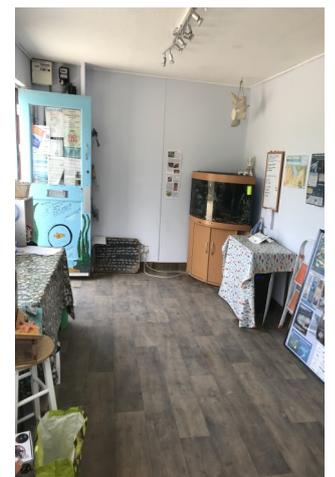
Before



During



After



The Aquarium Our aquarium has once again been a massive success this year. The fact that the Snakelocks cloned itself was not only fantastic, but the fact that we got the fission on camera was truly miraculous. Check the link below! Our strawberry anemone was very fat this year and eating whatever he could get! Our highlights were our 5 bearded rocklings that caused trouble at feeding time, especially Reggie. Our Sea scorpions caused all kind of fun by hiding right in front of everyone's eyes, camouflaging themselves to the exact colour of the rocks. Vickie is going to have a tank over the winter to look after our enormous hermit crabs which have grown so much over the summer that they may not be able to find large enough shells in our local rock pools. At the moment we are having to import shells from Scotland! We also had a very long game of hide a seek with various small creatures in our tank, including a sea hare and a chiton. We would like to thank our very hungry topshells for keeping the tank glass clean all summer by eating all the algae, they really did sterling work. Thank you also to PARA who donated us funds to buy a Go Pro camera so that we can film the shenanigans going on in the tank and share it with all our followers on social media.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=906995529640816>



Cloned Snakelocks Anemone



Sea hare



Strawberry Anemone



Marine Discovery Day May 31st—our biggest event of the year

For the 3rd year running we were blessed with a beautiful, hot day and a packed beach. The tides didn't allow us to have a rockpool ramble so instead we had a rocky shore beach explore which was much enjoyed. There were also demonstrations by RNLI, and BLMLR, a litter picking and trommeling activity, treasure hunt and the ever popular and fiercely contested sand sculpture competition. 22 local voluntary groups and organisations attended and the beach looked totally amazing with everyone's gazebos erected each showing their area of interest. We are so grateful to everyone involved in making the day the most successful ever, particularly Sarah Stevens NT ranger for the organising of the day and Dis Disbury for the many hours spent preparing the treasure hunt and so much more, we absolutely couldn't do it without you.



Mega Beach Cleans March and September

Both of the Mega Beach Cleans were held on really wet days, but that didn't stop a good turnout at both. We also used our new trommel to show people how much micro plastic is hidden in the sand. Luckily we were able to have tea, pasties and cake inside our newly renovated marine centre, thank you so much to Barnecutts for supplying these.



5th September—Big Beach Day

On a slightly blustery but sunny September day we attended The Big Beach Day on Polzeath beach, which was organised by Cornwall Council. Even though not as big as in previous years it was such fun. We held a sandcastle competition with some rather amazing designs and also did some trommel work with different groups focusing on the safety and how a trommel works and the showing the end results. All our helpers were absolutely amazed that such clean looking sand contained so much micro plastic. It was also the first outing of our new feather flag, which this years summer ranger's designed! It looks brilliant and vibrant, and stood up to the blustery wind very well, so we have popped a few more on order! Look out for them when you are on the beach next summer.

We had a lovely day filled with smiles and songs, hope to see them all again next year.



Get crafty and Ranger events

This summer not only did Kathy and Di run the weekly Wednesday craft sessions but our summer rangers did a Sunday event which consisted of art ideas to upcycle plastic bottles, and here are some end results of our jelly fish making with some very happy artists.



19th September—Fundraising Quiz

On the 19th of September, we joined up with the Polzeath Area Residents Association to hold a fabulous quiz. The aim was to bring our local businesses and community together and have some fun after the chaos of summer. All the funds raised will be split between the PARA and PMCG. We would like to thank everyone who attended, Jamie and the team at Waterfront/Sandbar for hosting and feeding us on the night, Sharps Brewery and Ocean Blue for donating prizes and especially David Atfield the quiz master for preparing the super difficult questions and keeping control of the proceedings including monitoring little peeps at Google to help out with the answers.



Rockpool Rambles!

2019 Rockpool Rambles resulted in many treasures! We managed 14 Rockpool rambles this year with a total of 494 guests! On each ramble everyone got stuck in with our upcycled scoops trying to find crabs, fish, starfish and anything else that moved. Our brilliant volunteers helped them ID all the wonderful creatures they found. We had many stars of the season including; 5 bearded rocklings, cushion stars, Montagues crabs, the most exciting find being St Piran's crabs. Of course we also found lots of other common species, such as shore crabs, shannies, blennies, topshells, periwinkles, whelks, anemones and a range of seaweeds. We have had such wonderful feedback from our guests on the Rockpool rambles and we hope to see you all next year on more amazing Rambles! Dates to be confirmed, if you're a member you will get sent the dates next year, if not then keep a close eye on social media.

St Piran's crab - *Clibanarius erythropus*

Our 12 week ranger Sammy brought a hermit crab back to the tank which was then ID by Charlie our 6 week ranger. The St Piran's hermit crab hasn't been seen on this coastline since 1967 when the oil tanker, the Torrey Canyon was wrecked between Cornwall and the Isle of Scilly. This find resulted in mass excitement not only at the centre but at Cornwall Wildlife trust ,with every subsequent rock pool ramble focusing on finding more. Over the summer we found 6 different St.Pirans which is very promising start to this species comeback in the north of Cornwall!



Charlie with a starfish



An armful of star fish



This picture to the right shows how effective our net curtain bags made by Kathy are. Not only do we Rockpool Ramble but each family has a bag to collect rubbish on route. This picture was of the rubbish picked up out of just the rockpools on one rockpool ramble



School visits

We had 7 school visits this year, with the outside area being used as a safe base. Our main focus was looking at micro plastics and trommeling which was kindly donated to us by Wadebridge secondary school. Everyone including the staff and volunteers were shocked at how many micro plastics we found on our 'clean' beach. This was an important educational lesson due to most of the children already knowing about litter and recycling so it the next step forward in environmental education.

When tides allowed we conducted a rockpool ramble which is always the highlight for the children, especially the ones that had never been to the beach/rockpools before.

Quizzes, sandcastles, and litter picking were also carried out to keep engagement high.

We want to thank our artistic volunteer Dis for the quizzes and the jigsaws—a secret talent there!



Volunteer beach Rangers

This summer we have been lucky enough to have supported 2 university students to enable them to volunteer with us throughout the summer. Sammy for 12 weeks and Charlie for 6. They have been totally brilliant in very different ways, as they are like chalk and cheese, and I hope they have learnt as much from us and from the experience as we have from them about all things social media and marine biological. The village is a much quieter place without you both!



We have had an amazing year—hope you have too!

2019 Donors and supporters

We have been wonderfully supported this year by our kind donors and supporters. A massive thank you to all the organisations and people who have given us donations. In alphabetical order. Aviva, Bridge Bistro, Cornwall Council, Fletcher family, Malcolm Barnecutt, National Trust, Polzeath Area Residents Association, Spar, St. Minver Highlands and Lowlands Parish Councils, St Minver Link Magazine, Tesco's, The Waterfront, Tubestation, Valley Caravan Park, WREN, and to all our members who continue to support us and of course our wonderful volunteers and committee who between them have donated more than **4000 hours. Non of what we do would be possible without everyone of you.**

Rogues gallery of our fantastic volunteers

