



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

outstanding scilly

 nature  access  beauty  heritage

Life's a beach...clean!

By Natalie Rance, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Marine Ranger

"Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming whether you like it or not."

- Greta Thunberg, United Nations General Assembly 2019

Unless you've been hiding under a rock for the past year you've no doubt heard of the infamous climate strikes driven by young people who want to make a difference. One such young woman is 16-year old climate and environmental activist Greta Thunberg - the brains behind the #FridaysForFuture climate strikes which have taken place all across the world, including here in beautiful Scilly.

The climate strikes have been met with much controversy, yet despite popular belief, the sake of the strikes is not for youngsters to bunk off school but founded upon the principle that **no one is too small to make a difference!** Think about it...why should children study for a future that may not exist if the world doesn't wake up to the imminent danger our planet is in? Why should they put effort into becoming educated when our governments refuse to listen to the educated who are telling them we need to act now?! How else are they supposed to be taken seriously and attract the attention of those within power, pushing them to drive the change our environment needs?



Students on Scilly partaking in the global

#FridaysForFuture climate strikes



That is a question that the IOS Environmental Group are hoping to answer. Founded by four friends with a shared passion for our planet, the group was formed earlier this year with the aim of determining what these forward-thinking students could do to make a difference to our planet and the peril it faces.

Enthusiastic students Fraser Clark, Freya Jenkins, Isla Hicks and Toby Hicks formed the IOS Environmental Group earlier this year, "We formed a group back in September without really realising. All four of us are keen sailors and we'd sail about twice a week together." Impassioned by the clout of the global #FridaysForFuture climate strikes, Fraser told me that their conversations often turned to the present environmental crisis, "We had many discussions about the climate and we all agreed it was a big problem and we wanted to fix it."

Driven by their shared goal, in early October the group met with Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Communications Officer Nikki Banfield to discuss ways in which they may be able to help. All four were keen to run environment-centric events to raise awareness of the climate crisis and try to contribute towards a possible solution. Backed with the support of the Trust, the group decided to coordinate a community beach clean at Porthloo, St. Mary's.

On Saturday 24th November (not a school day I might hasten to add), alongside the support of family and friends, the four students took to the beach to begin clearing washed up ocean debris from our shores. Most of us will be no stranger to the concept of a beach clean and are fully aware of how important they are in decreasing pollution in the marine environment. Despite this, the scale of the problem can often seem a daunting and never-ending prospect, with new litter being washed up on our shores every day!

This is a task that the IOS Environmental Movement were determined not to be phased by, and the keen activists spent a rather chilly couple of hours on a crisp morning down at Porthloo collecting and categorising washed up marine litter to enable the material to be recycled. The students cleared a huge amount of debris from the beach including piping, tyres, bottles and rope to name just a few! Some items had even travelled from as far away as China!

Given my line of work as Marine Ranger for the Trust, I can only agree that the sheer scale of the problem can seem overwhelming, but the only way we can tackle it is if we all pitch in together. We should all take inspiration from this young group and simply do what we can. The solution to our environmental crisis doesn't lie in a handful of people doing things perfectly, but in millions of people doing things imperfectly. We all need to do our own little bit and stop criticising each other for what we do wrong, but rather encourage others to contribute to the solution in whatever way they are able and celebrate what we are doing right!

For regular updates
follow them on social media...

Instagram:
@_isles_of_scilly_

Facebook:
Isles of Scilly Environmental
Movement



Isles of Scilly
Wildlife Trust

@ScillyWildlife

@ScillyAONB | @ScillyWildlife | @PlasticFreeIOS

ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk

Registered charity number 1097807

ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk



Funded by:
ISLES OF SCILLY
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty