

Beach clean-up FAQ

Is the plastic pollution dangerous?

The plastic pellets or nurdles are not toxic but can pose a risk to wildlife and other animals if ingested, which is why we're cleaning up as much as possible. Please keep dogs on leads for now and don't touch any nurdles you find. Our clean-up team are wearing gloves and using litter pickers as a reasonable precaution because they're handling the waste.

Should I stay off the beaches for now?

It's still fine to visit. All we ask is you continue to take care with anything that you come across on the beach. It is a good idea to keep off the tide line so that you aren't making the plastic more buried, or moving it about on the beach. Please keep dogs on leads for now and don't touch any nurdles you find.

Did any fuel wash up from the collision?

So far, there is no evidence of this. Some of the burnt clumps of nurdles might give off an odour like fuel but that's simply because plastic is a product that is made from oil and can smell strongly when heated or burned.

Can I volunteer to help with the clean-up?

The borough council are cleaning the large pieces of plastic. There will be an opportunity to help when we start nurdle clean up.

Should I report any plastic pollution I come across?

Please call Humber Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre on 0344 382 0580 or email zone8@hmcg.gov.uk - If possible, please provide a 'What Three Words' location or a grid reference to assist HM Coastguard to identify the exact location. We are doing surveys of beaches in our area to identify areas that need cleaning. This clean-up operation will likely take a few weeks as we have a large coastline to cover and further waste might wash up during that time, so please bear with us as we move from beach to beach.

How are you removing the smallest pieces of plastic?

We are carrying out tests for the best methods. This is likely to involve sieving so that only nurdles are removed. This may be where volunteers could help for the long-term clean up.

Who is part of the clean up?

The borough council is working with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and their contractors, ITOPF (a non-profit specialist), Norfolk County Council, the Environment Agency, local nature and wildlife groups and other emergency response agencies

What other areas are affected, and how are protected habitats being cleaned?

We are communicating with other councils to share knowledge, and working with North Norfolk District Council on their cleanup. Also with RSPB, Natural England, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and English Nature to make sure our efforts are co-ordinated and sensitive habitats and wildlife are protected.

Please follow "Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk News & Events" on Facebook for ongoing updates.