

Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners



N.A.R.C
**NEPTUNE'S
ARMY OF
RUBBISH
CLEANERS**

Helping to keep the
underwater world
litter free



“Most Admired Voluntary Organisation in Wales 2009”



Annual Report 2013 -14



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Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners Committee

David Kennard, Chairman

David Jones, Secretary/Fund raising

Ceri Jones, Safety and Diving Officer

Meg Pugh, Public Relations Officer

David Jones/David Kennard, Treasurers

Annual Report by David Jones

1. INTRODUCTION

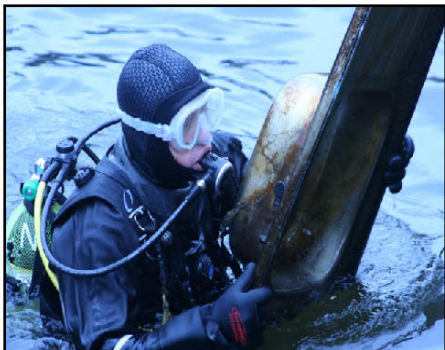
This annual report has been produced to provide not only a yearly progress update but a background to Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners (NARC). The report covers our underwater clean-up events, our efforts in raising awareness of marine litter and the impacts it can have, other work, and our future plans. The finance section is included primarily for our funders but also for any potential funders and supporters.

1.1 ABOUT US

While the impacts of litter washed up or left on our shoreline can easily be seen, the same cannot be said for marine litter that is below the surface of the ocean. NARC is a voluntary group of divers and non divers with a passion for keeping the underwater environment in Pembrokeshire as pristine as it should be. Since its inception in 2005 by local diver Dave Kennard and Keep Wales Tidy the group has carried out over 100 underwater clean-ups and a number of awareness raising events.



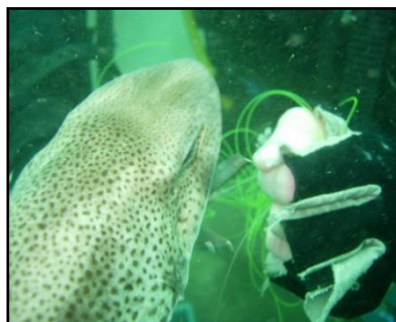
NARC can be found at a number of sites along the coastline throughout the diving season, collecting litter that is often having a negative impact on the habitat and the wildlife it supports. Divers descend in buddy pairs armed with scissors, bags, trays, lifting bags and a great belief in what they are doing. Dives can last almost an hour in which litter is collected, bagged and sent to the surface for retrieval by a support boat.



The diversity of litter found on dives is staggering with mobile phones, shopping trolleys, bicycles, revolving chairs, skate boards, batteries and quite literally the kitchen sink! The highest presence of litter is from recreational fishing with weights, rods, hooks and endless amounts of line retrieved from dives all around the county.

The impacts upon wildlife are only too apparent with fishing line often cut from spider crabs and lobsters, dog fish released from hooks and lost crab pots ghost fishing. The litter can also

be a hazard to divers and other water users. Once retrieved the various items are cleaned, sorted, recorded and recycled where possible.



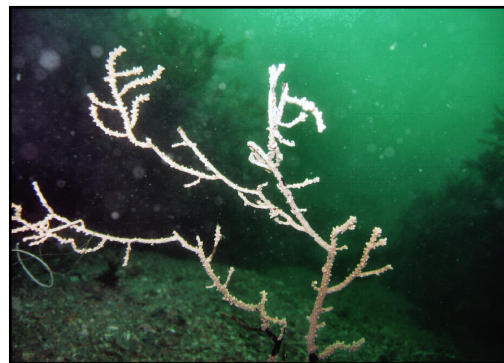
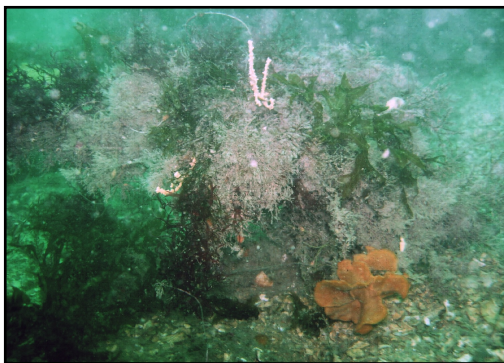
1.2 THE BENEFITS

The group is doing its best to reduce the amount of litter in the underwater environment. By removing foreign objects from the sea bed NARC helps make the underwater environment a cleaner and safer place for wildlife and other water users. We believe the following benefit from NARC's actions:

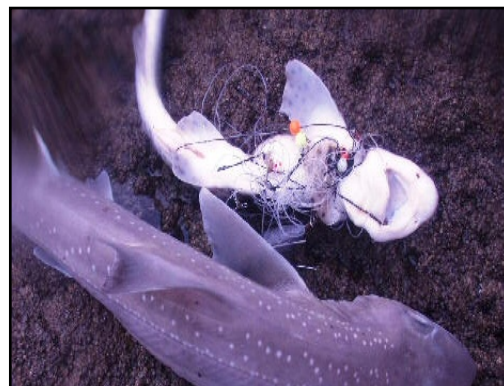
- Marine wildlife - less entanglement potential/ decrease in potential ghost fishing from lost commercial fishing gear
- Bathers - less sharp and entangling hazards
- Divers - less entanglement hazards from lost line, ropes, nets
- Leisure craft users - Less chance of entanglement to propellers etc
- Anglers - a reduction in seabed litter decreases the chance of further entanglement

It is not only the obvious marine wildlife such as seabirds and seals that benefit from less marine litter. Pink seafans are a warm water soft-coral at the northern limit of their geographical distribution in Pembrokeshire. They grow at less than 5mm per year and can live for over a hundred years. They are specially listed for conservation action in the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Two of the pictures below show a seafan covered in lost angling line which had been trapped by a discarded soft drink can. The second shows it after fifteen minutes effort to cut it free of lost line.



A skip of fly tipped rubbish found in Pembrokeshire's Marine SAC



Entangled Smooth Hound and Dogfish at Stackpole

2. RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT UNDERWATER LITTER

NARC was formed by concerned divers who had become aware of the increasing amount of litter they found underwater and the damage caused to marine habitats and wildlife. Whilst also carrying out underwater clean-up events the group are always looking for more proactive ways to limit the amount of Marine Litter.

Raising awareness of the issue is an important part of the work.

Since its inception NARC has:

- Produced leaflets which are available from most dive centres in Pembrokeshire
- Set up a website – www.narc-cc.org.uk
- Given educational talks about marine litter to community groups and schools
- Visited Ireland, funded by Keep Wales Tidy, to promote the idea to Irish dive clubs
- Produced 4 awareness raising videos
- Produced two ground breaking site specific leaflets providing visiting anglers with tackle tips on how to minimise tackle loss and underwater maps
- Assisted the Marine Conservation Society with the “hang on to your tackle campaign” sitting on the working group and providing advice on tackle bin placement
- Linked in with wider initiatives e.g. Ghost Fishing, Plastic Oceans, School projects

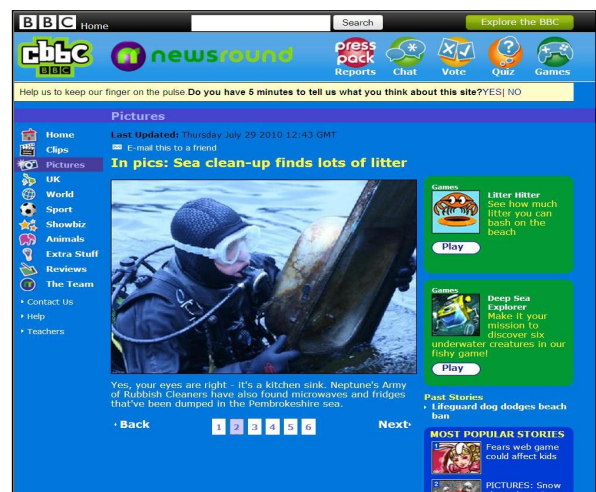
The group also uses local and national media to help raise awareness of marine litter and has had coverage on the BBC National UK news at ONE, BBC The One Show, HTV Welsh News, Newyddion, BBC Wales Today, BBC XRAY, Channel 4 Born to be Wild, BBC Wildlife Detectives and a number of National radio stations and newspapers.



BBC website covering NARC work



National Coverage on BBC UK News at One



NARC on the CBBC Newsround website

3. RECOGNITION OF NARC'S WORK

In its first year, NARC won the Beach Improvement category and the Peter Cambridge Trophy for voluntary organisations and schools working to improve their local environment in Keep Wales Tidy's Tidy Wales Awards 2006.

In 2009 NARC were voted the "Most Admired Voluntary Organisation in Wales" by the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action. This is one of the most prestigious awards for the voluntary sector.



NARC - the Most Admired Voluntary Organisation in Wales

In 2010 NARC were finalists in the Keep Wales Tidy Awards in the "Long Term Effort" category and in 2012 were chosen as one of 20 National projects to celebrate 20 years of Environment Wales.

Endorsements of NARC's work from NARC supporters

Sue Burton Pembrokeshire SAC Officer (Special Area of Conservation)

"Not only are the members of N.A.R.C. doing their individual bit to help make the marine environment a cleaner and more natural place to be, for themselves and fellow users (divers/fishermen..), but they are also improving the environment for the wildlife. N.A.R.C s activities help to fulfil some of the required actions from the Pembrokeshire Marine S.A.C Management scheme (under refuse and litter , and raising awareness).It is for this reason that the relevant authorities group for the S.A.C. chose to help fund some of N.A.R.C. s activities in 2007."

Simon Preddy (KEEP WALES TIDY)

"N.A.R.C. has made an invaluable contribution to the Pride in Our Communities project within Pembrokeshire. They have raised the awareness of the problem of fly-tipping around our waterways and undertaken activities to clean up the mess. The divers have willingly and consistently given their time to help improve our local environment."

JIMMY McVEIGH AN TAISCE (Clean coast Officer)

"As part of the Clean Coasts Project David Kennard of N.A.R.C. came over to Ireland to teach Irish divers, including members of the Irish Underwater Councils about how to conduct underwater clean ups. This was a very successful exchange of knowledge and a number of dive groups have undertaken clean ups since N.A.R.C's visit. Their presentation was very informative and left the Irish divers with the required skills to conduct clean ups of their own. We hope that N.A.R.C will be able to make it over to Ireland in the future to give further presentations, their enthusiasm for the protection and preservation of the marine environment is infectious."

Kate Lock (Skomer Marine Nature Reserve)

"N.A.R.C volunteers do a superb job of clearing the sea bed of litter including miles of angling line, bucket loads of lead weights and fishing pots. The litter if not cleared and kills and damages marine

life. Monofilament line tangles fish and crabs and also cuts into the soft tissue of sponges and corals like the pink sea fan,(a UK protected species).Public awareness of the damage caused by marine litter is needed and N.A.R.C. plays a key role in promoting the awareness through their work. In the Skomer Marine Nature Reserve we are particularly grateful of the efforts of N.A.R.C. where the quantities of lost tackle below popular angling sites is of concern."

Gill Bell (Marine Conservation Society)

"N.A.R.C. has been very supportive of M.C.S. activities within Wales and in addition to promoting marine conservation, B.A.P. species recording and sustainable fishing through the Good Fish Guide, they have also carried out two underwater clean surveys as part of the M.C.S. Beachwatch 2008 weekend"

Dr Lou Luddington, (Marine Biologist , Marine Conservation Society & NARC Volunteer)

" I find it very distressing seeing litter when I am diving or snorkelling, especially if there is potential for entanglement or damage to marine life. Volunteering with NARC gives me the chance to clear up some of this litter as part of an effective team whilst also raising public awareness of the problem. Discarded or lost anglers line and tackle are a particular problem at popular angling spots. Part of NARC's role is to highlight this problem and encourage anglers to reduce loss of tackle by using the appropriate lead weights (ones without barbs for rocky coastal fishing areas) or by switching to biodegradable fishing line and lures. This is a fantastic hands-on project which I am proud to support!"

David Jones, (Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum & NARC Secretary)

"As someone who not only enjoys and appreciates the marine environment in my spare time I'm lucky in that my career involves me in Coastal Zone Management. Marine policy and projects can take a long time to develop where the outputs and outcomes are often time consuming and difficult. One of the many things I love about volunteering with NARC is that your work is instant, gratifying and really does make a difference. In just one dive you can free entangled wildlife and improve the habitat. I'm really proud of our partnership working especially with the Pembrokeshire and Welsh Federation of Angling Coaches in producing site specific tackle tips leaflets for anglers."

4. 2013-14 HIGHLIGHTS

Long Mathew Point/Barafundle Ledges 06 April

The dedication/slight madness that seems to be thriving in NARC volunteers was evident again at a cold start to our 2103 clean-up campaign. Whilst the sane amongst us were donning hats and scarves 11 volunteers jumped on board Volsung and headed to South Pems. The sun was shining above the waves but that's where any slight warmth ended. A 7 degree water temperature tested everyone's dedication as did the 1 metre viz. However a new site was searched and 1 dive later saw 70 weights sent to the surface.

Next up came Barafundle ledges, a popular stretch for anglers near one of the most spectacular beaches in the country. With new kelp growth at a minimum very little line and lures were found. However an amazing haul of 450

angling weights found their way into our trays and onto the boat via lifting bags. Thanks to Louie for heading up the recording effort. A curry and a few beers were needed to thaw out the troops!



Low Point/Wooltack Point 07 April

An early departure from Dale once again found the yellow ball in the sky doing its thing. It was a pretty rough trip as the wind whipped up the sea surface and the swell maxed out around St Annes Head. Low Point within Skomer MNR was the first dive where 6 volunteers dropped in to locate 100 weights, bottles, a rod tip and small amounts of line.

The second dive at Wooltack Point turned out be a great dive. 2 metre viz and a fantastic dive site, 1 of our buddy pairs had trouble getting down due to ear issues so the team of 4 bagged 70 weights in an hour or so. A fantastic start to the year and a great effort by all including a new volunteer! Hopefully it's warmer from here on in. I hope so, as I'm definitely not brave enough until the water temp sees at least 13 degrees!!

Folly Farm May 24th

NARC was delighted to be chosen as Folly Farm's newest conservation partner. The Pembrokeshire based Zoo opened its brand new state of the art Penguin Coast on May 24th with the Minister Edwina Hart carrying out the formalities. We were in attendance for the opening where interpretation panels describing the work of NARC and the impacts of marine litter have been developed by Folly Farm. This exciting partnership will raise awareness of our efforts in trying to keep our undersea world litter free.



Stackpole Bioblitz May 25th

NARC were really pleased to be involved in the fantastic Bioblitz event held at Stackpole Quay <https://www.facebook.com/stackpole.bioblitz>. A fantastic weekend of recording species which is an annual UK event. 4 NARC volunteers were joined by 4 members of Ammanford Sub Aqua Club who not only got stuck in to record species and collect marine litter but also kindly provided the boat. 120 weights, line, hooks, cans, bottles, a rod piece and 1 entangled spider crab released. Add that to the underwater species found and recorded plus some sunshine equalled smiles all round. A big thanks to Rhi from the National Trust for her help in getting the boat and vehicle back online!

Hobbs Point June 29th

8 volunteers jumped into the murky waters off Hobbs Point to carry out the bi-annual (sometimes more!) clean-up at a site that seems to attract fly-tipping. This part of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC is infamous for its bad viz and challenging conditions. Once again bad visibility played a huge part leaving our dive team requiring dedication, patience and batteries in the torches! A great effort saw lifting bags bring 6 lost lobster pots to the surface, a fishing rod, boat cable, bottles, cans and the obligatory scooter, handed back to a friendly kid. 2 shore crew were on hand to assist as were the Maritime Volunteer Service who kindly provided boat cover once again.

Skomer MNR – Plastic Oceans July

We were really pleased to be involved with Plastic Oceans <http://www.plasticoceans.net/> which is a global project looking at the impacts of plastic in our seas. David Jones joined 4 volunteers on a clean-up of Skomer MNR with a blue sky and good viz making things much brighter than our last clean-up dive. 30 plus weights, line, hooks, bottles and cans were bagged in a quick dive leaving David with an idea of what we do and hopefully a continuing relationship in the future.

Wooltack Point July 18th

8 volunteers dived into waters of Skomer MNR and bagged 150 weights along with bottles, cans and line. We did have a couple of mishaps which include picking Nick and Helen up off the rocks who found more than they bargained for, an unknown slate wreck! Pretty good viz enabled the volunteers to spot a Bull huss and Octopus.

Strumble Head July 20th

9 volunteers boarded Wandrin Star for a sun filled day of clean-up diving in North Pembrokeshire. Our planned dive off Strumble Head ledges had to be changed due to the strong tide making it too risky to enter the water there. On our last visit to North Pems a local fisherman told us he had lost a string of pots in a storm just South of the lighthouse so we decided to try and locate them and lessen the potential impact of ghost fishing. Some pretty good team work that involved search patterns and even Mark the skipper donning a dry suit and scuba to help, left us with 7 lobster pots and metres of rope on deck. A great team effort from 25 metres down.

Fishguard Breakwater and Pen Anglas July 21st

Another sunny morning departure from Fishguard with 10 volunteers eager to get stuck in on day 2 of our trip to North Pems. After a fantastic dive on the wreck of the [vendome](#) as a thanks to all the recent hard work we split buddy teams to cover two sites. Three pairs went in on the Breakwater and two pairs on the ledges near Pen Anglas. We spread out to cover different, previously unexplored parts of the breakwater, two of which didn't really throw up much in the way of marine

litter. We always take this as a positive. The third spot however left us with an appetite to return next year. 51 weights, 80 hooks, 2 rod pieces, 3 plastic bottles, 2 glass bottles, cans and bit of plastic were bagged. We also filled half a sack of angling line which remains in the underwater environment for decades. 2 lots lobster pots were also retrieved releasing 4 trapped spider crabs. Pen Anglas proved a bit trickier with localised strong currents bringing one dive to an end after 9 minutes and the other buddy pair getting stung by jellyfish. Even with the very challenging conditions 19 weights, 25 hooks, line and a beer can were collected. We are determined to give Pen Anglas another go next year, hopefully without raging currents and Jellyfish! We were also happy to pass on the lobster pots to a local fisherman who will repair and recycle them for use again.

Skomer MNR July 28th

New volunteers joined some of the usual crew for another clean-up in Skomer MNR. Following on from reports given to the group by a previous dive session we managed to locate and lift 2 pots from East Hook and West Hook. We also bagged some lost diving equipment and from both sites approx 120 weights.

Stackpole August 12th and Skomer MNR August 14th

NARC were chosen by BBC's The One Show to be part of their Marine stories for 2013. This was a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of marine litter and the work we do locally to try and help. Two days filming at Stackpole and Skomer hopefully gave the BBC team enough footage to highlight some of the impacts. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped pull this together and a big thanks to the super friendly BBC team who made our bit easy. Miranda and Dave made great clean-up buddy pair and we will make sure she gets a NARC T-shirt (in purple) as promised!

Low Point August 29th

On a trip back from the Langton Grange 7 volunteers dropped into the waters off Low Point. 88 weights, line, hooks, bottles, cans and various plastics were bagged in great viz. The image (right) demonstrates the impact that lost angling line can have on some of the marine wildlife found in the Marine Reserve.



Hobbs Point Sept 1st

7 keen volunteers were joined by the MVS and the Water Ranger to get stuck into our usual dip at Hobbs. For the first time in years we could actually see, with the viz approaching 6 metres! Unheard of as we usually bump our way around in pretty bad viz.

6 lobster pots, a trailer, batteries, weights, rubber, glass, cans, line and bottles were bagged and sent to the surface. A site that just keeps on surprising us with the range and diversity of the litter we found here. All within a site of European importance, the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation.

Hobbs Point Sept 29th

With the mild summer weather continuing we decided to hit Hobbs point for the second time in a month. Even after our last visit there was still plenty to find. With 10 eager volunteers and help from the water ranger and Alistair from Rudders Boat Yard we got straight down to the business of finding underwater rubbish. With viz approaching 2 metres we could actually see we were going which is not always the case at Hobbs! After 45 mins lifting bags were filled and sent to the surface and contained amongst other things: 30 weights, radio, shoes, half a bag of line, lead, a lobster phone, golf balls and 2 rod tips. We also managed a few hours work on a lazy Sunday!



Stackpole Quay 12 Oct

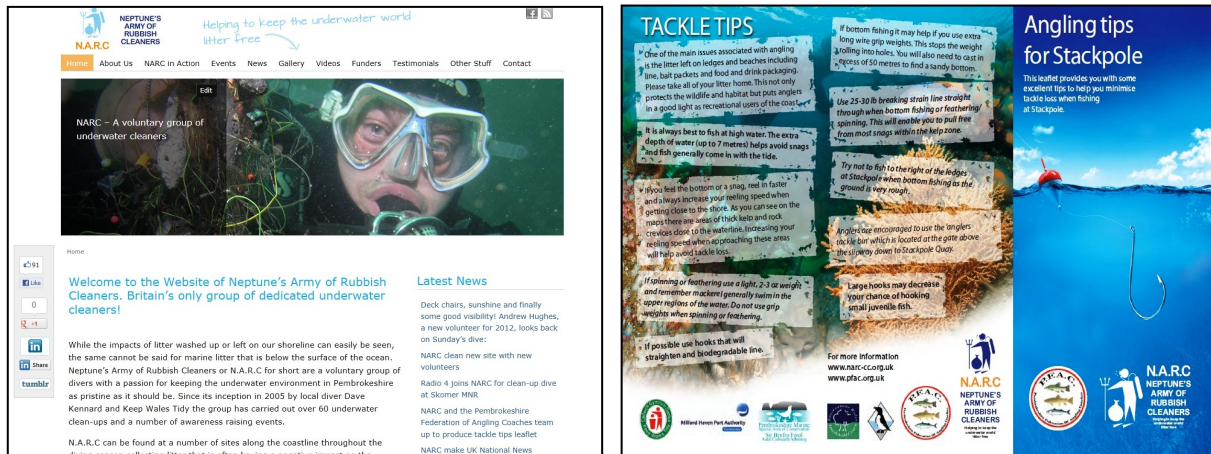
6 hardy souls endured a fairly rough trip out on Volsung extending our clean-up season into October. 188 weights, lines, spark plugs, cans and bottles were bagged at our final dive at Stackpole until next year. The fine weather has obviously seen a number of anglers at the site this year so we are looking forward to our next visit.

Skomer MNR 13 Oct

The final dive of the 2013 saw us back in the reserve again. A wonderful lush day out the boat with 5 volunteers keen as mustard. A previous report of lost pots at Tusker Rock set us a challenge for the day. After 42 metres, 2 lifting bags and an amazing effort 5 pots were sent up from the depths for Sam the skipper to collect. Low point came next where 1 buddy pair broke our record and bagged an amazing 148 weights in 1 dive. This was added to the other volunteers which gave us a total of 246 with line, hooks, cans and bottles also recorded. This event was sponsored by the Crown Estate. A superb end to one of NARC's best ever years!

4.1 OTHER WORK IN 2013-14

- Continuous updating of our project website www.narc-cc.org.uk which contains information on the group and recorded 300 hits in one day after the BBC National News Coverage.
- Distributed copies of the site specific tackle tips leaflets which have underwater maps and site specific advice for Stackpole and Skomer MNR



- Displayed boards and information at a number of events
- Collected footage at a number of clean-up dive events to produce an educational video on Marine Litter and the work of NARC
- Liaised and provided information to the National Trust, the Crown Estate and the BBC to raise awareness of marine litter
- Joined the new international network on Ghost Fishing and provided text and images <http://www.ghostfishing.org/neptunes-army-of-rubbish-cleaners/> <http://www.ghostfishing.org/initiatives/narc/>
- Entered into a Conservation partnership with Folly Farm in Pembrokeshire highlighting the work of NARC and the impacts of marine litter.
- Adopted the MCS angling litter bin at Hobbs Point
- Linked in with the Bioblitz day at Stackpole Quay
- Dived with Plastic Oceans www.plasticoceans.net/ which is a global project looking at the impacts of plastic in our seas.
- Dived with BBCs The One Show team to raise awareness of NARC and the impacts of Marine Litter attracting 4 million viewers.

5. PROJECT FINANCES

5.1 Income

Funder	Amount
Private Contribution	£750.00
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park	£500.00
South Hook LNG	£2000.00
Environment Wales	£4499.00
Total Income 2013	£7749.00
Balance carried over from 2012	£2222.53
Total Budget	£9971.53

5.2 Expenditure

Item/Services	Amount
Dive Master Insurance	£465.20
Boat Charter	£3950
Equipment e.g. Strobes/Cylinders/Trolley	£610.24
Air Fills	£690
Marketing e.g. Website/banner/printing	£790
Total Expenditure 2013	£6505.44
Total Income 2013 less Expenditure	£3466.09

6. PLANS FOR 2014-15

While 2013 was very successful in terms of fundraising (income table) the group needs to attract more support to achieve many of the aims for 2014. To successfully carry out the project plans listed below NARC needs to not only keep the kind support of our current sponsors but to attract new funders. We hope this report shows our existing sponsors the value of NARC's work and the value of their contributions to supporting it, and encourages them to continue and others to add their support.

NARC plans to celebrate its ninth year with an increased programme of clean-up events, more effort to raise public awareness about seabed litter and NARC's efforts to reduce it and to support other groups to start similar projects.

Diving/Clean-up events	Education and Awareness raising	New schemes
10 Clean-up dives are already organised for 2014 with hopefully more dates to be confirmed	Join in the BioBlitz event at Stackpole Quay	Recording slates for dive buddy teams to allow data collection to be carried out on every dive
The group are looking at new sites to explore including outside of Pembrokeshire	Continuous updating of the website which has had 1000+ visits this year	Offer clean-up services to commercial fishing sector if fishing gear is lost
Look at new equipment and collecting trays after feedback from volunteers	Continue to raise awareness and build up video footage library	Confirm/develop new partnership with Folly Farm to raise awareness of NARC and marine litter
	Design and print new marketing material e.g. Pop-up banner to display at events	

7. THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The group would like to thank all the sponsors and funders for 2013 whose support is crucial for the project to succeed.

Jo Horsley and Environment Wales
 Mari Williams and Keep Wales Tidy
 Laura/Andy and South Hook LNG
 Ryan Pratt/Fiona Wynn and the Crown Estate
 Ed

NARC would also like to thank The MVS, Andy Truelove, Mark Deane, Plumbase and all the dive clubs who kindly offer their ribs and divers.

Lastly and most importantly many, many thanks to all the NARC volunteers who freely give up their time for this good cause. Thanks to everyone for another fantastic year!