

Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door Project Report

Aim

To reduce litter on the beach as well as reduce 'wild toileting' in the caves.

Timescale

January 2021 – September 2021

Location

Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door beaches and surrounding land and car parks managed by the Lulworth Estate and Dorset Council.

Context

In 2020 after restrictions eased there was a large amount of general litter being left at the beach at Lulworth and Durdle Door, as well as 'wild toileting' at the world heritage site cliffs. This received a lot of national press at the time. Lockdown exacerbated the issue as the site was having many visitors to the bathing water. Litter Free Dorset built relationships with the Lulworth Estate and Lulworth community to help further community cohesion while working with the Lulworth Estate to install improved signage around the Durdle Door and Lulworth Cove sites, explaining where key facilities e.g., bins and public toilets are located.

Project partners

We facilitated workshops with a range of partners and stakeholders to bring together a joint approach to reducing the litter. As well as this other multi agency meetings were held in regards in visitor management to resolve other issues such as parking and the public's safety.

How key stakeholders were involved

Key stakeholders each had their part to play in the effort to reduce litter last summer at Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door beaches. These included:

- Lulworth Estate (landowner): The Lulworth estate were involved from the start of the project and LFD worked with the rangers on site. Deliverables were co-produced with the estate to make sure they were sympathetic to the location of a world heritage site as well as 'setting the right tone' for visitors.
- Lulworth Litter Scouts (community group): This community group were able to help us identify the key issues at the beginning of the project as well as keep us abreast of current local litter issues as we went on throughout the project.
- Dorset Council (local authority): Dorset Council were key in helping with general visitor management and supported us to link in with their wider summer campaign. Dorset Council Waste Services had the waste contract for the site for the 2021 season.
- Area of outstanding natural beauty team (AONB): The AONB team can link up with other AONB teams across the county to share successes on litter management and improve water quality for greater impact.

Target audience

Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door receive approximately 500,000 visitors each year. It's not uncommon for people to drive 2-3 hours to get to the world heritage site from cities such as Bristol, London, and Birmingham. Demographic for visitors is varied and include large family groups, groups of young adults and couples. The main issue in targeting this audience is that most people buy their food and beach equipment prior to arriving in Dorset and don't always understand the access and

limitations of the site (30-minute walk from beach from carpark / beach has no facilities). Ideally people should be communicated with prior to them arriving in Dorset.

Methodology

LFD began by looking at points of potential engagement (including car parks, cafes, shops, visitors' centre and toilets) and considering how the rubbish is coming to the beach and what people are allowed to take down on to the beach. We needed to review the current messaging and ensure it has a 'simple call to action', is realistic and promotes shared ownership. We looked at current operations and how many rangers were present at peak times as well as how often bins were emptied. It's important that the beaches are kept clean, and that litter doesn't start to pile up as this is when extreme littering events can occur.

Behaviour change

Reinforcing positive behaviour is key rather than negative to avoid negative group conformity. As well as this, we know people behave differently when they feel like they are being watched. A presence on the beach at peak times when litter is left is important. A carefully planned approach to signage was taken to enhance the visitor experience - there is a careful balance between effective signage and excessive signage. Temporary signage has been a necessity during the pandemic, but the effectiveness of introducing ad hoc messaging can be ineffective. This could be due to "rule fatigue" and message overload or perhaps temporary signs were simply not impactful enough in terms of content (e.g., too much emphasis on what not to do).

We used 'social norming' to encourage positive behaviour change at the beaches with the text 'Please take your rubbish home from the beach today. 99% will, YOU can make it 100%'

Key outcomes

- Workshop with all stakeholders and partners (face to face).
- Working group set up with local volunteers for litter picking activities/hot spots.
- Signage at the entrance to the World Heritage Site.
- Facility signs along walking paths to inform visitors where the last toilets, bins and refreshments are.
- Large flags for toilets and bins at the DD carpark so visitors are aware where amenities are.
- 5G boards were installed through Dorset Councils Rural 5G project with messaging around litter and access.
- Organised with Planet Purbeck to have 'Wanda the Waste warrior Fish' located at Lulworth Cove during the August Bank Holiday week.



New Welcome sign at Durdle Door on a busy August bank holiday day

The Results

The result of all of this was a significant reduction in litter collected throughout the season. Anecdotally, on most days it was seen that more litter was being generated in the car park than was being left on the beach, which although still not ideal, is much easier to deal with.

The Lulworth Estate rangers ran a visitor survey, in total surveying 329 visitors from a range of backgrounds, ages and group dynamic. This data gave us useful information to inform communications within future years. Two example questions from the visitor survey are below:

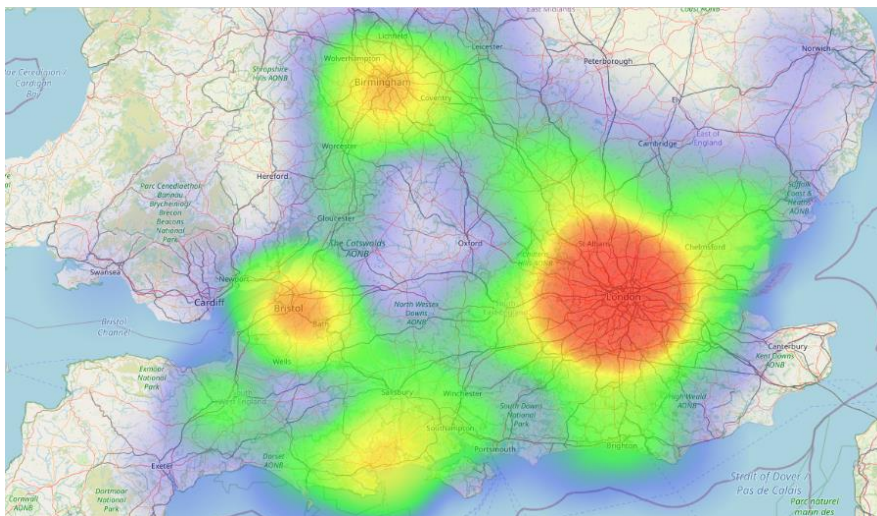
1. *How far did you travel to get here?*

- Under 30mins: 20.7%
- 30mins – 1hr: 34.8%
- 1hr-2hrs: 16.5%
- 2hrs-3hrs: 14.9%
- Over 3hrs: 13.1%

Interestingly, there was a shift from 2020 where the spread was more even (all around 20%) as visitors were escaping lockdown, but unable to stay in other accommodation were understandably travelling for day trips. The figures above still show a high proportion of visitors are travelling more than an hour to reach Durdle Door though.

2. *What is the first part of your post code?*

Data was recorded and then pinned on a heatmap postcode plotter as seen below:



As might be expected, most visitors came from large inland conurbations such as London and Birmingham where there is large population density and no beach. There is no surprise that a large 'blob' is over London as it is within a few hours' drive, making it accessible for a daytrip.

Other concentrations were from Bristol, Bournemouth and Southampton and a number from Manchester.

Lessons learned

Simple messaging with a clear call to action can have a good impact of reducing litter. Making it easy for people to find amenities such as bins and toilets is also key. Targeting visitors before they arrive at the destination is something that could be improved looking at specific audiences that are travelling from cities.