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**Alderney's Plastic Project**

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## Alderney's Plastic Project

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*Protect local wildlife*



**Working with the public and local businesses to reduce plastics on Alderney, from single use to microbeads and educate on the harm they cause**

### The problem

AWT have been working to help reduce waste on island, in particular single-use plastics, resulting in Alderney being named the second plastic free community in November by [Surfers Against Sewage](#). This does not mean we have eliminated plastic on our island yet, just that we have made significant steps to do so.

Plastic is an amazing material with lots of uses, however many of the reasons it is so widely used are what contributes to why it is a problem in the environment. For example plastic never truly degrades making it durable and hard-wearing for manufacturers but will break in to smaller and smaller pieces in the environment. These small pieces are then easily swallowed by marine life and even attract other pollutants in the water such as PCBs. Fulmars, a [species found on Alderney](#), have been shown to have on average [33 pieces of plastic](#) in their stomachs. Ultimately any plastic eaten lower down in the food chain also accumulates higher in the chain including in humans. Studies have shown that seafood eaters [ingest](#) thousands of tiny microplastics every year.

If animals swallow plastic it can take up room in their stomach, leading to starvation as they cannot eat their natural food or twist in their insides causing death.

This is in addition to the problem of wildlife getting caught in various types of litter that makes its way into their habitat. This again is a problem we see often in Alderney as [Gannets](#) often use fishing line and net to build their nest, in addition to the traditional seaweed. Chicks especially may become tangled and perish in the nets.



### **The beginnings of a solution**

Fortunately there is something we can all do to stop the tide of plastic reaching our oceans. By reducing the plastics we use in our everyday lives, and choosing plastic-free alternatives to the items we buy we send a message to retailers and businesses.

In Alderney we have also set up our plastic action group, meeting quarterly to discuss ways to reduce plastic on island and to encourage businesses and local government to support our actions.

### **The AWT Microbead Challenge!**

Towards the end of 2017, we set a challenge to our local retailers to look at reviewing and reducing microbead products they sell on Alderney. Microbeads are small pieces of plastic which are found in cosmetics and toiletries, such as facial scrubs and toothpastes. After use, the microbeads wash out to sea and are unfortunately eaten by zoo-plankton and fish.

Spectacularly, we found that nearly all cosmetic and toiletry products sold on Alderney by our local retailers are microbead free!

Retailers which took part in the challenge include: Eden, Lynn Roscow/Neal's Yard, The Farm Shop/Jeans Stores, Le Cocqs, Stop2Shop, Carol Walters/Forever Ltd and Boardman's Pharmacy and Perfumery.

We would like to thank all the retailers for taking part in this challenge and for any further information, please contact: Dr Mel Broadhurst-Allen via [marine@alderneywildlife.org](mailto:marine@alderneywildlife.org)

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**Protecting Alderney's Wildlife for the Future** Slades, 48 Victoria Street, Alderney GY9 3TA (Guernsey Charity No CH261) Website by [Precedent](#)