



Fishing For Litter



**KOMMUNENES INTERNASJONALE MILJØORGANISASJON
LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATION**

PRESS RELEASE

New phase of Fishing For Litter project launched at Isle of Whithorn

A new phase of the Fishing for Litter scheme was launched at the Isle of Whithorn on Friday 27 May and was well supported by fishermen, members of the community and related organisations. Aileen McLeod, the newly elected SNP South of Scotland list MSP, came along to lend her encouragement to the expansion of this innovative international initiative.

Fishing for Litter is an international scheme involving provision of dedicated disposal facilities at a network of harbours in Scotland and northern Europe. Commercial fishermen are provided with large bags so that any litter hauled in with the catch can be stored until it is landed. The scheme is led by KIMO, an organisation that tackles marine pollution by working with around 150 European local authorities. KIMO also contributes to marine litter policy development and carries out research on the impacts of litter on the marine environment.

Councillor Alistair Geddes said: "I am delighted that a grant from Wigtown Area Committee has enabled this scheme to go ahead on a trial basis for a year. Marine litter is a global problem and I am very pleased that the fishing community at the Isle of Whithorn is playing an active part in tackling the issue."

Tom Piper, KIMO UK Co-ordinator, who gave an informative presentation at Friday's event said: "Marine litter can have devastating effects on wildlife, costs the fishing industry money in downtime when gear becomes entangled, and often ends up on beaches where it detracts from scenic coastlines. The vast majority of litter is plastic which never biodegrades; it simply breaks down into small pieces which pollute the marine environment for ever more. This launch marks a new phase of the Fishing for Litter project in Scotland."

Shaun McGuire, Harbourmaster at the Isle of Whithorn has been delighted by the uptake at the Isle of Whithorn already with more skippers joining at Friday's launch: "The first to sign up was Andrew Lochhead, a local crab and lobster fisherman who skippers Bright Horizon, closely followed by James Kyle, Michael McGuire, Domhnall MacLachlainn, Eric McIlwraith and Paul Maguire who all skipper vessels working in the local area."

The Fishing For Litter scheme is sponsored by SNH, The Crown Estate, The Scottish Government, Aberdeenshire Council, The Highland Council, Total E&P UK Ltd, Seagreen Wind Energy and the Scottish Fisherman's Trust. The project also benefits from the time given to the project by the staff at all the participating harbours.

Photograph

Aileen McLeod MSP, Councillor Alistair Geddes, local fishermen, members of the community and supporting organisations attended Friday's Fishing for Litter launch.

Nic Coombey, well known for his work on community projects in Dumfries and Galloway, kindly loaned his 'Flotsam Faces' to help illustrate the marine litter issue at the event. The weird and wonderful faces are made from beach litter mounted in fish boxes – all collected from the local shoreline.

Taken by Peter Foster

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