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'Fishing for Litter' Bags Fourth Harbour in South West

Newquay fishermen will be taking part in an international project to help reduce marine pollution as the North Cornish port joins the 'Fishing For Litter' scheme this month.

'Fishing For Litter' encourages fishermen to bring ashore marine litter caught in their gear during fishing operations, by providing the facilities and infrastructure required for its safe and responsible disposal. Newquay Harbour is the fourth port in the South West to sign up to the project which aims to remove 100 tonnes of rubbish from our seas by 2011.

It was initially feared that space restrictions would prevent the port from being able to accommodate the litter collected however Cornwall Council and SERCO have stepped in and have provided the project with a tailor made container, specifically designed for use in the port.

The first Newquay based skipper to sign up to the scheme is Phil Trebilcock, who fishes the Loyal Partner, he said; **"It feels good to be doing my bit for the environment and 'Fishing For Litter' makes it easier for me to do that. I would encourage other skippers to get involved. The scheme provides us with large sacks to collect rubbish we find at sea, all we have to do is bring it back to port. It makes good sense to me."**

Commenting on the issue of marine pollution, Sarah Crosbie, Project Coordinator for Fishing For Litter South West said; **"Despite many initiatives to reduce marine litter, it remains one of the most significant problems affecting the marine environment on a worldwide scale. This year's Beachwatch survey by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) found 1849 items of litter, for every kilometre surveyed and 63% of it was plastic. Plastic litter has increased by an enormous 121% since Beachwatch started in 1994. The Fishing For Litter scheme aims to combat the problem by retrieving rubbish before it reaches our shores."**

Sarah added; **"Plastic litter does not biodegrade, it merely breaks down into smaller pieces and ultimately into microscopic pieces or dust. These small pieces of plastic are commonly mistaken for food by birds. The MCS reports that microplastic particles are now found inside filter feeding animals and between grains of sand on our beaches, in some parts of the ocean there are more plastic fragments in seawater than there are plankton."**

"Marine litter also costs the fishing industry thousands of pounds per boat every year, through contamination of catches, broken gear and fouled propellers. With facilities in place at Newquay, an important milestone for the project has been met. One of our main objectives was to involve fishermen working out of four South West harbours and I am pleased to report that we are well on track to exceed that target as the project also gets underway in Appledore and Looe later this month."

Julian German, Cornwall Council cabinet member for Waste and the Environment, said; **"Cornwall has the longest stretch of coastline in the country and we are keen to play our part in protecting this glorious natural asset."**

"We are very pleased to offer further backing for this scheme which is proving to be a big help in tackling the problem of marine pollution. I look forward to many more local fishing boats joining the scheme over the next few weeks and months."

"This scheme is gaining momentum across the South West and I'm sure it will be just as popular in Newquay."

Fishing For Litter is funded by The Marine and Fisheries Agency, The Environment Agency, Cornwall Council, The Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation, The Crown Estate, Duchy of Cornwall, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Natural England and forms part of the Fishing for Litter network run by KIMO, an international organisation of local authorities working to tackle marine pollution and environmental issues.

Visit www.fishingforlitter.org

Ends

Main image 1 – Pictured in front of the fishing vessel “Loyal Partner”

Caption:

Fishing For Litter gets underway in Newquay.

Pictured from left:

Phil Trebilcock (fisherman), Dave Trebilcock (fisherman), Derek Aunger (Newquay Harbour Master), Aaron Trebilcock (fisherman) and Sarah Crosbie (Fishing for Litter Project Officer).

Image 2 – Pictured with skip

Caption:

Newquay Harbour Master Derek Aunger receives the first bag of marine litter collected by fisherman Phil Trebilcock.

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Notes to editors:

The South West project is based upon Fishing for Litter Scotland which has been in operation for over 3 years. Scotland's fishermen, from 16 major ports and from over 110 vessels, have removed over 200 tonnes of litter. The project was developed by KIMO and is coordinated in the South West by Sarah Crosbie.

About KIMO:

KIMO was founded by local municipalities with a shared concern for the state of the environment. KIMO is designed to give municipalities a political voice at the international level, to share best practice and to find solutions to marine political problems that affect coastal communities.

Fishing for Litter is an example of where this has been successful. The scheme, which encourages fishermen to take ashore litter they catch while fishing by providing the infrastructure required, has been acknowledged by United Nations Environment Programme as one of the tools to reduce marine litter. KIMO will continue to seek funding for projects in the future that will benefit the coastal communities that it represents.

Project Funders:

