

A '**rural beach**' is one that has limited facilities and is not developed as a resort or part of any significant development. The aim of the rural award is to acknowledge those beaches which are visited and enjoyed for their intrinsic qualities and where local interest and management maintains a clean environment whilst at the same time promoting considerate use by visitors. Rural beaches are generally more remote than resort beaches.

Where the award refers to a section of a long beach, with no natural divisions, the award section of beach would be expected to be at least approximately 500 metres long.

Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB), following consultation with a National Beach Jury, will only award the Rural Seaside Award to beaches that comply with all relevant national and local legislation, achieve the mandatory water quality standard\* (Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC) and which fulfil all other land-based criteria.

In order to protect the integrity of the Seaside Award and the beach managing authority it is crucial that the flag be taken down, permanently or temporarily, if there is any infringement of the criteria. Information should be posted to explain the absence of the flag and KSB should be notified immediately.

### WATER QUALITY

- 1. To be eligible for entry to the award scheme the bathing water associated with the beach must have attained at least the mandatory standard\* as outlined in the Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC. The results of the current season's water quality monitoring and the standards of the previous three years (where available) must be posted.**

*The bathing water at a rural beach does not necessarily have to be identified as one of Scotland's designated bathing waters under the existing Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC or under the Revised Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) list which came into existence in March 2008. However, all monitoring must be carried out strictly within the Directives methods of analysis of inspection by either the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), or an authority approved by Keep Scotland Beautiful. The suitability of monitoring bodies other than SEPA should be checked with KSB.*

*A SEPA and Clean Coast Scotland water quality poster template for displaying appropriate water quality information should be used and is available from KSB.*

*The award beach should include a water quality sampling point, or be part of a designated bathing water area, as mapped by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), which includes a relevant sampling point.*

*\* Continued Seaside Award status may be considered at sites where Mandatory or Guideline water quality has previously been achieved, but*

*where poor water quality events have led to a breach in annual compliance. This will only be possible where the number of poor water quality samples is low and the majority of these poor water quality samples have been predicted accurately and the public warned using electronic messaging systems controlled by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). The final decision will be assessed on a case by case basis by the National Beach Jury. If a bathing water does not achieve the Mandatory Standard for more than three years in a row the award is likely to be withdrawn.*

**2. Waste water discharge points and riverine inputs within one mile of the beach/water must be highlighted to KSB and the public.**

*The presence of a discharge point does not necessarily eliminate the beach from consideration, but they should be marked on a map so that members of the public can make an informed decision on whether to enter the water or not.*

**BEACH AND INTERTIDAL AREA**

**3. Algal and other vegetation materials should be left on the beach unless it becomes a hazard to the public.**

*Algal vegetation generally refers to seaweed. Whilst seaweed is encouraged as a vital part of the beach ecology it should not be allowed to accumulate on resort beaches and become a hazard to the public. Seaweed should be composted or reused. It must not be put to landfill unless contaminated with hazardous waste.*

**CLEANSING**

**4. There must be adequate cleansing of the beach and surrounding area.**

*Accumulations of litter and dog mess are not acceptable on the beach or in the areas surrounding a beach (that is the car park, grass areas and paths).*

*Local Authorities are responsible for keeping beaches and the surrounding areas under their management or ownership clean under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA). The EPA makes Duty Bodies responsible for keeping beaches clear of litter and refuse. Full details of how they must comply with this cleansing duty are contained in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse, which accompanies Part IV (section 89) of the EPA.*

*Based on land use and time the Code of Practice sets out reasonable and acceptable standards of cleanliness which Duty Bodies should achieve at beaches under their management. What matters is maintaining the cleanliness of an area, rather than how often it is cleaned.*

*The section which covers beaches has been significantly updated. There are now four 'categories' of beach: amenity, recreational, special conservation areas & other, depending on the use of the beach. All award beaches fall under one of the following three categories: amenity beach, recreational*

*beach or sensitive conservation area. A Seaside Award beach must meet the appropriate cleanliness standards set out in the Code of Practice. Therefore, if cleanliness standards drop below a 'Grade B' the Duty Body must return the beach to this standard within 48 hours at amenity beaches and within a week at recreation beaches, during the bathing season (1<sup>st</sup> June & 15 September). Beaches which are classified as Sensitive Conservation Areas must be hand picked of litter within a month if the standard drops below a 'Grade B'. Different timescales are set for the winter months.*

*Further information, including images of the appropriate grades can be obtained from KSB, or found at [www.littercode.org.uk](http://www.littercode.org.uk) where the booklet 'Litter & Scottish beaches - A guide for the public and practitioners' can also be downloaded.*

*With regards to dog waste on beaches the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 specifies that the person in charge of a dog must be responsible at all times for removing faeces from any public open space. In relation to beaches, dog owners, walking on the beach are now responsible for picking up after their dogs and disposing of the waste in an appropriate way (dog bin, general waste bin, or take it home). Local Authorities now have an active part to play in enforcing this in open spaces – including on beaches. Both the police and authorised LA officers can issue Fixed Penalty Notices of £40 without the need for corroborative evidence.*

*The existence of seaweed is a vital part of the beach ecology. The raking of sandy areas closest to dunes and the removal of seaweed should be treated sensitively as the removal of pioneer species, such as sea rocket and sea stock which grow in front of the dunes, prevents them establishing roots and stabilising the dune structures. (See Criteria 3)*

*It is recommended that the cleaning regime for each beach be examined carefully. It may be more effective, and indeed, economical to hand pick litter at some sites. A document outlining the benefits and problems of mechanical and hand picking cleansing techniques is available from KSB.*

*Dumping, or flytipping, is illegal and must not be allowed. In areas where there are problems with the practice there should be deterrents put in place. Information should also be made available to visitors about how they can report incidents which they may witness. Further information can be found at [www.dumbdumpers.org](http://www.dumbdumpers.org) and the stop line number which could be advertised is 08452 30 40 90. Leaflets and posters can be downloaded from this site for display too.*

- 5. Provision of properly secured litter bins, in adequate numbers, or signage encouraging users to take their litter home where appropriate, should be in place.**

*Where litter bins are provided they should be covered and of a suitable character, size and appearance.*

*Where litter bins are not provided the local authority / beach manager must monitor the situation and when necessary develop a plan to educate users not to leave litter. If litter becomes a problem and is identified as an issue by KSB assessors, bins may have to be reinstated.*

*Recycling is to be promoted where possible or visitors encouraged to take their waste home to recycle it.*

*Whilst dogs are allowed on Seaside Award beaches owners should be encouraged to keep them under proper control and to clean up after them in line with The Scottish Outdoor Access Code and Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003.*

*Where accumulations of dog faeces are recorded, either by the council, members of the public or Keep Scotland Beautiful assessors, specific dog waste bins, or general waste bins which clearly accept dog waste, should be provided.*

## **MANAGEMENT**

### **6. The beach must be actively managed under a scheme of guardianship.**

*A named contact or organisation should be appointed to act as a 'guardian'. This could be a local school, community council or individual who has undertaken to keep an eye on the beach, alert authorities to problems and perhaps even do some litter picking and maintenance of notice boards and bins.*

### **7. Access must be safe and well maintained**

*Road access and parking for vehicles must be adequate for the expected use and location. Although not necessarily metalled, the road surface must be well maintained.*

*Access from the car park to the beach must be safe. Advice about steep or restricted access must be well displayed and included in all promotional literature.*

### **8. Unauthorised driving must be prohibited.**

*Where there are no physical barriers preventing access to the beach, and where vehicles are known to be an issue, causing damage to dunes and eroding pathways, measures, such as barriers, must be put in place to prevent unauthorised vehicles .*

*When such measures are not deemed to be effective consideration should be given to introducing a bye-law prohibiting unauthorised driving.*

*In both cases information should be provided on the information board about why vehicles are kept off the beach.*

**9. Any buildings and equipment must be adequately maintained and there must be safe confinement of all construction work.**

*Any construction work or hazardous derelict structures should be enclosed to prevent ready access by the public, particularly small children and they must not detract from the enjoyment of the beach user.*

*It is suggested that information about the work / reason for cordoning off the area should be provided to the public.*

**10. Toilets, where present, must be cleaned and well maintained. Suitable bins for disposal of sanitary waste should be provided.**

*If toilet facilities are provided close to the rural beach, they must be cleaned to an acceptable standard, stocked with toilet paper, soap and either hand towels or a drier.*

*Ideally these facilities should be available between 10am and 5pm daily.*

*Access to toilet facilities must be safe with no hindrance from vehicular traffic.*

*Suitable bins, whether sanitary bins or general waste bins, should be provided for the disposal of feminine hygiene items. Information about the appropriate disposal of sanitary waste should be provided in the toilets too. Posters and leaflets are available from Scottish Water at [www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk) or their call centre on 0845 601 8855.*

**SAFETY**

**11. A risk assessment should be carried out and appropriate control measures put in place - i.e. appropriate public rescue equipment and/or warning signs.**

*A risk assessment is a legal requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which sets out the responsibilities employers have towards themselves, employees and members of the public. The Act states that employers must ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that employees and members of the public are not put at risk. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999, also set out in detail what employers must do to manage health and safety. The Regulations require an employer to make a 'suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking'. So the duty to carry out risk assessments extends to visitors as well as to employees.*

*Appropriately qualified personnel should conduct any risk assessment and normal operating procedures should be written to address any identified risks.*

*Carrying out a risk assessment may help with writing a Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) and an Emergency Action Plan (EAP). It will also assist with identifying the type and location of appropriate public rescue equipment for your site. A guide to coastal public rescue equipment, published by the RNLI, gives excellent guidelines on appropriate equipment for different beaches.*

*The risk assessment should specifically look at emergency phone provision/cover at rural beaches. Where a public telephone is available it should be working and clearly marked on the map. Where mobile phone coverage is not available/reliable information explaining this should clearly be made available to beach users on the information board.*

*The following websites could be consulted for support information:*

*[www.rnli.co.uk](http://www.rnli.co.uk) / [www.rosopa.org.uk](http://www.rosopa.org.uk) / [www.rlss.org.uk](http://www.rlss.org.uk) /  
[www.nationalbeachsafety.org.uk/](http://www.nationalbeachsafety.org.uk/)*

## **INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

### **12. Appropriate codes of conduct for beach use should be easily available to the public.**

*Codes of conduct for beach use, water use and safety should be made available on information boards. Such codes may be council specific or refer to national guidance, such as the Outdoor Access Code.*

*Keep Scotland Beautiful can provide examples of codes of conduct displayed at beaches across the country on request.*

### **13. An information point must be present. It must have:**

*Telephone number for the nearest police  
Telephone number for the coastguard  
Telephone number for the nearest hospital/surgery/first-aid point  
Information about local hazards where applicable  
Contact number & address for the local authority / beach guardian  
Contact details for Keep Scotland Beautiful  
Seaside Award Criteria  
Seaside Award Certificate (current)  
Bathing Water Quality Poster with updated information ideally conforming with the Clean Coast Scotland / SEPA format including the results of, at least, the previous three years' monitoring*

### **14. A map must be present. It must show:**

*The appropriate area of the beach (especially if award section is part of larger beach)  
Water quality sampling point  
Car / bike parks  
Disabled parking (where applicable)  
Nearest public/emergency telephone*

*Information points*  
*Lifesaving equipment*  
*Larger litter bins & recycling facilities (where applicable)*  
*Public facilities – toilets (where applicable)*  
*Disabled toilets (where applicable)*  
*Access points*  
*Disabled access points (where applicable)*  
*Nearby footpaths*  
*Potential hazards (cliffs, rip currents, access problems)*  
*Environmentally sensitive or protected areas.*  
*Riverine or waste water discharges to bathing water/beach*

*KSB can provide award map guidance.*

**15. Visitors should be actively encouraged to protect and conserve the beach environment.**

*Some sites may prove environmentally sensitive and require particular management techniques in which case evidence must be provided to show that recognised local conservation organisations have been approached for advice and the problems addressed. It may be that the fragility of certain environments will preclude them from the Rural Seaside Award on the grounds that greater visitor numbers would endanger wildlife or habitats.*

*Some access may be restricted by signs, barriers or planting of effective vegetation and where this is the case clear information should be given to the public.*

*Information boards, interpretation panels and or leaflets about the coastal environment can all be used to educate beach visitors about the natural environment and the part they play in protecting it – taking litter home, picking up after their dogs, respecting the wildlife etc.*

*KSB has produced a number of support information posters which can be provided and used on information boards. The poster topics range from general information about Scottish coastal wildlife, appropriate behaviour at an award beach, and activity ideas which people can get involved with.*

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*Further information and application forms are available from:*

*Keep Scotland Beautiful, Wallace House,  
17-21 Maxwell Place, Stirling, FK8 1JU.*

*[www.keeptoscotlandbeautiful.org/coastal  
beach@ksbScotland.org.uk](http://www.keeptoscotlandbeautiful.org/coastalbeach@ksbScotland.org.uk)*