



Update and overview of the Plastic Free North Devon ‘Protect our Playground’ polystyrene bodyboard ban project and how North Devon Council (NDC) can further support this growing movement.

Background

Our ‘Protect our Playground’ (POP) campaign which initially focused on reducing the amount of polystyrene bodyboards and plastic toys we find on our beaches during the height of summer (over 500 broken boards were collected from Croyde in 2019) has grown into an all-encompassing mission and campaign for our charity. Many of our projects campaigns now fall under ‘POP’ including our Visitor Campaign and our sustainable business support programme. We are currently developing our ‘Protect our Playground’ flagship education programme which uses immersive virtual reality and activities to directly connect more people with what's on our doorstep. The education will be framed around 3 films that are solely focused on the northern Devon landscape : Lundy with Grey Seals, 'The Rocky Shore' and ‘Moor to Coast'.

Sir David Attenborough says “No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced”. This quote sits right at the heart of this campaign and attempts to increase care and stewardship over our natural world through education and actual experience (vr and real life opportunities and experiences).

Phase 1 of our POP education programme will be ready to launch at the beginning of June. This will be focused on delivering this experience to inland and deprived communities through locally established community groups and projects as well as the 5 million visitors that visit during the peak season. There are currently huge barriers to bringing everyone along with us and having the capacity to make environmentally friendly decisions is a privilege for most . Not everyone has the luxury of caring about the environment when they are worrying about where their next meal is from. North Devon has some areas with high levels of social deprivation and large parts of the population that are disconnected with the natural world and the intrinsic benefits it provides; this is something as a community we should be working on more intensely. This isn't about cutting down on your plastic use or encouraging people to shop at refill stores , it is about trying to encourage a deep shift in our society where people start to understand that we are a ‘part of it’ and we have to play a part in trying to protect it.

POP Polystyrene Bodyboard Campaign - what has already been achieved?

Stage 1 - In response to the lack of alternative options to polystyrene bodyboards we launched a pilot wooden belly board hire scheme pilot with a local in conjunction with Saunton Surf Hire. Twenty wooden belly boards are available for hire with all profits supporting two local charities; Surf Mobility and Plastic Free North Devon, we also have them for sale on our website.

Stage 2 - Launched a public referendum and community lobby with Plastic Free Torridge and The Ocean Recovery Project to ask our local councils to discourage all retailers to stop selling cheap polystyrene bodyboards which we hope we have nearly done - THANKYOU!

Stage 3 - Contact all the retailers and lobby for a UK government BAN (working on)

POP wooden belly board hire - Where next?



- **More hire locations**

Confirmed for this summer:

Saunton Surf Hire, Saunton

Ruda, Croyde

Freshwell Camping, Croyde

Woolacombe - Tourist Information Centre and investigating other options

- **Holiday home uptake** -Holiday makers can borrow when they are here without having the pressure to buy something on a whim. This will also help further improve the sustainability of their business and support the growth of eco tourism in North Devon.
- **Provide free hire** to members of the community that fall into low-income/vulnerable categories (this is where we need your help)

How can NDC help our mission?

NDC could help us launch a pilot project for Summer 2021 that helps more people access, connect and both mentally and physically benefit from our local marine environments by removing financial barriers.

Examples of how you could facilitate this are:

- **Provide financial support to help us remove barriers to families/ individuals from low-income and socially deprived areas so they can enjoy time at the beach and in the ocean.** We would like to provide a number of vouchers that covers the subsidised hire cost of a board along with an optional return bus ticket to the beach. This would work really well alongside the POP education session we deliver as a prize to those who partake or we could look to offer vouchers on a specific day and our education delivery team could meet them on the beach to deliver some activities. This would ensure that the business doesn't lose out and we PFND are happy not to take any revenue on the boards that are hired as part of the scheme which would keep the hire cost to you subsidised (£5 per hire)

£5 x 100 children = £500 + bus ticket (£5) x 100 = £1000 + associated admin costs.

Vouchers given would be accompanied by some information about the project to ensure they understand the 'why' behind the offering.

- **Fund more POP boards that can be put into retail locations** and look to set up a 'FREE2HIRE' (similar to WWHO scheme) alongside our pay for hire boards that help raise revenue for our charity.

As we are already working with several of the local retailers set up at the main beaches across the areas we could look at this as an additional option.

£60 x 6 co-branded wooden PFND/NDC boards = £360 (2 boards at each of our already agreed hire locations that are for FREE USE only for those that qualify) +associated admin costs

NB. My question around both schemes and the above is how do you identify who gets free hire without the person who is hiring feeling any sort of embarrassment? It is also vitally important that any selection process for subsidies will not include any labelling language that may add a barrier. I'm hoping you have a simple answer.

- **Connect us with local groups and help us ascertain which areas** would benefit the most from the initial POP education programme.
-

Thank you for taking the time to read our update, we hope NDC can find a way of supporting this campaign in whatever capacity they can.

Claire Moode
CEO Plastic Free North Devon