

UK's biggest marine plastic mural gets warm reception

Local MSP urges public to 'look after our environment' following unveiling

East Lothian locals flocked to North Berwick harbour to catch a first glimpse of an eight-metre marine mural made from 13,000 pieces of plastic beach waste.

The mural, believed to be the biggest of its kind in the UK, was created by artist Julie Barnes and was unveiled to the public this month.

MSP for East Lothian, Paul McLennan, has welcomed the 'stunning' artwork and believes it's a stark reminder of the ecology impact we have on our shores.

Paul said: "This stunning new artwork demonstrates clearly the link between the impact we have on the environment, and the need to safeguard our beautiful natural environment for the future.

"It challenges all of us to ensure that we look after our environment, especially our local beaches.

"I was delighted to attend the mural launch. The dedication and patience of the litter pickers was incredible, and the mural itself is a fantastic piece of art."

The materials for Julie's mural were sourced by fellow East Lothian local, Elizabeth Vischer, who collected 27,000 pieces of plastic from a 200-metre stretch of Longniddry Bents during 100 beach cleans.

Caledonian Horticulture became aware of Elizabeth's beach clean work through The Scottish Coastal Clean Up, and alongside [Jerba Campervans](#) saw potential to create a ground-breaking installation with a vital message at its heart.

Only half the items collected were incorporated into the mural, demonstrating the extent of marine waste present on East Lothian's coastline.

Simon Poole, Co-founder of Jerba Campervans, said: "It was fantastic to see the local community supporting this inspirational initiative so wholeheartedly.

"North Berwick now has a fantastic and thought-provoking new piece of art, which adds vibrancy to the harbour as well as sending a vital message about plastic waste in our seas.

"It has been incredible to see the project grow from an initial idea into a large-scale physical depiction of such an important issue in today's society. The public's response to the mural's unveiling was fantastic; the recognition gained by such an innovative project was fully deserved."

The harbour's mural will last for many years in the sea spray environment and will continue to attract visitors after a successful first weekend.

As well as unveiling the mural, the event also featured educational workshops on the dangers of marine waste, and a photographic exhibition, Art in Action: Not Just a Load of Rubbish, can be viewed in the Scottish Seabird Centre showcasing images of Elizabeth's plastic collection.

Elizabeth, said: "It was wonderful to be at the unveiling of the stunning mural by Julie Barnes down at North Berwick harbour last weekend, and to see such an overwhelming response from everyone there to this fabulous project.

"It's incredible to see so many of the plastics I collected

being used to create such a powerful piece of work. It truly looks amazing.

“I’m delighted to have the opportunity to have my own photographic work documenting the plastic picking project I undertook showing in the Seabird Centre adjacent to the mural. Together they form a powerful narrative on the issues surrounding plastic pollution and the protection of the coastline we love so much.”

Visitors can view the Art in Action: Not Just a Load of Rubbish exhibition at the Scottish Seabird Centre until the 25th June.

It is estimated more than 5,000 pieces of plastic can be found in every mile of beach in the UK, and that every day more than 8 million pieces of plastic find their way into our oceans.

The North Berwick Harbour Trust, a local charity which aims to maintain, conserve, and improve North Berwick Harbour commissioned the cooperative project with Jerba Campervans and Caledonian Horticulture and artist Julie Barnes. The Trust believes that all participants in the project have enhanced the Harbour, and made an educational contribution for visitors and locals at the community asset.

The mural comprises eight panels, each of which have each been sponsored by a local business, including: Steampunk, Turnbills Home Hardware, The Lobster Shack & Rocketeer, Meg Maitland, Peppermint Beach, Fidra, and the North Berwick Trust.

To find out more about The Scottish Coastal Clean Up and how you can get involved in future beach cleans [click here](#).

www.jerbacampervans.co.uk

www.caledonianhorticulture.co.uk

<https://juiebarnes.co.uk/>

