

# **Surfers Against Sewage stage protest in Portobello**

**Marine charity, Surfers Against Sewage, (SAS) staged a protest on Portobello Beach on Saturday, calling for government action on sewage spills into Scottish waters.**

This was part of a mass event from Cornwall to Scotland with protests held in at least 30 places on the coast.

Charlie Allanson-Oddy, SAS spokesperson for Scotland, led the Edinburgh protest, and outlined the group's goals saying they were "calling for a complete stop on sewage release into bathing water areas and areas of particular natural interests".

He said: "Across England, Wales, and Scotland, there's been a fifty per cent increase in the amount of sewage pumped into our waters.

"We are demanding that all bathing water areas, and particular areas of wildlife are protected from sewage by 2030."



SAS Protest on Portobello Beach 18 May 2021 PHOTO Joe Coghill  
There are three points along the beach at Portobello where rainwater and sewage is discharged onto the beach when heavy rainfall occurs. According to Scottish Water's data, the number of these spills has increased by around 10% from 2022 to 2023. However, the total number is not known because only four per cent of sewage overflows in Scotland are monitored by authorities. SAS claim this could mean the real number of sewage spills for Scotland could be in the hundreds of thousands.

This year, SAS raised more than £200,000, with some funding invested in Scotland. Charlie said: "SAS have been backing a local initiative called the Porty Water Collective. So they've been funding us to do weekly water quality tests... And 81% of those results have shown unsafe levels of E-Coli by SEPA standards."

This group made headlines last year when they discovered these levels of E-Coli in the waters off Portobello Beach. Charlie also announced a new partnership, where the University of

Edinburgh will be doing “in-depth testing of the samples in the hope of establishing the source of the E.Coli.”

These tests are due to start next week, and the results will be posted on the [SAS](#) and [Porty Water Collective social media pages](#).

Charlie agreed that it will take time to fix the “Victorian” era sewage system saying “but clearly, it’s unfit for purpose”.

He said: “There is no quick fix to the situation we have. However, what we do demand is commitment now to start to change it. There needs to be a proper plan with a considered framework.”



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